

examine the introduction of the Value Added Tax system for domestic industry for broad-banding of the duty structure within three bands, thereby enabling uniformity and ease in implementation. A suggestion has been made for the administration of Customs Duty, Safeguard Duty and Anti-Dumping Duty regimes in the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance. Simultaneously, the need for the Commerce Ministry to explore the setting up of a separate department to deal with WTO matters, with an aim to secure the interests of Indian industry has been emphasized.

On the labour front, all the task forces have called for flexible labour policies for expediting closure of unprofitable ventures, laying off of workers etc.

MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Sir, I have gone through the statement, circulated by the hon. Minister, in reply to question No. 307. May I know from the hon. Minister how the Government proposes to implement the suggestions of these advisory councils? Does the Government propose to take Members of Parliament also into confidence before implementing the suggestions of these councils? If so, how are you going to implement this?

SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE: Sir, this is very simple. We are going to implement them by taking action on the recommendations made by these councils. So far as consulting and taking the Members of Parliament into confidence is concerned, Members of Parliament are always welcome.

MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Sir, I did not get an answer to the first part of my question.

SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE: Sir, if I understood correctly, the first part of the question was: How are these recommendations going to be implemented?

MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: How are you going to implement then?

SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE: By taking action.

MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: What are the actions you are going to take?

SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE: Necessary action.

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI: Mr. Chairman, Sir, these councils have given some recommendations to the hon. Prime Minister. If the recommendations made by the councils contradict the observations made by the Planning Commission, will the hon. Minister go according to the suggestions of the Planning Commission, or, according to the suggestions of these councils?

SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE: Sir, I can assure the hon. Member that there will be no contradiction at all.

SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES: Sir, it is a good decision that the Government has appointed these councils. But, I do not know under which statute the Government has appointed these councils. There is an uncertainty among the members of these councils. They say, "whatever report they prepare, may not be acceptable to the new Government, in case the Lok Sabha is dissolved. So, I want to know from the Government whether there will be a continuity for these councils. Will they be legalised by a statutory sanction? Or, will these be like other Parliamentary Committees, and their report will be null and void, in case the Lok Sabha is dissolved?

SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE: Sir, these are *ad hoc* committees, specifically appointed for a specific purpose. And after the work is over, the Committee's life is over. The only thing that remains, as Miss Khaparde asked, is how to implement it. I said, it can be done by taking action.

Handing over Birsa Maidan

*308. MISS FRIDA TOPNO: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that the Steel Board in 1991 had

decided to handover 29 acres Birsa Maidan to Birsa Munda Statue Committee, Rourkela, for the construction of birsa Munda Tribal Research Centre;

(b) if so, the reasons for not handing over birsa Maidan so far; and

(c) the time schedule for handing over Birsa Maidan to the said Committee?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI NAVEEN PATNAIK):

(a) to (c) The Board of Directors of SAIL had approved the surrender of 19.60 acres of land to the Government of Orissa in February, 1991 to facilitate the establishment of Birsa Munda Tribal Cultural Centre at Rourkela. The land was taken over by the State Government on 8.11.1995. Further action in the matter lies with the State Government.

MISS FRIDA TOPNO: Sir, in the recent past, the Rourkela Steel Plant has allotted land to different non-tribal and cultural organisations without the concurrence of the State Government. So, the RSP is adopting a step-motherly attitude towards the Birsa Munda Statue Committee, which is a tribal committee; and is insisting on the State Government's concurrence which is not forthcoming. I would like to know, through you, Sir, as to what the alternative before SAIL is to provide land to the Committee to set up the Tribal Cultural Research Centre, and what the time schedule is.

SHRI NAVEEN PATNAIK : Sir, in answer to the hon. Member's question, and especially as she has asked about the 29 acres of land which is popularly known at the Birsa Maidan, I would like to give a certain detailed background about that particular land. Sir, the SAIL Board's decision to hand over the land to the State Government was taken in February 1991, following which the Ministry conveyed its approval in May 1991. It signed a lease deed between the RSP and the State Government on the 1st of July, 1993. The date of the registration of that lease deed was 20th August, 1993. The State Government expressed inability

to transfer the land to Birsa Munda Centre in Sept. 1995. It was informed to the hon. Member of Parliament, Miss Frida Topno, to sort it out with the State Government in October, 1995.

Now, Sir, I have a letter here from the hon. Member when she was a Minister in the State Government of Orissa. This letter is dated 5th of January, 1990 in which Miss Frida Topno, who served as a Minister in the State Government had written to the Managing Director of Rourkela Steel Plant, stating, "The Secretary of the Birsa Munda State Committee, Rourkela had requested you to hand over the Birsa Maidan for establishment of a Tribal land Cultural Centre on the aforesaid Maidan. Therefore, you are requested to hand over the said Maidan to the Government for eventual transfer to the Birsa Munda Statue Committee early."

In fact, Sir, the hon. Member while acting as a Minister in the State Government had requested that this land from Rourkela Steel Plant be handed over to the State Government. My reply to the hon. Member is that this land is with the State Government and she could request the State Government which is a Congress Government. And the hon. Member is from the Congress Party; she can request her Chief Minister or other appropriate ministers for the transfer of the land.

I would also like to add here, as we all know, Birsa Munda is a heroic and revered tribal figure in the history of our great nation. In the compound of this august House, in the Parliament, recently SAIL, that is the Steel Authority, contributed very largely to a larger than life statue of this revered tribal leader.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now the Question Hour is over.