

along with audited statement of Accounts for the year 1984-85, in respect of the Regional Engineering Colleges, within the stipulated period.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT-1265/86].

Report and Accounts (1984-85) of the National Institute of Health and Family Welfare, New Delhi and Related Papers

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy each (in English and Hindi) of the following papers:—

(i) Annual Report of the National Institute of Health and Family Welfare, New Delhi, for the year 1984-85.

(ii) Annual Accounts of the National Institute of Health and Family Welfare, New Delhi, for the year 1984-85 and the Audit Report thereon.

(iii) Review by Government on the working of the Institute.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT-2166/86 for (i) to (iii)]

REPORTS OF THE STUDY TOURS OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE WELFARE OF SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES

PROF. N. M. KAMBLE (Maharashtra): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy each (in English and Hindi) of the following Reports of the Study Tours of the Committee on the Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes:—

(i) Report of the Study Tour of Study Group I of the Committee on its visits to Bhopal and Indore during November, 1985.

(ii) Report of the Study Tour of Study Group II of the Committee on its visit to Udaipur and Jaipur during November, 1985.

MESSAGE FROM THE LOK SABHA

The Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 1986

SECRETARY-GENERAL: Sir I beg to report to the House the following message received from the Lok Sabha, signed by the Secretary-General of the Lok Sabha.

"In accordance with the provisions of rule 120 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, I am directed to inform you that Lok Sabha, at its sitting held on the 4th March, 1986, agreed without any amendment to the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 1986, which was passed by Rajya Sabha at its sitting held on 25th February, 1986."

REFERENCE TO THE PLIGHT OF JUTE-GROWERS

MR. CHAIRMAN: We now take up Special Mentions.

SHRI SURESH KALMADI (Maharashtra): Sir, on a point of order. We are awaiting your decision on the discussion in regard to the recall of the Governor of Maharashtra. You said you will give your decision in the matter today.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yesterday itself, I have ruled it out. I never said, I will give a decision. Now, Special Mentions. Shri Chitta Basu.

SHRI CHITTA BASU (West Bengal): Mr. Chairman, Sir, with your permission, I rise to draw the attention of the Parliament and the Government to the plight of the farmers

[Shri Chitta Basu]

who grow jute in different parts of the country, particularly in West Bengal. Sir, the four kisan organisations, namely, Agragami Kisan Sabha, Sam-jukta Kisan Sabha, West Bengal Provincial Kisan Sabha and Bhumi Mazdoor Sangha....

MR. CHAIRMAN: One minute, Mr. Basu. I would like to inform hon. Members that the Prime Minister will reply to the debate on the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address, at 2.30 P.M. Mr. Basu, you can proceed now.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: Sir, the four organisations representing an overwhelming majority of the peasants of West Bengal are now in Delhi and they are parading in the streets of the capital. They want to draw the attention of the Government and Parliament to the serious plight which the jute growers are facing, as also that of the jute workers who are also facing starvation and unemployment, because of the unhelpful attitude of the Government and also the anti-working class policies pursued by the jute mill-owners who are invariably monopoly houses.

Sir, as you know, West Bengal has about 60 out of the 75 jute mills in the country. West Bengal accounts for more than 91 per cent of the jute goods produced in the country. West Bengal also accounts for more than 50 per cent of the total raw jute production in the country. Sir, the jute growers have been denied the legitimate, just and remunerative price for their raw jute. They are steeped in incredible poverty and are fast losing hold over their land and becoming agricultural labourers. On the other side, there are two lakhs of industrial workers working in the jute mills, namely, in the 60 jute mills in West Bengal. Several thousands of them have already been thrown out of employment because of closures and retrenchments; seventy thousands industrial workers have been thrown

out of employment because of the unhelpful attitude and antiworking class attitude pursued by the employers as well as the Government. The jute growers have been victims of the age-old exploitation and thereby they have become frustrated and disappointed. The burden of this indebtedness has increased manifold and they are naturally here to express the resentment, wrath and indignation against the policies of this Government.

Sir, this House is aware that on the 21st February hon. Minister of Agriculture, Shri Buta Singh, all of a sudden, appeared on the floor of the House and issued a statement announcing statutory price of the raw jute for the year. As far as I remember, it was only Rs. 225 per quintal for raw jute W-5 grade for Assam. Let me make it clear here that this is not at all just, this is not at all remunerative, this does not even cover the cost of cultivation that a peasant is likely to spend for cultivation of jute. Therefore, it is gross injustice and this will put the producers in great jeopardy. This will harm the cause of the national economy also. The House is well aware of the importance of the jute industry. It occupies a vital position in the national economy. It is a foreign exchange earner. So far as West Bengal is concerned, jute industry is one of the main trades of the State economy. If the farmers do not get the legitimate price, naturally there will be less production, and if there is less production, the factories will suffer for want of raw jute. So, in the interest of the farmers of the State, in the interest of the industrial workers engaged in jute growing, the Government should revise its decision and withdraw the statement made on 21st February statutorily fixing only Rs. 225 as the minimum statutory wage.

So far as procurement by the JCI is concerned, JCI is the only organisation which procures jute from the

villagers through their purchasing centres but I can show you by facts and figures that there has never been an occasion when the JCI has been able to procure more than 10 per cent of the total production of the raw jute, thereby leaving a vast majority of the raw jute growers to the mercy of the *fariaks*, dalas or agents as they are called, or the middlemen. These middlemen are sufficiently financed by the jute mill-owners, thereby on the one side the industrial workers are suffering and on the other side the jute workers are suffering and ultimately the national economy of our country is suffering. Therefore, Parliament cannot remain oblivious of the implications of the national economy. Parliament should be seized of the matter and about this position also. (*Interruptions*).

The four organisations want to give a memorandum to the Government, which includes the following demands:

(1) That the Central Government shall announce the procurement prices of raw jute and mesta before the sowing season begins;

(2) The Central Government shall fix immediately the minimum procurement prices at Rs. 600 per quintal for jute and Rs. 400 per quintal for mesta.

(3) That the JCI should immediately step up the purchasing centres and shall arrange to make monopoly purchase of raw jute and mesta directly from growers.

And as I have already mentioned, the JCI should announce to open adequate number of purchasing centres and sub-centres to procure raw jute directly from the growers. That steps should be immediately taken to nationalise the jute industry, wholesale trade in raw jute and export of jute products should be nationalised. The closed mills—i.e. the closed jute mills—should be immediately opened.

Sir, in the interest—again I repeat—in the interest of the nation's economy, in the interest of 20 lakh jute growers of our country, in the interest of 2 lakh of the industrial workers engaged in the jute industry, the Government should withdraw the statement made in Parliament on 21st February and concede the demands which have been mentioned in the memorandum. And I only implore upon you, as the Chairman of this House, that you should also exercise your good offices so that the Government can see the path of reason, justice and refrain from imposing further burden on the helpless peasants of our country.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Gurudas Das Gupta, will you now please briefly associate yourself with this.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA (West Bengal): I shall definitely be brief, Sir, I have been speaking on jute, as you know, over the year; this House has been discussing, or at least some of us have been raising the question of raw jute over the year. But today, Sir, we discuss jute in a situation when thousands of growers have come from different parts of West Bengal, paying the enhanced fare that the Government of India has just imposed. We have been discussing in the House closure of jute mills. We have been complaining in the House about the illegal closure of mills. We have been placing facts before you about the defalcation of the ESI and Provident Fund deductions by the jute mills.

[Mr. Deputy Chairman in the Chair]

And we have been telling you that it is the same set of people who had generous advances from the Government to modernise the mills and who, instead of modernising the mills, had modernised their own life style. But today Sir, we do not discuss only the question of decline of jute prices but actually, we are discussing crash of jute prices. Today morning, I had

[Shri Guru Das Gupta]

the reply from the Minister Incharge or Textiles which says that in 1985, the price of raw jute was Rs. 980 per quintal and this year the Calcutta price of W5 raw jute has come down to Rs. 296 per quintal. From Rs. 980 to 296 per quintal. Just imagine the margin of fall. This only indicates the total inability of the Government machinery—i.e. the Jute Corporation of India—to come to the rescue of the people who are victims of this price crash. Mr. Chandra Shekhar Singh, before he lost his job as the Textile Minister, had promised to a deputation where Mr. Dipen Ghosh was with me that one-third of the total jute produce will be purchased by the Government and Government is not going to allow any sort of price crash in any part of the country. And I should say that the problem of jute is not the problem of West Bengal alone. We have reports that jute growers have been burning their produce in different parts of Bihar, in some parts of Orissa also.

Now, Sir, the production of jute, according to the estimate of the Government is around 1 crore bales. What is the procurement they have made? I had today the reply from the Government, from the Minister concerned which says that they have procured till today only 27 lakh bales. They are beating drums and saying that they have achieved a record so far as purchase is concerned, but even then the sale does not touch even the required fringe, or it does not fulfil the pledge or promise that Mr. Chandra Shekhar Singh had made to us when he was incharge of this portfolio. At the present moment, Mr. Deputy Chairman, the JCI has stopped procuring jute and at the same time the private mills are sitting idle. Thousands of jute growers at the present moment are left to the mercy of middlemen, they are left in a situation where there is no transaction or no purchase of jute at all. That is the situation. The gravity of the problem has never been understood by our present Government and the

situation has been taken advantage of by those people who are interested in depressing the price of raw jute and minting black money.

Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, now the price of jute is Rs. 225 per quintal a paltry increase of ten or fifteen rupees. Last year it was Rs. 215 for W5 Assam. This year it is Rs. 225. There is an increase of only Rs. 15. In the meantime the Government has announced three budgets. The first budget of increase of administered prices has resulted in withdrawal of subsidy on fertilizer. Secondly, it makes diesel costlier. Therefore, the production of jute has become costlier, much more than to the extent of increase which the Government seems to have been generous towards the jute growers. Therefore, I only ask our Government to tell us whether jute shall go the indigo way or, I should say in other words, whether the jute growers of our country shall face the same fate during the Congress rule which the indigo cultivators had faced when the British had ruled our country. This is the situation, this is the distress, this is the dimension of the problem that we are confronted with.

Sir, our Ministers or the officials do not consult the workers because they do not have knowledge of the market, they say. The big people—are saying that there is no demand for jute goods, just at the present moment the Government of India is importing synthetic granules to produce synthetic bags. Imagine the shortfall in demand for jute goods in the market, the closure of jute mills and the depressing prices of raw jute, and just at that moment they are importing synthetic granules to produce synthetic baks. I complain. Sir, some of the Government of India organizations are using synthetic bags as containers instead of jute bags. Then what is the situation? You are not giving them a proper prices. The Jute Corporation of India is not coming to the rescue and you are not creating demand for jute goods. Taken together, therefore, I should say that

it is not only the jute barons, it is not only the Jute Corporation of India but also it is the hostile and anti-jute policy of the Government of India that is resulting in a total crisis and I apprehend, therefore, that jute will face the same fate as indigo had faced in our country. Therefore, Sir, I demand, not only I but we all together on behalf of the jute growers of the country and, I should say, our hon. friends who are sitting on the other side—they have their cultivation of jute in U.P. and Bihar and we have jute cultivation in Orissa and Assam and the problem of jute is not a problem of the left parties alone; the problem of jute is not a problem of the Communists alone; the problem of jute is a national problem, of the national economy—that support should be given from all corners to the demand that the jute policy should be reversed or changed, support should be given from all quarters that the price of jute be increased, support should be given from all quarters that a ban be put on the use of synthetic bags, support should be given from all quarters that they must stop importing synthetic granules which is further accentuating the problem. In conclusion, Sir, I only say that this is a problem for the economy as a whole and our Parliament and Government will find time to ponder over what a disastrous policy it is continuing in regard to jute and the economy as a whole.

Thank you, Sir.

SHRI SHANTIMOY GHOSH (West Bengal): Sir, I associate myself with this Special Mention. While associating myself with all that has been said, I only say that there is no remedy except nationalization of the jute industry. There is no other remedy. All other things have been tried. The only remedy is that the entire jute industry including the trade in raw jute, jute mills and exports—everything—should be nationalized by the Government of India. That is the first thing. That is the first remedy.

Secondly, credit, institutional credit, should be liberalised for the jute-grower. It is not liberalised. The jute-growers are losing in the market every year except the year before last. For a long, long time during the days of British the jute-growers' blood is being sucked by the monopolists, by the jute mill-owners, by the money-lenders, by the *fariahs*. Their blood has been sucked. Twenty lakh families in West Bengal alone are suffering for a long, long time since the days of the British empire. But after the independence their fate has not changed. So, what should be done? The Government of India is talking of many, many things. Many, many projects are there. Poverty-alleviation is there. But the jute-growers, 20 lakh families, in West Bengal alone every year are losing in the market. They are selling their property, they are selling their land, they are selling everything. That is the fate of our jute-growers.

We have come to Delhi, four organisations, peasant organisations, have come to Delhi with some of their followers to place before you, to place before the Government of India, their demand that unless they agree to their demands jute-growing will stop a considerably.

The third demand is that the JCI must make monopoly purchase. They cannot be left to the *fariahs*, the *benamdars*, the jute mill-owners, the blood-suckers. They cannot be left to them after 38 years of the independence. All these things should be taken into consideration immediately.

With these words, I submit that I again support the special mention.

श्री सत्य प्रकाश मालवीय : (उत्तर प्रदेश) मैं भी इस का समर्थन करता हूँ और इस समस्या का समाधान जल्दी हो किया जाना चाहिए यह चाहता हूँ ।

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I fully associate with my colleague from West Bengal.