

[17 April, 2000]

RAJYA SABHA

है जिसके द्वारा नियंत्रण किया जा सकता है। लेवी शुगर सप्लाय कंट्रोल ऑर्डर, 1979 है जिसके द्वारा इन सारी बातों को नियंत्रित किया जा सकता है। तो यह जो अमेंडमेंट है, यह जो ऐक्ट है, यह जो अनावश्यक है, उसको रिपील करने के लिए है। बाकी जो बातें मैंने कही हैं, मैं विश्वास दिलाता हूँ कि उन सारे सुझावों पर सरकार विचार करेगी। मैं निवेदन करूंगा कि क्योंकि अब इसकी आवश्यकता नहीं रही है, इसलिए सदन इसको रिपील करने के लिए पास करे।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR): The question is:

"That the Bill to repeal the Sugarcane Control (Additional Powers) Act, 1962, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR) : We shall now take up clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill.

Clause 2 was added to the Bill.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Title were added to the Bill.

श्री शांता कुमार : मैं अनुरोध करता हूँ कि :

इस विधेयक को पारित किया जाए।

The question was put and the motion was adopted

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Increase in Prices of Certain Petroleum Products

श्री जीवन राय (पश्चिमी बंगाल): रुपया उठा भी लिया, वह हजम भी हो गया, अब इस स्टेटमेंट से क्या होगा? सरकार अब यह स्टेटमेंट प्राइज उज्ज्वल करने के लिए लाई है? सब बातचीत करने के लिए तैयार हैं और एक डिसकशन महंगाई पर किया जाए। पेट्रोलियम और कैरोसिन वाली जिस सरकार ने यह बीच में किया है, Otherwise a piecemeal discussion will not work. It is an attempt to take the wind out of the people's discontent.

जब सदन चल रहा था तब प्राइस नहीं बढ़ाए बल्कि इन्टर सेशन में बढ़ाए हैं।

अब सरकार ने रुपया खा भी लिया है, हजम भी कर लिया है, डाइजेस्ट भी हो गया अब बातचीत करने से क्या होगा?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR): Let the hon. Minister make his statement.

SHRI JIBON ROY: Sir, if the hon. Minister has brought the Statement to withdraw the price increase, then it is all right. If it is not for withdrawal, we do not want any statement. We want a statement only on withdrawal; not on anything else.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR): You have made your point.

SHRI R. MARGABANDU: Sir, we can have a structured debate on this.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE (West Bengal): Sir, we want a full discussion on it. (*Interruptions*) They are making a mockery of the people's plight.

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI RAM NAIK): I thought they would have some points to argue.

श्री जीवन राय : बीच में डिस्कशन से क्या होगा? पीपुल आउट साइड। रुपया खत्म हो गया। ...*(व्यवधान)*...नो-नो आरग्यू की क्या बात है? आपने पैसा लगा दिया, खा लिया ...*(व्यवधान)*...

श्री नरेन्द्र मोहन (उत्तर प्रदेश): पहले स्टेटमेंट आने दीजिए, बाद में बात करिए। ...*(व्यवधान)*...

श्री दीपांकर मुखर्जी: भाव बढ़ गया है, क्या खाने को ...*(व्यवधान)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR): Let him make his statement.

SHRI JIBON ROY: No statement is required. (*Interruptions*)

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR): Please take your seat. If the hon. Members desire a structured debate, as Mr. Margabandhu has said, please give notice. I am confident the hon. Chairman will consider it.

SHRI JIBON ROY: No statement is required.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR): This has been agreed to in the Business Advisory Committee. I cannot depart from it. Mr. Ram Naik to make the statement now.

श्री बालकवि बैरागी (मध्य प्रदेश) : उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, गांव-गांव में मूल्यवृद्धि के खिलाफ धरने हो रहे हैं, आन्दोलन हो रहे हैं और लोग गिरफ्तारियां दे रहे हैं। हम लोग गिरफ्तारियां देने के बाद सदन के भीतर आए हैं और ऐसी स्थिति में आधी-आधी रात को सरकार कीमतें बढ़ा रही है। माननीय उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, यह मूल्यवृद्धि वापस ली जानी चाहिए। ... (व्यवधान) ... महंगाई को आगे बढ़ाकर आपको क्या प्राप्त होगा? माननीय उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, यह गलत है। ... (व्यवधान) ...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR): Please take your seat. Allow the hon. Minister to make his statement.

SHRI RAM NAIK: Sir, the hon. Members would be aware of the steep increase in the prices of crude oil that were being witnessed for the last one year. International prices of crude oil...

DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA (West Bengal): Kindly yield for a minute. Sir, I am just on a typical point. It is a long statement. What I am suggesting is... (Interruptions) Please allow me to have my say.

SHRI JIBON ROY: This is a thesis on how to rob the people. उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, यह थीसेज है और वह भी लम्बा थीसेज है। ... (व्यवधान) ...

श्री दीपांकर मुखर्जी : सर, ये तो पूरा पेपर है। ... (व्यवधान) ...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR): Please take your seat. When I am on my legs, please sit down. It is not for the first time that this House has seen a comparatively long statement. For Dr. Biplab Dasgupta, this is not a novelty. He is fond of thesis and the statement of seven pages is a child's play for him. So, please, let him continue. We will hear him. You have got reservations that the people are disturbed by the price increase. We will consider that. Let the Statement be completed without any interruption. I will be grateful to you.

SHRI SURESH A. KESWANI (Maharashtra) : Sir, this statement is based on information which is factually incorrect.

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU (Karnataka): Sir, how can they make comments without the Statement having been read out? How can he make such a comment without going through the statement?

SHRI SURESH A. KESWANI: They have circulated it. *...(Interruptions)...*

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR): Kindly take your seat. Take your seat. Unless the statement is made, you cannot make any good point or bad point or otherwise. It will be only after the statement is read out. Please don't interrupt. Otherwise, nothing will go on record.

श्री राम नाईक: हम बता रहे हैं ऐसी क्या बात है। हम आपको बतायेंगे। आप पढ़ेंगे तो आपको पता चलेगा। I have already given an addenda which I will read.

SHRI RAM NAIK: Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, hon. Members would be aware of the steep increase in the prices of crude oil that were being witnessed for the last one year. International prices of crude oil which were around Rs.3,210 per tonne in February, 1999 rose to around Rs. 7,906 per tonne in March, 2000, an increase of over 146 per cent. Consequently, the oil import bill has also increased and is estimated to go up from Rs.27,000 crore in 1998-99 to around Rs.57,000 crore in 1999-2000.

Based on a decision taken during the Government led by Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao, an Expert Technical Group (ETG) was appointed on 25th June, 1996 to make recommendations on reforms in the hydrocarbon sector. The ETG submitted its two reports while the Government led by Shri H.D. Deve Gowda was in power. The second report of ETG was accepted by the Government led by Shri I.K. Gujaral on 20th November, 1997, when it was decided to dismantle the Administered Pricing Mechanism (APM) in a phased manner and to switch over to full deregulation by the end of March, 2002. The following decisions were taken:-

- (1) That subsidy on kerosene oil for public distribution system would be brought down to 33.33 per cent of the import parity price by the year 2001-02.
- (2) That subsidy on LPG (packed-domestic) would be brought down to 15 per cent during the year 2000-01.

- (3) The selling prices of motor spirit and aviation turbine fuel would be moved towards import parity; and
- (4) That price of diesel would continue to be moved in line with international prices as per the earlier Cabinet decision dated 1st September, 1997.

Honourable Members would be aware that the Oil Pool Account is balanced by cross subsidisation of PDS kerosene and LPG (packed-domestic) prices from revenues earned through MS and ATF. Prices of diesel are required to be at import parity and are Oil Pool Account neutral. The steep increase in international crude prices has increased the differential between the import parity prices and the prices of the subsidised products thus placing a great burden on the deficit in the Oil Pool Account.

The annual subsidy in the preceding year, that is, in 1999-2000 for PDS kerosene at the pre-revised prices was expected to be approximately Rs.8,100 crore and for LPG approximately Rs.4,700 crore. At March, 2000, prices this deficit would have been considerably larger and would have reached the order of Rs.11,000 crore for PDS kerosene and Rs.7,000 crore for LPG for 2000-01. This level of deficit in the Oil Pool Account cannot be sustained since there would be no money with the oil companies either to import and process crude oil and market products.

The basic price of PDS kerosene has remained unchanged since 25th July, 1991. The differential between prices of diesel and PDS kerosene has been widening continuously over the last two decades. The difference between the price of diesel and PDS kerosene was only one paise in 1975; 66 paise in 1980; Rs.1.19 in 1985; Rs.2.09 in 1990 and Rs.3.72 in the year 1995. Earlier Governments spoke of reduction of subsidy and market mechanisms, but made hardly any attempt to increase the prices of PDS kerosene. As on 22nd March, 2000, the difference between diesel and PDS kerosene retail price in Delhi was Rs.11.37. When we look at our neighbouring countries, the differential is Rs.3.61 per litre in Sri Lanka and Rs.1.30 per litre in Pakistan. In Bangladesh, diesel and kerosene are priced at the same level.

This differential in prices is also contributing significantly to adulteration and black-marketing. In a study carried out by Tata Economic Consultancy Services during the year 1994, it revealed that around 30% of PDS kerosene was being diverted towards other uses including

black-marketing and adulteration of diesel. Since the price differential has widened manifold, it can only be inferred that such diversion would be of a much higher order at present. In my interactions with the public, media and also discussion on various fora, I have been speaking of the need for raising the prices of PDS kerosene and other products in tune with the realities of the market. There has also been broad consensus on this issue in the meetings of Petroleum Ministry Consultative Committee and Ministers of Food and Civil Supplies of various States.

Taking into account the international prices, the prevailing subsidy level, the differential between diesel and PDS kerosene prices and the prices of kerosene in the neighbouring countries and in conformity with implementation of the decision taken by the Gujral Government on 20th November, 1997 for the dismantling of the administered price mechanism, the Government decided to increase the ex-storage point price of PDS kerosene from Rs.2.00 per litre to Rs.4.50 per litre with effect from midnight of 22nd -23rd March, 2000.

LPG (Packed-Domestic) is a common fuel not only for the middle class and the urban housewives but indeed for all sections of the people. We have decided that the waiting list for LPG (Packed-Domestic) aspirants be cleared by 31st December, 2000. It means a sanction of around one crore additional LPG (Packed-Domestic) connections. At March, 2000 level of prices of LPG, each cylinder sold by the oil companies had a subsidy of Rs.162 per cylinder. The subsidy is partly paid from the Oil Pool Account and to some extent absorbed by the oil companies. If we have to ensure that LPG (Packed-Domestic) reaches every household, we have to make the selling prices realistic to ensure that the oil companies do not suffer huge losses in providing LPG (Packed-Domestic) connections. I realize that it is not possible for the ordinary housewife to bear the burden of the total removal of subsidy at one go. In order to provide a balance between reduction of subsidy and burden on the housewives, the Government decided to increase the ex-storage point price of LPG (Packed-Domestic) cylinder by Rs.30 per cylinder with effect from midnight of 22nd -23rd March, 2000.

As I mentioned earlier, ATF price cross-subsidises LPG (Packed-Domestic) and PDS kerosene. However, with the increase in the international prices of products, ATF, as on 22nd March, 2000, was being priced at Rs.1.06 less than its import parity price. It was, therefore, decided

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to increase the price of ATF also at the ex-storage point level by Rs.2.00 per litre with effect from midnight of 22nd-23rd March, 2000.

The increases in the prices that I have just now mentioned would bring to the oil pool Rs.3,440 crore per annum from PDS kerosene, Rs.1,660 crore per annum from LPG (Packed-Domestic) and Rs.320 crore per annum from ATF.

As per the Cabinet decision of September 1, 1997, selling price of diesel is required to be fixed on the principle of import parity. The retail prices of diesel in the country are already high. Considering the current level of prices of diesel and also because of abnormally high differential between the selling prices of diesel and PDS kerosene, it has been decided not to increase the diesel prices for the present. This has been done to protect the interest of diesel consumers which, inter alia, include farmers and passengers, goods transport, etc. MS is currently priced higher than its import parity price to cross subsidise PDS kerosene and LPG (Packed-Domestic). As per the Cabinet decision of November, 1997, selling price of petrol is to be moved towards import parity. For the present, selling price of MS is not being touched.

The recent OPEC decision to increase their oil production by 1.45 million barrels per day (excluding increase by Iran) has resulted in some decline in oil prices in the international market, which has to be viewed against the backdrop of the OPEC statement to review its decision by June, 2000. However, the large deficits which have already accumulated in the Oil Pool Account will have to be tackled only through price adjustments.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR): I have got some names. Let me finish those names. Mr. Santosh Bagrodia.

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA (Rajasthan): Sir, I would like to seek some clarifications. At page 2 of the statement, it has been stated by the Minister that the selling prices of Motor Spirit and Aviation Turbine Fuel would be moved towards import parity. Does it take it that there is a reduction because these prices are fluctuating quite a lot in the international market? If there is a reduction, can we get an assurance from the hon. Minister that the prices will be reduced on the same parity immediately or with a time limit? The next point which has been raised immediately after that is, the price of diesel would continue to be moved in line with international prices as per the

earlier Cabinet decision dated 1st September, 1997. Does it mean that there will be no subsidy on diesel from now onwards?

It has been stated at page four of the statement that this differential in prices is also contributing significantly to adulteration and black-marketing. This point is not clear to us. How is it contributing to adulteration and black-marketing because the reasons for adulteration are entirely different? The last point is at page 5 of the statement where the PDS kerosene price has been more than doubled. I wonder whether the hon. Minister will consider that though, as per the international prices, he has probably increased it to the same level, that was applicable to diesel and petrol and not to kerosene. It will be a great help to the poor people of the country if this price is reduced to Rs. Three or so. I cannot understand one point. On 22nd March or 23rd March, 2000, this increase has been introduced. The Parliament was in session before that. The second phase of the Budget Session has begun today. Why was it delayed till there was a recess of the Parliament? Why did you not take the Parliament into confidence before effecting this type of increase? Thank you.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR): Mr. Minister, I believe, you will prefer to hear all and then answer together. That will be better. We will have to extend the time of our sitting. Keeping that in mind, I request all of you to be very brief. Shri R. Margabandu.

SHRI R. MARGABANDU (Tamil Nadu): Sir, the main reason for cutting the subsidy and increasing the prices has been stated at page four of the statement. It has been stated that this differential in prices is also contributing significantly to adulteration and black marketing. So, due to these factors, the differential in prices has increased manifold. If it is true, it shows that the Government has not been able to control adulteration and black marketing. Effective action should be taken to control adulteration and black marketing. But, the Government, instead of controlling it, is burdening the poor people by increasing the prices of kerosene and LPG. These items are consumed by the common people whereas adulteration and black marketing is resorted to by a few people who indulge in these illegal activities. Instead of controlling the few people, you are adding so much burden on the common people. And you also said that in 1997, those decisions were taken. On 24th February, the Budget was presented. On the 17th April, the Session is convened again. But in the mid-night of 22nd

March or 23rd March, you had increased it suddenly! It badly affects the common man. You should have taken that into consideration. I strongly say that this Government will become unpopular if it imposes so much burden on the common man. It will only bring unpopularity to the Government. Bearing that aspect in mind, I appeal to the Government to see that the price should be reduced.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI (Kerala) : Sir, the hon. Minister was enthusiastically justifying the decrease in the subsidy on kerosene oil and the increase in the kerosene and oil prices. He was very categorical, but he was feeling guilty while making the statement. He wants to put the blame on the previous Government. If you refer to the first page, you will find an apologetic tone. At least, I could see that tone, and I hope, I can take advantage of the apologetic tone and request him to reconsider whatever he is very aggressively propagating, that by 2002 the entire subsidy will be eliminated. I think, that approach may not be helpful to the poor people who are really concerned.

You also said in the first paragraph that the international prices of crude oil were around Rs.3,210/- per tonne. I agree; that is correct. But if you calculate the whole thing by taking into account the total quantity of all the petroleum products produced in India, I believe that in respect of kerosene price, the approach followed by you is unrealistic. He has increased the petrol price, he has increased the diesel price, and he has increased the prices of other items, whatever they are, but if you take all those things in totality, the price of kerosene cannot be increased to that extent. That can be reduced. I want that kind of approach should be followed in that case; that kind of method should be applied in that case. Sir, the hon. Minister has made an elaborate statement. He has said that the only thing he has to explain to the House is that 2002 would be the cut-off date for taking away the subsidy on kerosene and the LPG. Secondly, will he consider his decision again? Sir, you would see that one of the excuses that has been given is--the hon. Minister made a statement, and some people and the media also wrote--that it is used for contaminating or mixing diesel and petrol. It is only seven per cent; I am not denying that. There may be a little pilferage or a little leakage in kerosene. That is only seven per cent. Sir, I had visited the rural areas in West Bengal. I could see that a lot of kerosene is used by the people. Sir, you know the RJD party. Their election symbol is a lantern, a kerosene lantern. Why has it chosen that symbol? It has chosen because

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kerosene is used in every house. It is not because that Laloo Yadav does not know about electricity, but he knows that this is the thing which the people understand so easily. Even though he is in jail, there also he is using a lantern. You know that, Sir. Please see the utility of kerosene. The people, particularly the poor people, in the country, are using it. Bombay is a big city. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA (Bihar): Sir, he said, "Although he is in jail, there also he is using the lantern." Sir, he should not be allowed to use those words.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Sir, it is only a joke in a lighter way.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR): We shall go into the party symbols like palms etc. afterwards. We shall stick to the subject.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Sir, I withdraw that comment. I withdraw that. I only wanted to show the importance of kerosene. I only wanted to show the importance of kerosene that is being used by the poor people. My intention was to show its importance. I am very sorry.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR): It was a figurative use.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Everybody knows the importance of kerosene. I only wanted to show the importance of kerosene which is used by the common people. That was my only intention. In that respect, I want to tell that even in the rural areas of Bombay--the hon. Minister may not be knowing it--it is commonly used. I make an appeal to you, and I seek a clarification whether you will retreat from your earlier statement. I don't want you to roll back the prices. Will you consider that 2002 shall not be a sacramental date for you to cut off the subsidy on kerosene, as it concerns the poor people, the common people and the people belonging to the middle class? In Delhi, in every house it is used. The demand for cooking gas is very heavy. In that respect, I would like to know whether you will consider this or not. The increase in the price has come as a lightning on the people. All of a sudden, you just increased the price by 50 - 60 - 100 per cent. Such an increase is a heavy burden on the people. Considering these facts,

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especially, keeping the hike in the price of kerosene in mind, will the hon. Minister reconsider his decision? In the first page of the statement, you said, 'I am only following in the footsteps of Mr. Deve Gowda and Mr. Gujaral.' Please, don't follow in their footsteps, but you take some steps which are pro-poor. Thank you.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE (West Bengal): Sir, the tragedy is that decisions in regard to the issues which affect the maximum number of people in this country are taken at a time when the Parliament is not in session. I am not questioning the intention of anybody. This has been the part and parcel of what we call democracy. Last year, we discussed an issue on the 29th of October, 1999. At that time also, the diesel price was hiked when the Parliament was not in session. And when the Parliament is in session, we have an eight-page statement. Sir, you rightly pointed out that we have only 2 - 3 minutes. There is an eight-page statement which involves eighty crore people, especially, the poorer people. So, I will put two or three questions. He will answer some questions, and he may not answer some of the questions. रात गई बात गई । And things will be over. But, still, if you will permit me, I will try to question each and every statement that has been given here. It really requires a lot of study. We require a serious discussion in this House, not only on this price rise issue, but also on the petroleum issue.

What is the major point? One is import parity. I understand that because of this, the price has increased. Another point is regarding the Oil Pool Account. I will not go into any debate. One thing I wanted to know is why he wanted to address that question before 22nd of March. Well, everyone knows it. I was only thanking Mr. Ramachandra Reddy, the Telugu Desam Leader, that he had civic elections there. At least, up to 22nd March, we were saved from this price hike. Everyone knows it. It is a well-known fact. Okay, that is all right. Now, even after the elections, if you still oppose it, then, I think that the real friend of the poor is not my friend.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR): Don't depart from your subject.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: I am departing, Sir. Otherwise, I would have put my point in this fashion that it is because of elections in Andhra Pradesh that the decision was taken after the Parliament session was over. Is it a fact? If it is not, then, let it be explained.

I now come to the Petroluem Sector. It was decided in 1997 when the price of crude oil was 18 dollars. And, I think, during September, 1999, it had come down to 11 dollars. Import parity is another thing. I don't understand it; so, I am leaving it. From 18 dollars the price came down to 11 dollars. How did you manage your Oil Industry Pool Account when the price had come down from 18 dollars to 11 dollars? Import parity means that your Oil Industry Pool Account should have been managed in such a manner that when the import price had come down to 11 dollars, you should have some account, some surplus to take care of this. Now, I will put a question. What was the decision taken in 1997? Even if the price was 18 dollars or 11 dollars, I would have followed it irrespective of the fact whether the poor people of this country can afford it or not. Do you still think that your's is a welfare state? Or, is it that this country is being run like a business company? Is it your policy? Can you say that? I have a very high regard for Mr. Ram Naik. He is a people's man. Can he talk as if he is an Accountant in a Company? Well, a decision was taken in 1997. The decision was taken two years back. Well, I don't know. It has now been increased to 30 per cent saying, 'I had to increase.' What about the Industrial Pool Account? Now, I will put a question. I don't have the newspaper now. I have some information for you, Sir. If you are so much bothered about the Industrial Pool Account, kindly confirm whether it is correct or not. There is deficit in the Industrial Pool Account. My question to the Government is: Is it a fact or not? I have a lot of reliance on the Minister. Does this Reliance Petroleum Limited Company, this 27 million tonnes plant, have a Central Sales Exemption of 4 per cent? If there is sales tax exemption of 4 per cent, then, the national oil companies will have to pay that tax while buying their product. My information is this. Would the Minister kindly confirm or rebut that OCC and the Government have accorded, in principle, approval to a proposal that one-third of the CST, Central Sales-Tax, shall be borne by the stand-alone refinery, one-third of the CST shall be passed on to the customers by way of surcharge by the State Governments and remaining one-third of the CST shall be passed on to the all-India customers? Now, on this one-third of the CST the Reliance has got exemption. Two-thirds of the CST shall be made by the natioanal oil companies to the RPL. They have to pay two-thirds. On this two-thirds, they will make the CST claim through the Oil Pool Account. Is it correct? Will the national oil companies be reimbursed the two-thirds of the CST by the Oil Pool Account? If that is the case, how much is the amount?

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If it is not true, I will stand corrected.

Regarding this Oil Pool Account problem, who is affected by this Oil Pool Account? I understand it is the public sector oil companies. They cannot buy. They don't have the money. Their liquidity position is bad. This question was raised on 29th October also. I didn't get a reply. Still I am asking this. You had a problem in the Oil Pool Account, whatever you say. Did you force these national oil companies, the IOC, the ONGC and the Gas Authority of India Ltd., in February, 1999--this question was raised here, but I have not got a reply so far-- to pay the Government an amount of Rs.5,000 crores? This is for cross-holding equity shares among themselves. The Government shares were sold to the ONGC and the money went to Mr. Yashwant Sinha's deficit Budget, not to the oil companies. As regards the cross-holding shares of the oil companies, they have to sell the shares to each other. An amount of Rs.5,000 crores from these national oil companies has gone to the Consolidated Fund of India, not to the oil sector. When you had such a deficit....

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: It is disinvestment.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: No, it is not disinvestment. It is equity swapping. It is not a private fellow. It is a Government of India company. The IOC buys the shares from the ONGC. The ONGC buys the shares from the IOC. *(Interruptions)*...Power sector is your sector, Sir. I am talking about the poor man's sector. The amount involved is Rs.5,000 crores. Why was it done? Where is this money? Why should a poor man pay for it? Was it all this that you were talking about the oil pool deficit?

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: This question doesn't arise. Where did the money come from?

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: It came from the Government of India.

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: It went to the Government of India.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: If you have a deficit, why do you charge? When the oil companies have a deficit of Rs.5,000 crores....*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN (Uttar Pradesh): It has not been done by this Government. *(Interruptions)*... We know full well how the Oil Pool

Account money has been used earlier. *(Interruptions)*... We know how it has been used to finance the deficit Budget. *(Interruptions)*... Why are you blaming this Government for all this? *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Let him answer. *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: I think you know it full well, Mr. Dipankar. *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI RAJU PARMAR (Gujarat): You convince the people. *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: It was the Congress Government and the Gujral Government which misused it and they used that money for other purposes. *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Which one? This amount of Rs.5,000 crores? *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: It was not done by this Government. This Government is trying to structure the economy. *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU (West Bengal): Sir, we are on a different point. *(Interruptions)*... This is too much. *(Interruptions)*... There is the Petroleum Minister. We can't allow this unauthorised proliferation of Petroleum Ministers. We know that this question hurts them. *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: It is not a question of hurting us. I say we are not misusing the funds. The funds were misused in the past by different Governments. *(Interruptions)*... You can't blame this Government for all the misuse. *(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR): Please, order. *(Interruptions)*... Please. *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: You can't blame this Government for any misuse of funds. It was done by the earlier Governments. *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: We are contesting the logic given in the statement by the Minister. *(Interruptions)*...

[17 April, 2000]

RAJYA SABHA

SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: The Minister will give the reply. *(Interruptions)*... I am not speaking on behalf of the Minister. *(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR): Please take your seat. *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: You cannot blame this Government for what was done in 1992 or 1997. *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: No, Sir. *(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR): You don't like this interruption.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: I like it. Otherwise, I will not have a coverage. At least, because of these interventions I will have some coverage in the Press. That is all right.

My point was that an amount of Rs.5,000 crores was with these companies. How much dividend are these companies paying to the Government? They are paying Rs.1,700 crores. The Railway Minister could defer the payment of dividend so that the fares are not increased. Why can't you do it? It was only because you don't have an election within one year in Maharashtra. Why can't you defer the payment of dividend by the oil companies? Some money will be there. Save it for one year. What about the Oil Industry Development Act? Shri Ahluwalia was also speaking about it when he was sitting on this side. He has heard. That time you were here and Mr. Satish Aggarwal was speaking from there. He was charging Prime Minister Shri Deve Gowda on his face. The Oil Industrial Development Account, Rs. 32,000 crores.. *(Interruptions)*

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR): Mr. Mukherjee.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE : Sir, this is the figure. Sir, I am speaking from what BJP has spoken from here. *(Interruptions)*

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR): Mr. Mukherjee, you are making... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE : Rs. 32,000 crores are there under the Oil Industrial Development Fund. Where is that fund? How much

money has been given to the Oil Companies? What is the Act? My demand to the Government is, where is that Act under which this cess of Rs.32,000 crores was collected? Out of Rs.32,000 crores only Rs.902 crores have been given to the oil sector. When it was not being used for the improvement and development of oil sector, this cess should have been withdrawn. I think someone among them, I know there was a group within them, they were opposing it. Let them come out. Why should the cess not be removed? You are talking of import parity. The cess was put in 1974. The conditions then were different. Now the conditions are different. You should remove that cess. My last point is, if this goes on, how long will we have to be dependent on that crude international price? Should we not think about some sort of other alternative to crude oil, I mean, more production? You are talking about Shri Deve Gowda's decision. At that time a decision was taken to bring the Energy Conservation Bill. What has happened to that Bill? That we do not remember. That is the policy whether of this Government or that Government, for the people of the country. What happened to that Energy Conservation Bill? You cannot go on having consumption on the basis of imports. I think, Mr. Ram Naik must review it. Otherwise there is no idea of talking here. कुछ काम करके आप यहां से जाइए, फिर किसी प्वाइंट का जवाब देने की जरूरत नहीं है। Why have only a theoretical discussion? You should reduce something. That should be the only contribution, that should, I think, be the little respect shown to this House, if you reduce something and go out from here. So far as imports are concerned, you are saying that prices are already reduced. Why are you waiting for that? You link up your index with that index. As and when the oil price comes down, consumers will get a relief. Why should we wait for that? Why should not have an immediate index with that? This is an absolute injustice we are doing to the people of the country. This discussion must reduce something. Then only अहलुवालिया जी आए हैं राज्य सभा में। उनको भी तो कुछ बोलना पड़ेगा जाकर कि मैंने यहां जाकर दस पैसे कम कराए हैं, बीस पैसे कम कराए हैं। यहां हम लोग बकते गए, बोलते गए। कुछ हुआ? थैंक्यू।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR): Shri Suresh Keshwani. Please remember there are six more speakers and it is already 5.15.

SHRI SURESH A. KESWANI (Maharashtra): If he is willing to roll back, then I do not have much to speak. The point I am trying to make is very simple. The entire mechanism of crude oil import and administered prices is

something which is not connected with each other directly. Nobody has taken into account or assessed correctly, as to what is the cost of manufacturing petrol, what is the cost of manufacturing diesel, what is the cost of manufacturing kerosene, etc. We are importing crude oil. Our crude oil import bill is supposedly going up. We are freely distributing various end products at administered prices, without realising as to what product has what end-use, to which sector of the economy it goes, what productive purpose it serves and what is the total energy production and yield to the nation. How are we doing all this? If we do not realise, if we do not grasp that the increase in price of kerosene from Rs.2 to Rs.5 is immediately going to push the poorest of the poor, who comprise 50% of this nation, to alternate modes of fuel, what will happen to the ecological balance of our country? How much losses are going to be incurred by the nation as a result of what is happening here? Are we taking some kind of conscious decisions? I have seen here what has been done in the past. I am also familiar with what a long speech Mr. Chidambaram had given explaining to us what is the Oil Pool Account, what is what! Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, my humble submission is this. If we are having a regime of administered prices, that means we are talking about social responsibility, we are talking about using this imported scarce material worth Rs. 57,000 crores in a manner which produces maximum produce capacity and maximum energy yield for the country. How are we using this imported product? Does anybody realize as to what kind of trucks we are plying on the roads? What kind of gas guzzlers are we preparing for our cars? What is happening to the nation? There is no responsibility. Is this not the responsibility of the Petroleum Ministry? What end use to the products on which various prices are fixed is being put to? The Minister feels very happy in saying that he went to some fora in an air-conditioned five star hotel and addressed various people and obtained their assent that there was no increase in the prices of petrol and diesel. Does he realize where this country lives? How can he do this? Mr. Minister, do you have some sense of responsibility? You are a man who is representing the poorest of the poor people in Bombay. I know you have been championing their cause day in and day out. In all the election speeches which he delivered, he had talked about a variety of bootpolish walas and a number of other people whom he has rehabilitated. How many coolies has he rehabilitated? But he totally forgets as to what devastating effect this is going to have on the budget of the housewives of the poorest of the poor men in the country. I think we need to

have a structured debate on the whole issue. As Shri Dipankar Mukherjee has said, this is not the time when we should go on pointing out various intricacies which are involved here starting from production of various products to excise duty structure, sales tax structure, various facilities granted to various houses, the policy which has undergone changes and what end-result it is going to have, how are we benefiting certain selected sections by choosing to put this kind of duty structure, etc. I do not want to name anybody. I do not want to say anything about anybody. I think we are not behaving in a very responsible manner. The Government should do something immediately to undo the injustice which they are doing in the name of Shri Deve Gowda and Shri I.K. Gujaral. I think they should do something in the name of Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee who will have to hang his head in shame if this is what goes through. Thank you.

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI (Tamil Nadu): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, the statement, I feel, is a little bit incomprehensive. It is incomprehensive in the sense that it does not mention the figures of consumption of items like petrol, diesel, kerosene and LPG. By merely adjusting the prices, we cannot solve the problem. What we are doing in the production side within the country, has not been mentioned in the statement. Last year, we did not expect that the prices will go up in the international market. If the prices again go up in the next one or two years, how will we confront the issue? What is in their mind, they have not mentioned it in the statement. So far as the prices are concerned, I would like to refer to page 6 of the statement. The Minister says, "As I mentioned earlier, ATF price cross subsidises LPG (Packed-domestic) and PDS kerosene. However, with the increase in the international prices of products, ATF, as on 22nd March, 2000, was being priced at Rs. 1.06 less than its import parity price. It was, therefore, decided to increase the price of ATF also at the ex-storage point level by Rs. 2/- per litre with effect from midnight of 22nd -23rd March, 2000." Then you come to page 7. It is said, 'Motor Spirit is currently priced higher than its import parity price to cross subsidise PDS kerosene and LPG. As per the Cabinet decision of November, 1997, selling price of petrol is to be moved towards import parity. For the present, selling price of MS is not being touched.' That clearly says that the selling price of MS is not being touched. In the previous sentence, you have mentioned that the price is higher than its import parity price. But how much higher? You have not mentioned it. The rise may be 3 paise or 5 paise. That also is 'higher'. If it is

Rs. 1.50 or Rs.3, that also is 'higher.' That is why we want to know as to what it is. With regard to ATF, only some naya paise is the increase. But motor spirit is not touched by you at all. For kerosene, you say that the rise is from Rs. 2 to Rs. 4.50. The Kerala Chief Minister, Mr. Nayanar, has said in a statement that the rise is from Rs.2.80 to Rs. 5.80. Which statement is correct? Whether the observation made by the Chief Minister of Kerala is wrong, or, the information provided in your statement is wrong? This fact is to be made public through this august House.

Sir, apart from this, an hon. Member mentioned about the Tata Consultancy. In the statement, there is a reference to checking adulteration and black marketing. I feel, this statement was made in 1994. This does not mean that I am justifying it, but black marketing and adulteration is happening continuously.

For kerosene, according to your statement, you have raised it from Rs. 2 to Rs.4.50. What I suggest is, those who are using ATF can bear some more burden. As far as the motor spirit is concerned, I feel, instead of putting pressure on kerosene users, why can't you make an enhancement and adjust there instead of on kerosene? Is there any possibility of increasing the domestic production further? There too we can adjust it. We would like to know on these too.

At pages 6 & 7, what is said is on kerosene price. With regard to the LPG, you made a projection that such and such amount is to be shelled out from our pocket. Is this projection made on the assumption that will be an increase in the use of cylinders by one crore, or, it is what we are using now or what is being sold in the market, as it is? From the statement, it is not been clear. Therefore, we want to know about the projection made. Is the cylinder subsidy you have made on the basis of real consumption, which is now taking place in the market, or it is on the basis of an assumption - by increasing it by a crore more. We want to know.

Apart from these, at page 6, part 2, it is said, 'The increases in the prices that I have just now mentioned would bring to the oil pool Rs. 3,440 crore per annum from PDS kerosene, Rs.1,660 crore per annum from LPG and Rs.320 crore per annum from ATF.' Is it a fact that you are going to get more money than you have projected here? This has not been mentioned. We want to know on that. We would also like to know the consumption in these three - diesel, MS and ATF. What is the domestic production? Are you

thinking of increasing the domestic production so as to offset what we are paying as foreign exchange? I hope, the hon. Minister would reply on this. Is there any possibility to adjust the subsidy *via* MS spirit and ATF and lessen the burden on kerosene users? With these words, I conclude. Thank you.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE (West Bengal): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to one particular aspect and seek his clarifications on two other issues. In the second para of the first part of the statement at page one he has started by saying, "Based on a decision taken during the Government led by Shri P. V. Narasimha Rao, an Expert Technical Group (ETG) was appointed on 25th June, 1996..." Sir, the P. V. Narasimha Rao Government demitted office on 15th May, 1996. In a layman's reading, it would mean that on 25th June, 1996, the P.V. Narasimha Rao Government appointed this Committee. You enquire from the whole House that would be the meaning of this paragraph of this statement. Therefore, what I am saying is that this statement is not honest. This statement wants to mislead. The Minister himself is not convinced about the necessity of enhancing the prices of petroleum products. If somebody is convinced about his own reasons, of the necessity, of the need of economy, he would not like to take cover under others, what the previous Government did, what Deve Gowda did or what P.V. Narasimha Rao did. If the Minister himself is convinced that there is a fit economic case to enhance the prices of petroleum products and the level of subsidy he cannot bear, the exchequer cannot bear, then he should come to this House and tell frankly, "Look, gentlemen, this is my conviction and that is why I have done it." My contention is that he is the Government, the people have given him the mandate to run the Government and not take excuses and shelter under what this Government would have done or what that Government would have done. This is the disturbing part of it. He himself has admitted in the statement that since 1991 kerosene price was not increased. It was not increased because of the very fact that we have not yet been able to provide electricity to a large number of consumers. It was considered necessary that kerosene subsidy is needed. There is no denying the fact that distortions in prices between kerosene and diesel have increased enormously and as a result there is adulteration. But, it is equally a fact that this is such an item where it was considered necessary that subsidies are to be given and subsidies were maintained since 1991 to 1996 during our regime. Sir, in a case like this, if you look at any subsidy or any items which are subsidised, you can find a

case in favour and a case against. Repeatedly on the floor of this House both myself and Dr. Sahib are requesting the Government that for God's sake do not go by *ad hoc* decision-making process, do not go by adhocism but on the whole spectrum of subsidy kindly try to evolve a consensus. One would agree perhaps that this country cannot afford to have 14 to 15 per cent of its GDP going to the subsidy. But, it is equally the country's concern that in certain areas subsidies are essential. Therefore, the best course for the Government would have been to take an integrated holistic view, consider all aspects of the subsidy and the Government could have come. But it has not been done. He has said that cross subsidies are being used. Revenues from motor spirit and aviation fuel are being used to meet the cost of subsidy on kerosene and diesel. The whole system is not operationalised. It is always a debatable point that subsidies should come straightaway from the Exchequer; hidden subsidies, cross-subsidies, implicit subsidies should be avoided, as far as possible. What prevented the Government from taking a holistic view? Petroleum products are there. Food products are there. Somebody may consider that our food subsidies are essentially concerned with the concept of food security. Therefore, it may not be compromised, but the same person may like to agree that in certain areas, you can cut subsidies, and the arrangements could have become nil. But it is not there.

The third point is, if I remember correctly, the hon. Minister, while replying to a debate in the other House, assured the House that he is not going to enhance the price of kerosene. Whether it is correct or not? Whether I was wrongly informed? If my information is correct, it would have been better on his part not to announce it when Parliament was not in session. If he has given that assurance to that House, he should have gone to that House and informed the House that, "sorry, the situation is such that I will have to change my decision and I am going to do that." This is the normal parliamentary practice which we follow. I am not going to say that all the administered price increased should, necessarily, be brought before the House for approval, because it is the administered price and administered price increases have, sometimes, been announced before the presentation of Budget, and it is not related to the Budget. But if you have given an assurance to the other House, you should fulfil it. Even if you cannot fulfil that assurance, that House should receive the first information. At least, this minimum courtesy should be extended to them.

The last point is, there was an arrangement that there would be a

variation in the domestic prices whenever there was a fluctuation in the international prices. Now, if my information is correct, diesel prices - not of all items - at the international level are coming down. In reply to a question, you yourself has stated that during the period of time - I think the question was answered sometime in the month of December last year - nine times the prices were increased, and six times the prices were reduced, depending on the variation in the international prices and the linkage that we have with that. The perennial question that remains, that we debated, during the last session and earlier also, is, if the periodical adjustments had taken place with the enhancement of the prices in the international market, it would have been correct. But, by one go you are not to enhance the price so steeply. That you did not do. During the whole period of April, 1999 to September, 1999, the price adjustment did not take place though the international prices were moving upwards. Everybody knew that the Oil Pool Account was getting reduced. Newspapers made comments. But, for full six months, you did not make any adjustment because the elections were coming. Therefore, you took advantage of it and did not make any adjustment. So, you are trying to justify the policy decision which you took, in the first two pages of the statement. You are just trying to justify that you are just continuing the policy decision which was taken by the earlier Government. The earlier Government might have thought of it but they did not implement it. At least, our Government did not appoint this Committee. If the Committee was formally notified, I will demand, "please place the decision of the Cabinet on the Table of the House." But, I cannot demand this because Cabinet document is a classified document. What is the purpose and what message you want to convey by saying, "Based on the decision taken during the Government led by Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao, an Expert Technical Group (ETG) was appointed on 25th June, 1996..."? I have no way of verifying the authenticity of the statement. I will have to go only by his words because he cannot place a decision of the Cabinet or a Cabinet paper on the floor of the House. On the other hand, the fact is, Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao's Government demitted office on 15th May and not on 25th June. Therefore, I will advise the Minister to avoid this type of cheap tricks. I will consider it as cheap tricks and it smacks of dishonesty. Thank you.

SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I am grateful to the hon. Minister that he has made a *suo motu* statement on this very important issue. (*Interruptions*) It is an important issue because no

country can afford open-ended subsidies to the extent of thousands and thousands of crores of rupees. After all, there has to be somewhere some restriction. Moreover, it was the decision of the previous Government, but they did not have the courage to follow the right policy. My friend, Shri Pranab Mukherjee, is correct when he says that there should be a consensus on subsidy. There should be a structured debate on subsidy. Well, the Leader of the Opposition is here, if he demands a structured debate on subsidy, I think, this Government will concede to it. This is my personal view. But, I feel the need is that as per this statement, this House should examine whether the country should continue with the old prices of kerosene, etc., and the Minister should roll back - as my friend, Keswani, was saying - the prices, or, it should continue with what he has done. After all, how can we afford a subsidy of Rs. 30,000 crores? Rs. 26,000 crores has already been provided in the coming Budget against subsidies. Now, the total revenue of the Government of India is Rs. 1,88,000. That's all! That is the total revenue! Out of that how much do you want to spend on subsidy? So, through this *suo motu* statement a very glaring problem has been brought to the notice of this august House. It is not a question of subsidy only on kerosene or diesel. It is a question of subsidy in total - subsidy on foodstuffs, subsidy on power, hidden subsidy, etc. All these things have to be looked into by this august House, by this Government, by the people of India. *(Interruptions)* Including newsprint, of course. Newsprint is not subsidised. So, Sir, the most important point on which I would request the hon. Minister to enlighten me is as to who are the maximum consumers of kerosene. Has an attempt has been made to segregate them? The poorest of the poor must be looked after. We cannot overlook their problems. But, what is happening is, the subsidised kerosene is not going to the targeted section of the poor. It is going in the black market. No doubt, about four or five years back, the Tata Consultancy had submitted a report. But even after that report had been published, nothing has been done for the last four or five years by any Government. *(Interruptions)*

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR): Please do not interrupt. Let us have an uninterrupted discussion.

SHRI JIBON ROY (West Bengal): Sir, I am only helping him.

SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Thank you, Mr. Jibon Roy. So, Sir, the point is that the Minister should tell us as to who are the consumers

and whether he can really do something to protect them at least in future. Those poorest of the poor really need kerosene. As per this statement, this Government stands committed that by the end of March 2002, the administered prices mechanism will go, and, I would say, the market forces will prevail. Is it correct? If the market forces are going to prevail on kerosene and on diesel, then perhaps the poorest of the poor is going to be neglected. We cannot leave the poorest of the poor at the hands of the market forces. Has he got some device on that front? I request the Minister to give us a clear idea as to what is going on in his mind. What long-term strategy is he thinking of to protect and hedge the poorest of the poor? After all, they need to be hedged and protected. Certainly, the kerosene oil, the diesel oil is going to the black market. How it is to be checked? Now, one can say that the Government of India cannot do much about it. It is because the State Governments' mechanism comes into play. I would like to know whether any attempt has been made by advising and compelling the State Governments to stop this black-market. How many blackmarketeers have been arrested? Will the Minister come to the House with some figures? Will he be able to tell us as to who are those State Governments which have taken some serious steps to stop this black-marketing of kerosene and diesel? How many arrests have been made during the last one or two years? Why is there no direct attempt? If he is facing any problem he should definitely take the House into confidence. The other point that I would like to make is about the cost of production. The cost of production in India is definitely not up to the international standard. Whatever Indian refineries are producing, their cost of production is very high which ultimately affects the price of kerosene, price of diesel and others. Now, I would like to know as to what steps he has taken to see that the cost of production of petroleum products in India is of the international level. We will always be in short supply of petroleum and kerosene. We have to import, but still we can raise our production. What are the plans and policies of the Government to increase the production of kerosene and diesel in India? I would like to know whether any new refineries are coming up. I know only one refinery is coming up, and that is in Haldia. How much more time the Minister will take to set the ball at the right path? The basic price of P.D.S. kerosene has not changed since 25th July, 1991. But now, he has increased it. Will he like to say that he will increase it further? Has he something in mind that he is going to link it with the international price index or the consumer price index? He can declare

that there is a direct linkage of the Indian oil prices with the international prices of crude oil. If the prices of the crude oil in international market go up, the prices in India will also go up; and if they go down, the prices here will also go down. But there is no such clear cut policy statement. I would like to know as to what is going on in his mind. Whether he is willing to clearly declare about the linkage of the Indian oil prices with the international crude prices. Now, Sir, the last point is regarding the gas cylinder. The subsidy of Rs.162 per cylinder is there. Now, In India, basically every household is demanding these gas cylinders. Has he estimated the demand of these gas cylinders in the next five years? If the present subsidy remains, what would be the amount of subsidy on the gas cylinder? I would like to know whether he has in mind to remove even this subsidy in later days. He should tell us whether by 2002, the subsidy on gas cylinders will also go. These are the couple of points which I would like to seek, through you, Sir, from him. Thank you, Sir.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR) : Mr. Rama Shanker Kaushik, we are nearing 5.45 p.m. There are three more speakers to speak. I am prepared to sit as long as you desire.

श्री रमा शंकर कौशिक (उत्तर प्रदेश): श्रीमन मुझे तो थोड़े ही समय बात करनी है। मुझे तो 2-4 बातें ही आपके माध्यम से इस सरकार के पास पहुंचानी हैं।

पहली बात तो यह है कि सरकार ने यह बहुत गलत रवैया अपनाया। संसदीय व्यवस्था की जो प्रोप्राइटी है उसका उल्लंघन किया। पार्लियामेंट अनिश्चित काल के लिए बंद नहीं थी - न लोक सभा और न राज्य सभा और उस बीच में सरकार का इस ढंग का इतना बड़ा कदम उठाना, यह संसदीय व्यवस्था की प्रोप्राइटी नहीं है। इस पर तो हमेशा ही ध्यान रखा जाता रहा है कि जब पार्लियामेंट सेशन में हो, अनिश्चित काल के लिए न उठी हो, उस स्थिति में ऐसे बड़े कदम सरकार को नहीं उठाने चाहिए और पार्लियामेंट में लाकर ही इन बातों को करना चाहिए। वैसे तो श्रीमन, अब बजट की सारी व्यवस्था को ही छिन्न-भिन्न कर दिया गया है। श्रीमन, बजट का मतलब पहले यह होता था कि साल भर का बजट है चाहे वह घर का मामला हो, चाहे गृहस्थियों का मामला हो चाहे सरकार के कामों का मामला हो क्योंकि ऐसा नहीं है कि इस प्रकार से बीच-बीच में बिना बिजट के या बजट पेश हो जाने के पश्चात् किसी भी मामले में अगर किसी भी चीज पर कीमतें बढ़ायी या घटायी जाती तो सरकार की स्कीमों पर उसका असर नहीं पड़ता। केवल घरों पर ही असर नहीं पड़ता - वह तो पड़ता ही पड़ता है लेकिन सरकार की स्कीमों और सरकार के

कामों पर भी उसका असर पड़ता है।

दूसरी बात, मुझे यह निवेदन करनी है कि आयल पूल एकाउंट के घाटे की बात की जाती है और उसको कैसे पूरा किया जाए या उसको कैसे कम रखा जाए इस पर सरकार को चिंता होती है। वैसे सरकार के पूरे इस स्टेटमेंट में ऐसे कारण दिए गए हैं जो यह सिद्ध नहीं करते कि सरकार की असली मंशा क्या है। कुछ बताते ही नहीं हैं क्योंकि सरकार ने दूसरी सरकारों के ऊपर, जो पिछली सरकारें थीं उनके ऊपर डाला है, ब्लैक मार्किटिंग के ऊपर डाला है - चूंकि कैरोसिन तेल की ब्लैक मार्किटिंग होती है इसलिए हम इसको बढ़ा रहे हैं। ऐसा मालूम होता है। कभी-कभी यह मालूम होता है कि जो आयल पूल का घाटा है उसको वे कम करना चाहते हैं। कभी यह मालूम होता है कि चूंकि पिछली सरकारों ने वैसा किया इसलिए हम ऐसा कर रहे हैं। तो यह बिल्कुल अनिश्चितता की स्थिति सरकार को नहीं रखनी चाहिए। दो-टुक सीधी-सी बात कहनी चाहिए कि हम इस कारण से इसको बढ़ा रहे हैं और इस प्रकार से हम गरीबों पर बोझ डाल रहे हैं।

श्रीमन्, दीपांकर मुखर्जी ने बहुत सी बातें इस आयल पूल एकाउंट के घाटे को कम करने की रखा कि जैसे हम दूसरी इंडस्ट्रीज को देते हैं उसी प्रकार से गरीबों के लिए भी हम कुछ कर सकते थे। मैं सरकार से यह पूछना चाहता हूं कि क्या गरीबों के लिए हम यह नहीं कर सकते थे?

कीमतों के बढ़ने से हमारा सीमा शुल्क भी बढ़ जाता है जो इस सरकार को प्राप्त होता है। वह सैकड़ों करोड़ रुपए की संख्या में होता है। हजारों करोड़ का भी हो तो कोई आश्चर्य नहीं। हजारों करोड़ भी हो सकता है। यह सरकार देख ले। माननीय मंत्री जी इस बात को देख लें। जब आयल के प्राइसेज बढ़ते हैं तो आपकी सरकार का सीमा शुल्क का पैसा भी बढ़ता है। वह भी सैकड़ों, हजारों करोड़ रुपए में हो सकता है - जैसे जैसे उसकी कीमतें बढ़ती हैं। सरकार ने 340 उन चीजों पर तो सीमा शुल्क की छूट दे दी जो गरीबों के इस्तेमाल की नहीं हैं जो हमारे उपभोग की वस्तुएं नहीं हैं। लिपिस्टिक पर दे दी, बढ़िया तेल पर दे दी, बढ़िया साबुन पर दे दी। 340 चीजों पर सरकार ने आयात शुल्क का खात्मा कर दिया। क्या आयल पर जो हमारे गरीबों की आवश्यकता है उस पर नहीं खत्म किया जा सकता था? तब आपका आयल पूल घाटा भी उतना नहीं हो सकता था, वह भी बहुत कम या नीचे चला जाता। आप गरीबों की बात करते हैं, यह सरकार गरीबों की बात करती है और गरीबों के लिए यह भी नहीं कर सकती जबकि 340 ऐसी चीजों पर उसने आयात शुल्क पर छूट दे दी, आयात शुल्क खत्म कर दिया जिनका उपभोग किया जाता है जो आवश्यक नहीं हैं जो हमारे देश में भी पैदा होती हैं और जो

बड़े लोगों के इस्तेमाल की हैं, जो हमारी लग्जरी के लिए हैं, आवश्यक नहीं है, ऐसी चीजों पर कर दिया तो इस पर नहीं सोच सकते थे? इसलिए सरकार को सोचना चाहिए कि अगर आप वाकई गरीबों का भला करना चाहते हैं, आप अपनी असफलता को छिपाने के लिए यह बात मत कहिए कि ब्लैक-मॉर्केटिंग हो रही है, ब्लैक-मॉर्केटिंग को क्यों नहीं रोका जाता, क्यों नहीं रोकते? रोकिए उसको और उसको रोकने की अपनी असमर्थता पर आप बजाय इसके कि उस पर कोशिश करते, आप गरीबों पर बोझ डालने के लिए तैयार हैं। मेरा सरकार से और माननीय मंत्री जी से निवेदन है कि, क्योंकि कूड आयल की कीमतें भी इंटरनेशनल मार्केट में कम हुई हैं, इस पर भी विचार करते हुए इस घाटे को कम किया जा सकता है और यह जो बढ़ोत्तरी केरोसिन आयल के दाम में है, उसको खत्म किया जा सकता है। दूसरा सीमा शुल्क से जो अतिरिक्त आय होती है कीमतें बढ़ने से, उसको भी इस पूल में डालिए और गरीबों की जान को बचाइये, गरीबों का हित कीजिए। यही निवेदन करके मैं अपनी बात खत्म करता हूँ।

श्री एस. एस. अहलुवालिया : उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, पेट्रोलियम मिनिस्टर द्वारा दिया गया वक्तव्य और उस पर खास करके केरोसिन तेल और एलपीजी की कीमतें जो बढ़ी हैं, वैसे तो और भी बहुत सारी चीजों की कीमतें बढ़ी हैं, किंतु मैं अपने आपको इसी पर सीमित रखता हूँ। केरोसिन तेल के बारे में सब के सब लोग इसलिए गंभीर हो जाते हैं क्योंकि यह गरीबों के उपयोग में आता है। कहीं लालटेन जलाने की जरूरत पड़ती है तो कहीं स्टोव जलाने की जरूरत पड़ती है। उसका ध्यान मंत्री महोदय को रखना चाहिए और मेरे ख्याल से वह रखेंगे भी। पर केरोसिन तेल का जितना हिरसा हम चाहते हैं कि गरीबों के घर में दिबरी जलाने के लिए और लालटेन जलाने के काम आए, तो उससे ज्यादा चोर-बाजारी के माध्यम से यह इंडस्ट्रियल यूज में चला जाता है और ट्रॉलर व स्पीड बोट चलाने के लिए सब से ज्यादा जाता है। साथ में जितने डोमेस्टिक जेनरेटर हैं, उनमें इसका प्रयोग होता है। आवाज़ वहीं से उठ रही है, इफैक्ट उन्हीं को हो रहा है। दिबरी जलाने वालों की आवाज़ को तो यहां पहुंचने में वक्त लगता है। पर ट्रॉलर अगर रुक जाए, स्पीड बोट्स रुक जाएं, जेनरेटर सेट्स रुक जाएं, तो उनकी आवाज़ तुरंत पहुंचती है। उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, वैसे तो बारिश अगर न हो और पहाड़ों पर बर्फ न गले तो शायद इस देश के जितने दरिया और नदियां हैं, वे सूख जाएं और उसके बाद समुद्र भी सूख जाएं। यह तो भारत के राजकोष की बात है, राज सहायता की बात है। अगर उसको लाभ न हो और वापस किसी तरह से पैसा न आए, तो राज सहायता कहीं न कहीं रुक जाएगी। मैं समझता हूँ कि अभी आदरणीय प्रणब मुखर्जी साहब भी कह रहे थे, उनकी मंशा भी यही थी कि मोडस ओपरेंडी जो है मतलब यह दाम बढ़ाने का, वह गलत

हो सकता है, आपने हमारे से सलाह नहीं की, किंतु दाम बढ़ने पर ज्यादा विरोध नहीं है, क्योंकि वह भी वित्त मंत्री रह चुके हैं, हमारे आदरणीय मनमोहन सिंह जी भी बैठे हैं, वित्त मंत्री जी रह चुके हैं, आज अगर वित्त मंत्री ये रहें तो आज यही अवस्था इनके सामने भी आएगी और राज सहायता पर कहीं न कहीं अंकुश लगाना पड़ेगा। ये निर्णय हमारे पूर्व मंत्रालयों के रहे हैं, उनका रुपायण किया गया है। मैं मंत्री महोदय से जानना चाहूंगा कि क्या आपने कोई सर्वे किया है कि असल में कितने केरोसिन तेल की, गरीबों को डिबरी जलाने के लिए या लालटेन जलाने के लिए जरूरत होती है और उससे कितनी ज्यादा मात्रा पर केरोसिन तेल दुकानों पर पहुंचता है या पी.डी.एस. में पहुंचता है, जो स्पीड बोट्स, ट्रॉलर्स और इंडस्ट्रियल यूज के लिए जाता है ? मेरा दूसरा सवाल मंत्री महोदय से घरेलू एल.पी.जी. के बारे में है। उन्होंने कहा कि 162 रुपये प्रति सिलेंडर राज सहायता मिलती थी, उसमें उसका शायद 15 परसेंट अभी बढ़ा कर 30 रुपये बढ़ाया गया। 30 रुपए एल0पी0जी0 गैस सिलेंडर की कीमत बढ़ाई गई है। क्या मंत्री महोदय ने इस बात का भी सर्वे करवाया है कि वाकई हमें घरेलू परपज के लिए कितने एल0पी0जी0 सिलेंडर लगते हैं ? महोदय, मैं बहुत अच्छी तरह से जानता हूं कि इस गैस का प्रयोग बहुत बड़ी मात्रा में तीन जगह किया जा रहा है। एक तो होटल इंडस्ट्री में, दूसरे इंडस्ट्रियल परपज जैसे गैस कटिंग के काम में लाया जा रहा है। महोदय, गुजरात के इलाके में शिप ब्रेकिंग यार्ड बनाने में सभी जगह इस का प्रयोग हो रहा है और तीसरे ऑटोमोबाइल्स में आजकल इस गैस का प्रयोग शुरू हो गया है जबकि कम्प्रेसड नेचुरल गैस के प्रयोग के लिए सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने अपनी जजमेंट भी दी है। मैं जानना चाहूंगा कि क्या मंत्री महोदय ने एल0पी0जी0 के ऑटोमोबाइल में प्रयोग पर अंकुश लगाने के लिए कोई कदम उठाया है ? एल0पी0जी0 घरेलू काम के लिए प्रयोग में आए उस पर कोई आपत्ति नहीं है। महोदय, मैं मंत्री महोदय से यह भी जानना चाहूंगा कि अब तक डॉमेस्टिक कंज्यूमर्स की संख्या क्या है और कितने डॉमेस्टिक कंज्यूमर्स सभी कंपनीज के पास वेटिंग लिस्ट में हैं और ऐसे वेटिंग लिस्ट वाले कंज्यूमर्स की संख्या को निल करने में कितना समय लगेगा ? यही मेरे कुछ सवाल हैं जिन के जवाब मैं मंत्री महोदय से चाहूंगा। धन्यवाद।

SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY (Andhra Pradesh):

Mr. Vice-Chairman, I thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak on the statement made by the Petroleum Minister. I fully understand the contention of the hon. Minister that the prices of kerosene and LPG are largely dependent on international prices. But I would remind the Government and this august House that this Government also has a social commitment towards the poorest of the poor in the country. Therefore, this trend in the

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RAJYA SABHA

6 P.M.

international price has to be balanced with our social commitment also. I wish, this Government is more popular with the poor people, particularly, with the people living below the poverty line.

Sir, as per the statement of the hon. Minister, the Tata Economic Consultancy Services have carried out a study and revealed in 1994 -- I lay stress on the year -- that about 30 per cent of the PDS kerosene was diverted to other uses. From 1994 to 2000, six years have elapsed. I want to know from the hon. Minister -- though the Minister himself is not responsible, this Government alone is not responsible for the increase in the price of petroleum products, there were other Governments also at the Centre -- what steps have been taken by the Minister to curb the adulteration and blackmarketing in petroleum products in the last six years and the results achieved? How many persons have been booked? How many persons have been arrested? How many persons have been punished? If action had been taken against the persons who indulged in adulteration and blackmarketing, I think, this situation would not have arisen. The price of kerosene which is being used by the poorest of the poor would not have risen. I want a specific answer from the Minister with regard to the action taken in the last six years by the previous Governments as well as by this Government.

In Andhra Pradesh, our Government has introduced a very novel scheme expanding the LPG connections to the poorest of the poor, people living below the poverty line and the DWACRA group. LPG connections to ten lakh people have been sanctioned. Our Government has already given LPG connections to two lakh people. We are very grateful and thankful to the hon. Minister and to the Government of India for agreeing to this proposal. I would request the hon. Minister to continue to give subsidy to the poorest of the poor in Andhra Pradesh where this novel scheme has been introduced. I urge upon the Minister to continue the subsidy in Andhra Pradesh at the same level which was available to them before. We have already requested the Government of India to accede to our request.

श्री रमा शंकर कौशिक : पूरे देश में नहीं ?

SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY : Because it has been introduced only in Andhra Pradesh. Our Andhra Pradesh Government has taken care of the poorest of the poor, the downtrodden people and

DWARCA group. Nowhere in India DWARCA groups are found in large numbers such as in Andhra Pradesh.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR): Let them not provoke you.

SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Just a few minutes back, our Food Minister informed the House that PDS sugar will not be made available to income-tax assesseees. I would urge upon the Minister to think over and not to release these subsidised gas cylinders to income-tax assesseees. By that way also, the hon. Minister can reduce this hike to some extent. That is my feeling. Therefore, I urge upon the hon. Minister to consider these aspects, particularly, LPG connections and kerosene.

With these words, I thank you very much, Mr. Vice-Chairman.

DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA (West Bengal): Sir, it is now 6 o'clock. I request you to call it a day.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR): I had asked about it at 5 o'clock. Mr. Gandhi Azad is the last speaker. After that, the Minister will give the reply.

DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA: If one goes by the statement, the reply will be even longer.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR) : Since it is such an important subject over which all the hon. Members, cutting across party lines, are agitated, let us have a little more patience. Let us have the reply.

DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA : I request you to have it tomorrow, Sir.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR) : We will take the sense of the House. Let the last speaker complete. I will take the sense of the House later. Mr. Gandhi Azad.

श्री गांधी आज़ाद (उत्तर प्रदेश) : उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, माननीय मंत्री जी द्वारा जो बयान दिया गया है पेट्रोलियम प्रॉडक्ट्स की कीमतों में वृद्धि के बारे में, उसके मुताबिक मिट्टी के तेल की कीमत 2 रुपए प्रति लीटर से बढ़ाकर 4.50 रुपए प्रति लीटर कर दी गई है, एल.पी.जी. सिलेंडर में 30 रुपए की वृद्धि की गई है और ए.टी.एफ. में

2 रुपए प्रति लीटर की वृद्धि की गई है। महोदय, इस तरह सबसे ज्यादा बढ़ोत्तरी मिट्टी के तेल की कीमतों में की गई है। मैं समझता हूँ कि जब मिट्टी के तेल का दाम बढ़ाया गया तो मंत्री महोदय द्वारा यह ध्यान नहीं रखा गया कि कौन लोग मिट्टी के तेल का इस्तेमाल करते हैं और उनकी आर्थिक दशा कैसी है। महोदय, मिट्टी का तेल अधिकतर खेतिहर मजदूर, सुदूर जंगलों में बसने वाले आदिवासी, अनुसूचित जाति और अनुसूचित जनजाति के लोग ज्यादातर इस्तेमाल करते हैं और शहरों में जिनके पास एल.पी.जी. गैस नहीं है, ऐसे लोगों की संख्या 50 प्रतिशत से ज्यादा है, वे लोग भी स्टोव के माध्यम से मिट्टी के तेल का इस्तेमाल करते हैं। महोदय, ऐसी हालत में मिट्टी के तेल का दाम बढ़ाकर मेरी राय में गरीबों के टिमटिमाते हुए दीपकों को बुझाने का काम किया गया है।

महोदय, वैसे मंत्री जी ने अपने बयान में यह भी कहा है - "वर्तमान में डीजल मूल्यों में वृद्धि न करने के विषय में निर्णय लिया गया है। ऐसा डीजल उपभोक्ताओं, जिसमें अन्यो के साथ-साथ कृषक, यात्री, माल परिवहन इत्यादि शामिल हैं, के हितों के संरक्षण के लिए किया गया है"।

महोदय, मैं मंत्री जी से पूछना चाहता हूँ कि जब इन लोगों के संरक्षण को ध्यान में रखा गया तो प्रश्न यह उठता है कि जो गरीब मिट्टी के तेल का इस्तेमाल करते हैं, उनके संरक्षण का ध्यान क्यों नहीं रखा गया? महोदय, मैं सदन के माध्यम से यह भी निवेदन करना चाहता हूँ कि सरकार कोई भी हो, सरकार लाभ और नुकसान के लिए कार्य नहीं करती है, सरकार जनहित को ध्यान में रखकर कार्य करती है। मैं मंत्री जी से यह पूछना चाहता हूँ कि अगर जनहित को ध्यान में रखा गया होता तो मिट्टी के तेल का दाम बढ़ाने का क्या औचित्य था?

महोदय, मैं इस सदन के माध्यम से माननीय मंत्री जी से अनुरोध करूंगा कि वे मिट्टी के तेल के दामों में की गई बढ़ोत्तरी को वापस लेकर गरीबों के टिमटिमाते हुए दीपकों में पुनः रोशनी लाने का काम करें। धन्यवाद।

श्री रमा शंकर कौशिक : श्रीमन्, आत्म-मंथन भी करेंगे मंत्री जी। रात भर में सोच लेंगे और कल जवाब दे देंगे।

श्री बालकवि बैरागी (मध्य प्रदेश) : महोदय, मुझे केवल डेढ़ मिनट बोलना है। मुझे इतना ही कहना है कि आपका जो वक्तव्य है उसमें शीर्षक में लिखा है कि स्वप्रेरणा वक्तव्य। आप बड़ी कृपा करते यदि आप अपनी पार्टी के लोगों से पूछ लेते, अपनी कैबिनेट से पूछ लेते।

माननीय आसन पर बैठे हुए सज्जन से पूछ लेते, पीछे अहलुवालिया जी से पूछ लेते, मनोहर जी से पूछ लेते और उसके बाद यह पढ़ते तो शायद आप वापिस ले लेते। मेरा आपसे निवेदन है कि ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री नरेन्द्र मोहन: आप मंत्री जी पर कृपा कर रहे हैं। लेकिन मंत्री जी ने जो कुछ किया होगा पूछकर ही किया होगा सबसे।

श्री बालकवि बैरागी: महोदय, दूसरे मेरा आपसे यह निवेदन है कि मेरे यहाँ गॉव में गैस का सिलेंडर तीन सौ रुपए का हो गया है। तीन-तीन सौ रुपए में गैस सिलेंडर बिक रहा है और गरीब लोग मारे-मारे फिर रहे हैं। इस वक्तव्य को वापिस लीजिए और रात भर टंडे दिल से विचार कर लीजिए, सबसे पूछ लीजिए।

श्री नरेन्द्र मोहन: मान्यवर महोदय, सरकार ने अभी तक किसी भी केरोसीन की चोरी करने वाले को गिरफ्तार नहीं किया है।

श्री बालकवि बैरागी: आप क्या चाहते हैं इसमें।

श्री नरेन्द्र मोहन: चोरी करने वालों को गिरफ्तार तो करवाइए।

श्री बालकवि बैरागी: श्रीमन्, चोरी करने वालों से तो मैं कुछ बोलना नहीं चाहता। इसमें मध्य प्रदेश की सरकार कहाँ आ गई बीच में। ...(व्यवधान)... माननीय उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, कम से कम अपनी पार्टी और अपनी सहयोगी दलों के लोगों से ही पूछ लेते तो यह वक्तव्य सुओ-मोटो, सुओ-प्रेरणा से नहीं आता, सरकार की तरफ से आता।

उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्री अधिक शिरोडकर): यदि यह सूचना आप शुरू में करते तो वह शायद मान लेते, अभी तो टाइम बीत गया है। उस पर हम जवाब ले लेंगे। मि. मिनिस्टर।

श्री दीपांकर मुखर्जी: सर, अब तो छः बज गए हैं ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री राम नाईक: मैं 15 मिनट में पूरा कर लूंगा।

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: You have to take the sense of the House. *(Interruptions)*

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR): Mr. Minister, how long will you take?

SHRI RAM NAIK: Fifteen minutes. *(Interruptions)*

[17 April, 2000]

RAJYA SABHA

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: It is already six o'clock.
(Interruptions)

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR) :
Let not people carry a feeling that we were giving lip sympathy to their problem. We will hear it for fifteen minutes.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: By trying to expedite the process, we are giving lip sympathy. (Interruptions) Let him go through all the comments. It is not possible to reply to all the points right now. (Interruptions) Let there be a full-fledged reply. (Interruptions) He cannot reply to all the points right now. (Interruptions)

DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA: Let us have the sense of the House. Some of the Members have suggested let the Minister think about this tonight. Let him not commit just now. Let him talk to others and come back tomorrow. (Interruptions)

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR) : Let us finish it today. (Interruptions) Already, five minutes of the fifteen minutes that the hon. Minister required have been taken. Let us finish it. (Interruptions)

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Sir, so many points have been raised. He cannot finish. Justice cannot be done in this way. So many points have been raised. If he replies, that means we have to stay here till seven o'clock. (Interruptions)

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR) : To the best of my perception, there have been repetitions. (Interruptions)

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: There have not been any repetition. This is not the correct way of running the House. I want the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs to intervene. (Interruptions)

श्री राम नाईक: उनको जो कहना है उन्होंने कहा है, अब मुझे जो कहना है मुझको कहने दीजिए। पर मौका तो मिले।

श्री दीपांकर मुखर्जी: अब कल आकर बोल लीजिएगा।

श्री एस.एस. अहलुवालिया: इसके सवाल-जवाब दोनों छप रहे हैं
...(व्यवधान)...

श्री राम नाईक: अधिवेशन के पहले दिन ही इतनी जल्दी क्या है, थोड़ा जरा सुनिए।

श्री दीपांकर मुखर्जी: कल भी हो जाएगा, कल आराम से बोलिएगा।

DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA: Please take the sense of the House.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIORDKAR): If you will kindly take your seat, I will have the sense of the House. *(Interruptions)* Shall we go on with the reply?

SOME HON'BLE MEMBERS: Yes.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: This is not the correct approach. The House cannot be run like this. *(Interruptions)*

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR) : I remember having sat in this Chair from twelve o'clock to seven o'clock though the time was up to six o'clock in the last Session. I remember it. Dr. Baiplab Dasgupta, I am appealing to you that in view of the tight situation, let us finish it today. I beg of you. Please sit down. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: This is not the way to run the House on the very first day. The whole Session is there. If they want to raise a controversy on every point, can the House run like this? This is not the first time. *(Interruptions)*

DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA: If he insists on replying, then he can reply to the empty House. We will not be here. We will not be party to this.

(At this stage, some hon. Members left the Chamber)

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Sir, we will not find any time tomorrow to listen to the reply of the Minister. Tomorrow, there will be a reply to the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address. *(Interruptions)* So, if you want to postpone the whole reply, you can do it. *(Interruptions)*

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR): Dr. Sahib, I appeal to you to sit through. ...*(Interruptions)*... Please, I would appeal to you to sit through.

DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA: Now I walk out.

(At this stage some hon. Members left the Chamber.)

[17 April, 2000]

RAJYA SABHA

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Sir, the point is simple. Usually when there is no consensus, the House is adjourned. If it goes on having a voting system,--I think it never takes place--it is unfortunate if that is resorted to. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: It is the sense of the House.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: The sense of the House always comes, but we also know that whenever some Opposition Party Member says 'no', then, naturally, the Government also agrees and the House is adjourned. That is the procedure we follow. Now, steamrolling the issue will not help you. That is what I want to mention.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR): Mr. Minister, would you like to give a reply now? Or, would you like to give it tomorrow?

श्री बालकवि बैरागी : सर, पूरा रिप्लाय नहीं आयेगा।

उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्री अधिक शिरोडकर) : नहीं आएगा तो देख लेंगे।

श्री राम नाईक : उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, जैसा कि मैंने कहा है मैं 15 मिनट में रिप्लाय पूरी कर दूंगा। लेकिन लीडर आफ दी अपोजिशन अगर चाहते हैं कि अभी नहीं कल रिप्लाय करनी है तो मुझे कोई आपत्ति नहीं है। लेकिन कभी न कभी तो इसको पूरा करना है, नहीं तो यह पूरा नहीं होगा।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR): Sir, may I have your views?

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (DR. MANMOHAN SINGH): Sir, since you have asked for my views, and since the sense of the House, as I see it, is, that a very large segment of the House feels so, I think, that the reply could be postponed till tomorrow.

SHRI RAM NAIK: But tomorrow it should be allowed.

श्री राम नाईक: उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं यह प्रार्थना करूंगा कि इमीडिएटली आफ्टर लंच पहला आइटम इसको ले लें।

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: We have no objection to that. We agree.

SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Sir, since the Leader of the Opposition agrees, and if you also agree, immediately after lunch it should be taken up.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN(SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR): The Motion of Thanks is beginning at two.

SHRI RAM NAIK: Then immediately after the Question Hour and other submissions.

SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Yes, immediately after the Question Hour.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR): There are certain Special Mentions.

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: We have to accommodate it somewhere.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR): That was why I wanted to continue, but anyway, since the Leader of the Opposition has expressed, it is okay.

SHRI SHANKAR ROY CHOWDHURY(West Bengal): Sir, this is the tendency that this House has been following from the first day of this Session. This is the Budget Session. We have not yet discussed one word of the Budget, and we have been repeatedly saying that if there is a business of the day, it should be finished on that day; otherwise, we will carry on dragging on like this.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR): If every Member speaks *ad nauseum* and continues to speak at everybody else's time, and the moment he speaks, he goes out. Don't you think that this is what we are trying to do? I don't know. I have got my own reservations. The moment a Member has to speak, he speaks and goes out! And he speaks without a time constraint, and to tell the Chair at the end of the day, "Please follow the time constraint!", is improper; that is my feeling about it. We will take it up at 12 o'clock, after the Question Hour. One minute. ...*(Interruptions)*... We will fix up the time.

The House is adjourned till 11.00 A.M. tomorrow.

The House then adjourned at thirteen minutes past six of the clock till eleven of the clock on Tuesday, the 18th April, 2000.