

से बात समझ आती लेकिन...

Urgent Public Importance

CALLING ATTENTION TO A MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

श्री उपसभापति : कल बहुत से लोग बोले थे तो ये कितनों का नाम लेते।

Recent Increase in Prices of certain Petroleum Products

श्री शिव चन्द्र झा : यही तो बात है। यदि वे मॅशन न करें तो किसी का न करें और यदि करें तो सबको करें। यदि समय नहीं रहता तो सबको छोड़ दें। जब से आल इंडिया रेडियो के नये मंत्री जी आये हैं तब से यह हो रहा है उनको आप कहें कि आप इस तरह की परिपाटी, इस तरह की बदमाशी आल इंडिया रेडियो और दूरदर्शन...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN- Yes Mr. Indradeep Singh. You call the attention of the Minister.

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SHRI INDRADEEP SINHA (Bihar). Sir, I beg to call the attention of the Minister of Energy to the recent increase in the prices of certain petroleum products.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr. Sinha, you put your questions.

SHRI INDRADEEP SINHA: Sir the Minister has to read out his state-merit,

श्री उपसभापति : इसके लिये यह समय नहीं है।

श्री शिव चन्द्र झा : ...से न हो। प्रोसीडिंग्स को ठीक तरह से रिप्रेजेंट करें मैं तीनों को ही सुनता हूँ और देखता हूँ। मैं दो-दो रेडियो लगाता हूँ कि गड़बड़ी तो नहीं चल रही है...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN- The Minister has already laid the statement, so, he need not read it out again. You can put your questions.

SHRI INDRADEEP SINHA: I have not seen the statement.

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY (SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR) : The day it was made.

श्री उपसभापति : आपके रेडियो में गड़बड़ी होगी ऐसा मुझे लगता है... (व्यवधान)...

SHRI INDRADEEP SINHA: I wish to raise broadly two points. One is the inspiration or rather the motivation behind this increase in the prices of certain petroleum products. The formal aspect, the constitutional aspect, was yesterday brought before the House, that just on the eve of Parliamentary session it was beyond the bounds of Parliamentary propriety for the Government to do it and increase the prices of certain petroleum products which will yield an income of approximately Rs. 800 crores. But I am not raising this aspect. I am raising two other aspects. One is the form in which the increase has taken place. If the increase had been made by increasing the excise duty, the States should have been entitled to

श्री रामलखन प्रसाद गुप्त (बिहार) : हिन्दी में बोलने वालों का नाम नहीं देते हैं।

श्री शिव चन्द्र झा : जो हिन्दी में बोलते हैं उनको इग्नोर करने की नीति रहती है। दुर्भाग्य यह है कि जो हिन्दी के न्यूज राइटर हैं वही हिन्दी वालों को छोड़ देते हैं। वे हिन्दी समझते नहीं हैं और अंग्रेजी समझ जाते हैं। यह दुर्भाग्य की बात है। इसलिये मैं चाहता हूँ कि आल इंडिया रेडियो इस प्रकार पक्षपात की नीति न अपनाये।

[Shri Indradeep Sinha]

their share. But when the increase has been made by raising the rate of cess on the crude, the States do not get anything. So the burden is imposed on the people. The burden is in the form of taxation. It is taxation. It is a kind of taxation. A taxation is levied in a form in which the States are defrauded of their legitimate share. This is a practice which is not conducive to the strengthening of norms of parliamentary democracy in the country, or even to the strengthening of democratic relationship between the Centre and the States.

Secondly, Sir—it is no less important—I wish to draw the attention of the Minister to another aspect. Unfortunately, our Government thought it wise to go in for IMF loan, and we are in the second year of the loan. In the second year of the loan, the IMF grants even the instalment /by instalments. Even the second year's amount of Rs. 1800 crores was not granted in one lump sum. It is granted bit by bit, and before every sanction a team of IMF inspectors is sent to our country. They examine the records of the Government. They dictate certain conditions to the Government and the Government dutifully carries them out. Now, Sir, such a team visited our country recently and the IMF insists that a certain ceiling on the total bank credit to the Government and total bank . . .

MB. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That is a different matter.

SHRI INDRADEEP SINHA: It is not a different matter. I am just coming to it. The total bank credit to the Government and the total bank credit to the private commercial sector, in both respects, the IMF has laid down a certain ceiling, and it is insisted that the ceiling should be observed. The ceiling was crossed. And what did the Government do? There is across the board increase in customs duty. They increased the rate of cess on POL products and they asked the

public sector undertakings to take loans from commercial banks at a high rate of interest and pay back the loan to the Government. They issued a blanket order to all State Governments that they must clear their overdrafts, otherwise all payments will be stopped. And in certain States, such blanket orders were issued that even bills for the purchase of medicines in hospitals could not be encashed, and there was a blanket ban on payment of all bills.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: This cannot be tagged on to this.

SHRI INDRADEEP SINHA: This point is related. My contention is that at the dictates of the IMF inspectors, in order to bring the Indian finances within the limits of the credit ceiling prescribed by the IMF, all these hasty, unconstitutional and undemocratic steps were taken which have not only imposed an additional burden on the common people but also defrauded the States of their legitimate share of revenue and they had weakened the Centre-State relations and made our country an object of ridicule in the international community.

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR. Sir, I have called out certain aspects of the questions from what the hon. Member has observed. The first issue that he raised is the motivation behind the increase in prices. Sir, yesterday I made the position clear and I may recount it today also that the necessity to increase the prices was—(a) to reduce the gap in the balance of payments by curtailing the import of crude oil and petroleum products; (b) to meet the increased requirement of resources for development of the oil industry; (c) to meet the working capital requirements of the oil industry; (d) towards increase in railway freight of major petroleum products like motor spirit, kerosene, HSD and LDO which were not passed on to the retail trade from July, 1980 onwards; (e) increased burden on the oil industry due to adverse effect in the rupee-dollar parity. Now,

these were the reasons which motivated the Government to revise the prices.

On the question of propriety, yesterday itself I had made the submission and I need not repeat. My hon. friend has said that because of the increase in the cess, the States have been deprived of their share. Sir, actually, so far as the cess is concerned which has been increased, it is on the oil itself from the companies to the Government under the Act. The increase in the prices would also result in the higher collection of sales-tax by the States. In fact, my Department has worked out the figures on the basis of the increase of the prices. The States would be entitled to Rs. 40 crores. On the statement that this price increase has resulted because of the dictates of the IMF inspectors, I must submit that there is no basis in this.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Dr. Bhai Mahavir.

श्री सदाशिव बागाईतकर (महाराष्ट्र) : डिप्टी चेयरमैन साहब, एक व्यवस्था में चाहूंगा कि यह जो कालिग अटेंशन है इस प्रक्रिया में जो हमारी पुरानी पद्धति रही उसी के अनुसार आप चलायेंगे या ?

श्री उपसभापति : बता हो रहे हैं, आप देख रहे हैं शुरू हो गया है।

डा० भाई महवीर (मध्य प्रदेश) : श्रीमान्, जो वक्तवा मंत्री जो ने कल दिया उस के मोटे-मोटे वापदों को अगर एक तरफ रख दिया जाये तो यह स्पष्ट है कि सरकार के सामने और किस बात की भी चिन्ता भले हो हो लेकिन गरीबों का कोई चिन्ता नहीं है। जब आप इमेनिटेरियन सोसाइटी की बात करते हैं गरीबों के हित की बात करते हैं और उतावले गैरीमन को आवश्यकता निश्चित और सबसोडाइज्ड कोमत पर पूरी होजा रहे इसका दावा करते हैं तो मैं मंत्री जो यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या यह है या नहीं कि राशन कार्ड व्यवस्था के अन्दर आज जनसंख्या का एक

बहुत बड़ा अंश नहीं आता है। देहात का बहुत बड़ा हिस्सा अभी तक आपको फेयर प्राइस शाप्स या आपके पब्लिक डिस्ट्रीब्यूशन सिस्टम में अछूता है। बड़े शहरों के अन्दर भी अभी तक काफी बड़ा तादाद में ऐसे गरीब लोग हैं जिनको राशन कार्ड नहीं दिये गये। इस वास्ते वे सब आपके कंट्रोलड दाम के किरोसिन से बंचित रहेंगे।

क्या मंत्री जी को इस बात की जानकारी है कि अकेले दिल्ली में ही, दूर न जाते हुये सिर्फ अगर दिल्ली की बात करें, जो देश की राजधानी है और जिसको आप एक बड़ा अहानगर कह सकते हैं, इसमें भी आज कम से कम आठ-दस लाख लोग ऐसे हैं कि जिनके पास राशन कार्ड नहीं हैं। पिछले दो-तीन वर्षों से राशन-कार्ड बनाने की प्रक्रिया प्रायः बन्द थी और थोड़े लोगों ने इधर-उधर किसी तरह के जोर से या किसी अप्रोच से बनवा लिये हों उन्हें छोड़ नये राशन-कार्ड बनाये ही नहीं गये। झुग्गी-झोपड़ी में बंटे हुये लोगों के पास कोई राशन-कार्ड नहीं है, रिक्शा चलाने वालों के पास कोई राशन-कार्ड नहीं है, मजदूरी करके मकान बनाने के काम में जो लगे हुये हैं, और किसी तरह से अपना पेट पालते हैं, उनके पास कोई राशन-कार्ड नहीं है। इनमें से कोई राजस्थान से आये हुये हैं कोई उत्तर प्रदेश से। इसी तरह से जिन भट्टी खानों और खदानों की बात होती रही है मैं नहीं समझता कि उन मजदूरों के पास कोई राशन-कार्ड हैं। ऐसे लोगों को जो अब तक एक निश्चित दाम पर किरोसिन पा सकते थे, उनको आज के बाद के लिये आपने मजबूर कर दिया कि तीन रुपया पन्द्रह पैसे लिटर पर खरोद करके अपने चूल्हे जलायें, और अपनी रोटी बनायें। यह किस तरह से गरीबों के हित में जायेगा। यह कृपा समझाने का कण्ट करें।

[श० भा ई महावीर]

इसके बाद दूसरी चीज, क्या यह सच नहीं है कि आपने इस किरोसिन का कोटा भी कम कर दिया है, यानी जिस कार्ड के ऊपर किसी को अब तक छह लिटर किरोसिन मिलता था, अब इसके बाद शायद उसको चार लिटर मिलेगा, जिसको आठ लिटर मिलता था, उसको शायद पांच या छह लिटर मिलेगा और इस तरह से जो उनकी जरूरत थी, और है, उस के पूरा न होने के कारण उनको खुले बाजार में महंगे दामों मिट्टी का तेल खरीदना पड़ेगा। यह उनकी क्रयशक्ति पर और बड़ा बोझ होगा। जिससे उन्हें बड़ा आघात लगेगा और उनको बाकी चीजों में कटौती करके किसी तरह से इस खर्च को पूरा करना पड़ेगा।

तीसरी चीज, जब आपने सीमेंट के लिए—आप कह सकते हैं कि सीमेंट का आपका क्षेत्र नहीं है—इसी तरह की दोहरी वितरण प्रणाली सीमेंट के बारे में भी जो जारी की गई, उसके परिणामस्वरूप सीमेंट सस्ता उपलब्ध होना शुरू नहीं हुआ बल्कि हुआ यह कि जो सीमेंट के उत्पादक मांगते थे उससे कहीं ज्यादा दाम सरकार ने उनको दे दिये। एक तरह से लीगेलाइज्ड ब्लेक मरिनिंग, या लीगेलाइज्ड प्राफिटियरिंग सीमेंट के मामले में आपने परमिट कर दी वैसे ही आज किरोसिन के मामले में सरकार खुद कर रही है। जो काली कमाई या मुनाफाखोरी सरकार पहले न कर सकती थी, आज इस पद्धति से करने के लिए अवश्य उसने एक मौका बना लिया है।

महोदय, यह सारा कुछ उस समय हो रहा है जब ओपेक की तेल कीमतें भी कम हो रही हैं। उन कीमतों के कम होने के साथ, बजाय इसके कि लोगों को कुछ राहत दी जाती, सरकार उनका और खून निचोड़ने के लिए मानों कटिबद्ध दिखाई पड़ती है।

आखिरी बात, आपने डीजल के जो दाम बढ़ाये, क्या आपको इस बात का अहसास हुआ कि नहीं कि डीजल के दाम बढ़ाने से सारा ट्रांसपोर्ट महंगा हो जाएगा, किसान का इंजन, महंगा चलेगा, जो बस और रेल का सफर है, उसका खर्चा बढ़ेगा और इस तरह आपने महंगाई का एक नया 'स्नोबाल' शुरू कर दिया है बजट में जो कुछ प्रसाद मिलेगा, उसका तो धड़कते दिलों से लोग इंतजार कर रहे हैं इस बजट के आने के पहले लेकिन आपने जो यह किया है, वह पहले से ही आपने दामों को बढ़ाने वाली एक ऐसी चिन्तनी लगा दी है कि उसके 'स्नोबाल इफेक्ट' से महंगाई बहुत बढ़ जाएगी और इस महंगाई से वही लोग पिसेंगे जिनकी हमदर्दी का दावा आप दिन-रात करते हैं।

कृपया इन सब बातों पर रोशनी डालिये।

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR: Sir, on the basis of the observations that have been made by the hon. Member, while the intention, I had made clear yesterday, is to protect the weaker and vulnerable sections of the society, I must submit that for the first time the Government has taken steps to divide the society vertically into haves and havenots. The idea behind this, I must submit, is that this is only a beginning. Perhaps, at a later stage, even the essential commodities will have to be supplied to the weaker segments of the society at subsidised rates. My hon. friend, while he referred to this aspect, I must submit, has mixed up this question with the distribution system. I am aware that there are certain weaknesses in the distribution system. On 18th February, a meeting of the Secretaries of Civil Supplies or the Commissioners of Civil Supplies of the States, by whatever name you may call them, was summoned here. My

officials and myself have discussed | with these officials about an effective distribution system. There are a few loopholes, I must confess, from State to State. But necessary instructions have been given for plugging these loopholes which arise in the distribution system in the different States.

DR. BHAI MAHAVIR: I am only suggesting that it is not a question of "loopholes. It is a matter of a policy decision not to issue ration cards. Have you taken a decision to issue ration cards to all the people, at least in the metropolitan citiei?

SHRI HANSRAJ BHARDWAJ (Madhya Pradesh): Ration cards were found bogus in Delhi, in your administration.

होगे ।

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR: Necessary instructions have been given to all the Civil Supplies authorities who had assembled on the 18th that they should take care to see that immediately, ration cards are supplied to the vulnerable sections. By and large all over the country, sugar is supplied on the basis of ration cards. I have myself gone into the details. Everybody is supplied sugar on the basis of ration cards. We have directed them that this card should be used by some punch or some sort of a mechanism which they could devise so that the quota of kerosene is made available to the people at large. I do not deny, it is possible that some people might face hardship. I am not denying this fact. But it would be the endeavour of the Government to see that these sections suffer the least and for this, as I said, necessary instructions have already been given, be it Delhi or any other place; this is the approach we have taken. In fact, I have myself personally spoken to the Civil Supplies Commissioners and the Secretaries on the 18th.

*" On the question of the quota having been reduced, I must submit, what

has been happening is that, from 1974 to 1980, the demand had been rising every year, on an average 6.4 per cent. But for the last two years, the demand has grown to the tune of 10.5 per cent. In the recent months, the demand has exceeded this 10.5 per cent and it has gone up to 12.1 per cent. Actually, if we reckon the extra allocations which are sought by different States, I am afraid, the demand would go up to 21 per cent. We have, on our part, tried to assess the loss of kerosene which goes into adulteration. Not less than 15 per cent is going into adulteration, with the HSD. Therefore, this malpractice had also to be checked. Various considerations have to be taken into account for the purpose of devising this method. It is true, notwithstanding our instructions, some States might at the initial stage itself provide the people only with the 70 per cent of their quota. I am not denying that. We have informed them that if 15 per cent goes towards adulteration, they could increase the subsidised quota so far as the vulnerable sections are concerned. They could also consider to provide them with 100 percent, but it may not be possible immediately. Take a case, I am giving a very concrete case. Take a case of a retail or a wholesale dealer in the labour areas or in the villages. By and large people today use it either for the purpose of illumination or for the purpose of cooking. So far as poorer people are concerned they use it mainly for illumination purpose and people who could be called lower middle class, use it for the purpose of cooking also. We said that they could be given to the extent of 100 per cent in the rural areas and the urban labour areas. But notwithstanding that, of course, we have given a leverage to the State Governments because distribution system is in their hands, with necessary instructions to see that the demands of these vulnerable sections are met 100 per cent. It is possible, I concede that some of the State, might reduce the quota of these sec-

[Shri P. Shiv Shankar]

tions also to 70 per cent, I am not denying that, but this is an interim measure as I explained yesterday because within a few months they have got to decide on the weaker and vulnerable sections being provided with a system which would enable them to get 100 per cent kerosene at the subsidised rate.

My hon. friend has referred to the hike in prices of transport and so on. Our preliminary calculations show that this price-rise would lead to only a marginal increase in the transport cost.

DR. BHAJI MAHAVIR: That is what you usually say on such occasions.

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR: I am giving details, I have worked them out. For instance for goods, the increase may be only .75 paise, that is 3/4th of one paise per tonnekilometer and for passengers it would be even lower, that is 0.184 paise per passenger kilometer, less than 1/5th of one paise. Of course, I have got further details which I have worked out in the form of a chart, which I am prepared to show to the hon. Member.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, no.

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR: This is what we have worked out and it is possible. . .

DR. BHAJI MAHAVIR: I do not think the truck operators, the bus operators or even the railways will be guided by these figures.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It is his calculation.

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR: It is possible, I concede that they might rise a little, but so far as the impact of this increase is concerned, it is highly negligible. The intention of my bringing these figures to your kind notice is that the impact of this increase is highly negligible.

श्री शिव चन्द्र झा (बिहार) :

उपसभापति, महोदय, इस तरह से सेसन के ईव पर यह जो तेल के दाम बढ़ाये गये हैं यह बैकडोर टेक्सेशन है, या इस को यों कह सकते हैं कि यह फिजिकल पिकपाकेटिंग है और सरकार को इसकी आदत हो गयी है कि जब सेसन होने जा रहा हो तो इस तरह से पिक पाकेटिंग कर लो। पैसे की पिक पाकेटिंग कर लो। यह फिजिकल पिक पाकेटिंग है। पिछले साल भी आपने यही किया। पहले पेट्रोल के दाम बढ़ाये और उस के बाद बजट पेश किया। तो यह सरकार की आदत हो गयी है। और दूसरी बात यह कि बड़ा डेफिसिट आने जा रहा है बजट में। उसकी लीपा पोती करने के लिए कुछ पहले से इंतजाम कर लो यह उन का प्रयत्न रहता है और यह एक दुर्भाग्यपूर्ण कदम है।

मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से साफ सवाल पूछना चाहता हूँ। पहले यह कि क्या आप एज एन इंडिविजुअल इस को ठीक समझते हैं। मैं इंडिविजुअल की बात इसलिये करता हूँ कि आप ने ही कहा था कि मिस्टर हिदायतुल्ला एज एन इंडिविजुअल और मिस्टर हिदायतुल्ला एज ए चेयरमैन, आप ने उन को दो खेमों में रखा। ऐसा अगर आप ने किया है तो उस के हिसाब से ही किया है तो उस के हिसाब से ही मैं पूछना चाहता हूँ कि एज एन इंडिविजुअल आप ने जो यह दाम बढ़ाये हैं क्या उन को आप एप्रव करते हैं। क्या आप इसके पक्ष में हैं? मैं जानता हूँ आपके ऊपर घोड़े दौड़ाये जा रहे हैं। पी सी सेठी के ऊपर भी घोड़े दौड़ाये गये थे जब वह पेट्रोलियम मिनिस्टर थे। उनको मागना पड़ा। कैरोसीन और डीजल के दाम आपने बढ़ाये क्या आप इसको

अप्रूव करते हैं कि यह ठीक कदम है। एज एन इंडिविजुअल नोट एज एन मिनिस्टर ? यह पहला सवाल है।

दूसरा सवाल यह है कि बजट के जरिए यदि आप बढ़ाते तो पांच सौ करोड़ रुपया या 800 करोड़ रुपया जिसकी आप को उम्मीद है बढ़ाने से मिलेगा क्या आपको नहीं मिलता ? बजट के जरिए यदि आप करते तो क्या आपको नुकसान होता। अगर ऐसा करते तो बात साफ होती कि जनता के प्रतिनिधियों के सामने रखा गया है और उनसे पास कराकर बढ़ाया गया है। बजट के जरिए करते तो आपको नुकसान नहीं होता। यह सिर्फ स्टेट्स को डिफाइब करने का हथकंडा है डेफिसिट फाइनंस की बात है (व्यवधान)

श्री उपसभापति : यह सब हो गया है।

श्री शिव चन्द्र झा : दो स्टेट हाथ से निकल गये हैं और भी निकल रहे हैं। यह उनको परेशान करने का एक तरीका है। मुझे साफ करें कि अगर यह बजट के जरिए करते तो आपको क्या नहीं मिलता। यदि मिलता तो फिर क्यों आपने ऐसा करने का नहीं सोचा ?

तीसरा सवाल यह है कि इससे ट्रांसपोर्ट, फ्रेट के चार्ज बढेंगे। आपने यहां बताया है कि फिगर कलेक्ट करके दी है कि इतने बढेंगे। मैं पूछना चाहता हूँ कि क्या एग्रीकल्चर पर असर नहीं पड़ेगा ? 30 परसेंट डीजल एग्रीकल्चर पर इस्तेमाल होता है तो क्या इससे एग्रीकल्चर प्रोडक्शन पर असर नहीं पड़ेगा क्या आप प्रोड्योरमेंट प्राइस नहीं बढ़ायेंगे। इस पर भी आप आघात करते आ रहे हैं। क्या इससे हमारा जनता

का फंडामेंटल राइट टु मूवमेंट है उस पर आघात जही कर रहे हैं ?

श्री उपसभापति : कहां से कहां आप चले जा रहे हैं।

श्री शिव चन्द्र झा : संसद में ही हूँ संसद से बाहर कहीं नहीं जा रहा हूँ। सेल्फ रिलायेंस की बात भी इन्होंने अपनी स्टेटमेंट में की है। मैं पूछना चाहता हूँ क्यों आपने पुष्पक हेलीकाप्टर का एग्रीमेंट किया महानदी बेसिन में ?

श्री उपसभापति : इन बातों को छोड़िये।

श्री शिव चन्द्र झा : अपनी स्टेटमेंट में सेल्फ रिलायेंस की बात की है। इसमें इनका अपना ध्यान यहां से बाहर नहीं जाना चाहिए लेकिन वह यह कदम न उठाकर विदेशों से एक्सप्लोरेशन आफ आयल का एग्रीमेंट करते हैं ?

श्री उपसभापति : यह हो गया छोड़िये।

श्री शिव चन्द्र झा : यह एक्सप्लोरेशन का काम चल रहा है जिससे ज्यादा तेल आए और अगर आपको बढ़ाने की जरूरत है तो क्यों नहीं आम जनता को जिसको आप 24 अबर अपना हमदर्द समझते हैं, अपना काम देते हैं। बिहार में ड्रिलिंग का काम नहीं हो रहा है जब कि सारा प्रोजेक्ट तैयार है। (व्यवधान) एक सवाल और है कि तेल के अंदर प्रोफिटियरिंग और ब्लैक मार्केटिंग की बात उठती है। इसको रोकने के लिए आप क्या करने जा रहे हैं। आखिरी सवाल एल पी जी के बारे में पूछना चाहता हूँ। (व्यवधान) इसकी डिस्ट्रीब्यूशन मशीनरी, तेल निकालने की मशीनरी है उसका आपका क्या कार्य-

[श्री शिव चन्द्र झा]

कम है, इस संदर्भ में बताने की कृपा करें।

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR: Mr. Deputy Chairman, the hon. Member has raised...

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR: I would only confine myself to two or three aspects which the hon. Member has directly raised with reference to my statement. Sir, on the question of increase of prices, the last increase was effected in July, 1981 and, afterwards, the various changes, even in the pricing mechanism with reference to the different products, had taken place, and I have already said that there was also a large-scale malpractice of adulteration. As a policy this issue had to be considered, particularly on the question of kerosene. I must submit that the Oil Price Committee also had been emphasising the *need* to maintain price parity between the two products of HSD and kerosene. In fact, I found quite a large number of publicmen also raising this issue. This question had to be gone into in one form or the other. Therefore, when he asks whether personally I do approve it; well, I am a party to it. Sometimes a difficult decision has to be taken. But, in taking this decision, as I said.

SHRI SHIVA CHANDRA JHA: So you don't approve it individually, but because you have to do it....

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hear him first. Don't impute motives.

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR: When facts are evenly placed, sometimes it does present a difficult situation for taking a decision. In this case, as I was submitting this was going to affect the vulnerable and weaker sections of the society so far as S.K.O. was concerned and, therefore, we had to evolve the double pricing mechanism.

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other aspect which the hon. Member has raised is as to why it has not been brought as a part of the budget mechanism. This is only a pricing policy, and I have made this position clear more than once. At no point of time was the price increase in petroleum products a part of the budgetary mechanism. I have tried to carefully go into it. Even in 1981 or earlier, when it was done, it was done only by way of a price mechanism and not as a part of budget. I assure the hon. Member that his fundamental right to movement still continues to be there.

श्री शिव चन्द्र झा : एग्रीकल्चर का कितना होगा, वह भी बा कीजिये।

श्री उपसभापति : वह बाद में देखा जाएगा।

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH (West Bengal); Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I would only put specific questions to the hon. Minister. I pick up the %rea<j left by the hon. Minister, by saying that for the first time, by this policy, they have divided our society into two distinct groups—the have-nots and the haves. In his statement he has said that by this policy he likes to bring about an egalitarian society and, thanks to his platitudinous statement, if the bringing about of an egalitarian society would have depended upon only making of statements inside the House, then, surely, this Government, during the last thirty-five years could have brought it about. But, instead, they have really divided the society into two groups—one of have-nots and the other of haves—and with their own statement admitting that with the passing of years more and more people are going below the poverty line. And this policy would lead to push the people further below the poverty line.

But, Sir, I want to put two or three questions. Firstly, I take UP the ques., tion of the price of diesel V>v the

recent increase of which the cost of operations of transport would go up, particularly, the transport operated by the various State Governments through the State Transport Corporations. And, as you know, the States have their own constraints.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: This point has been replied to.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: When they have got their own constraints, the States are being told by the Planning Commission and by the Centre to concentrate on the mobilization of resources inside the States; and they are being told to cut the non-Plan expenditure. But with the raising of prices of priese, the cost of operations will go up. Will the Government subsidize the State Governments to the extent this rise in prices would result in escalation of cost of operation of the buses or the vehicles of the State transport corporations? That is one point.

The second is regarding kerosene. The Government have announced a dual pricing policy, and the hon Minister has stated much about it. In this context, I take to point out that in the country stretching from Kashmir to Minicoy Islands and from Assam to Gujarat. And almost 80 per cent of the people living in villages; and 78 per cent of the people, as told by the Minister, being the weaker section or the poor people for* whom the Minister has assured selling of kerosene at subsidized rates through the public distribution system. He has also made a statement that he hag already called a meeting of the Civil Supplies heads of various States and he is concentrating upon evolving a mechanism. Vet. with the given efficiency of this Government—and I do not know how long Mr P. Shiv Shankar will remain the Energy Minister with this particular job. . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It is the State Governments. . .

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: I am saying that the State Governments are also tumbling. Three or four State Governments are also tumbling. But my point is, till this mechanism is evolved by which the Central Government with the help of various State Governments allows the sale of kerosene oil at subsidised rates through the public distribution outlets, how will the poor people be given kerosene at subsidized rate, what will be the process, and to what extent is the Central Government in a position to ensure supply of kerosene at subsidized rate till this mechanism is evolved? (Time-bell rings) One minute.

The third is that enough has been said about adulteration, that in order to discourage adulteration of diesel by mixing kerosene, the prices of)/ kerosene had to be raised. May I know whether there were not other methods of preventing adulteration or discouraging adulteration without rais_ ing the prices of kerosene, thereby hitting hard the common people? There was a decision at one point of time that kerosene oil be coloured in order to distinguish between the two and in order that kerosene be not mixed up with diesel. But what steps did the Government take in that regard? One point more.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr. Minister.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: I am putting specific questions, and these questions have not been put by other hon. Members, a, I have understood.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please conclude.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: And the fourth is about the cut in consumption and the cut in the import bill. There was a committee which was set up

I for conservice of oil and effect economy in the use of oil, and they had made certain recommendations i also. What steps has the Government

[Shri Dipen Ghosh] |
taken to reduce consumption of fuel, particularly petrol and petroleum products as a whole. Another thing is that we are seeing that the consumption of oil is not elastic but is inelastic, as I could understand particularly because the Government has gone in for production of more cars, Maruti and others. So many more cars will be produced in the course of the year, and the consumption will also rise. How is the Government going to propose this cut in consumption of oil?

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR: Sir, I am sorry, I may have to join the issue with the hon. friend. When he says that this policy would push the people below the poverty line further. I do not think that this is a correct assumption. In fact, these sections have got to be helped, and it is a process of helping, the subsidy is one of the processes of helping these sections. And I am not able to see the rationale behind the statement made by my hon. friend. Of course, into his general observations, I would not like to go.

The second aspect that he made is because of the increase in the HSD prices, so far as the state transports are concerned, whether the Government of India would come forth with subsidy. That question does not arise. I have said why we have increased the price. This aspect is not under the consideration of the Government.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: Why? The States are being asked to cut down the expenditure.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That is a different matter. He is not concerned.

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR: The third aspect is with reference to the mechanism through which the poor people will get kerosene at the subsidised rate. I have just now made the submission that so far as the Central

Government is concerned, it appoints the wholesale dealers. The retail dealers are appointed by the concerned Civil Supplies Departments of the States. That is one aspect.

The second aspect is, as I have said, the sugar cards are available today all over. We have already advised that in the interim period that must be immediately pressed into service for the purpose of supplying kerosene. I have submitted earlier how I have advised that even in this interim period we should see that the vulnerable sections are supplied 100 per cent. But I have also said that it was possible that the States might take a view that they would supply only 70 per cent. But this would only be for the interim period of roughly three to four months when the system develops. I have already submitted that 15 per cent goes for the adulteration, and my assumption is about 10 per cent also goes for the industrial purposes. So, if this 25 per cent has got to be reckoned, then, it comes to roughly about 70 per cent which was catering to the needs of the people for the purpose of illumination as well as cooking, both. That has been taken care of. Therefore, I do not see any difficulty at this stage even for the interim period in supplying kerosene at the subsidised rates, particularly to the vulnerable sections.

The hon. member has also referred to another aspect of the other methods to avoid adulteration. It is true that colouring is one process; proper vigilance is also another process. But, Sir, we have got to reckon with the human ingenuity, as a result of which it goes on working out to get over the various difficulties or the various situations that present to a particular society, and people. By their ingenuity they have been trying to find ways and means to get over these efforts that were made by the Government in order to curb adulteration of kerosene with HSD. Therefore, this is one step which we thought we should take, and this would be an effective step.

Sir, on the question of import-saving, as compared to 1981-82, when we had to spend foreign exchange to the tune of Rs. 5,500 crores, for the year 1982-83 it has come down to Rs. 4,800 crores, thereby showing a saving of Rs. 600 crores.

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE (Maharashtra): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, this Calling Attention raises two very important questions. I will deal with the first. I am happy that the hon. Finance Minister is present in the House. This has been variously dubbed as backdoor tactics, as a measure to hoodwink Parliament and so on and so forth. And the main objection has been that it should have been a part of the budgetary mechanism or exercise. I, on my behalf, wish to enter a very strong caveat because I believe in an open and relaxed debate even in regard to budgetary matters. I just do not understand why all of a sudden on the 28th of February every year the price of commodity A or commodity B should change or should be brought under higher or lower rates of taxation. I think the time has come for us to have a re-thinking on this aspect of the matter, and what has been aptly and correctly described by the hon. Minister of Energy as a pricing policy, should be a feature throughout the year so that you raise the prices as and when it becomes necessary.

The second question, of course, is with regard to the merits of the pricing proposals or the price hikes which have been effected. Now those like me who have been concerned very seriously, very earnestly, very conscientiously, with the energy strategy of the country—because that is what will in a large measure determine the fate, the growth, the progress, of the country, or the reduction of costs or increase in inflation—are convinced that this is the first vital step in the right direction. And I say so with the backing of a large number of authorities, because all those who are known in this sphere

have welcomed this measure. I have carefully gone through the editorials which "have been published in the various dailies and I find that there has been an unanimous acceptance and acclaim of this policy of the Government. This measure has not come a day too soon. In fact, it should have come much earlier. It was necessary to raise the prices of kerosene and high speed diesel which had been dismally low and which had been affecting the very causes which have been set out in the statement of the Minister. I do hope that the Government will proceed with these bold steps. Though temporarily they may appear to be a little cost-pushing, in the long run they will really end in a great saving of foreign exchange, a great saving of oil reserves and in making available alternative sources of energy so necessary for our country at this stage.

I am quite sure that the main purpose of this dual pricing policy has been the concern for the weaker sections. I am quite sure that the Minister of Energy will adopt proper guidelines and evolve an efficient machinery and mechanism to see that domestic supplies of kerosene reach the poorest so that their hearths remain kindled and they get cheap kerosene for light and for cooking. I would request the Minister to let me know whether he will adopt a very effective and progressive policy to attain self-sufficiency in energy.

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR: Sir, I do not think that any question has been raised for me to answer. But as I have already made it clear, we are already working out an effective system for the purpose of distribution of kerosene at the subsidised rates to the weaker and vulnerable sections of the society.

श्री सत्यपाल मलिक (उत्तर प्रदेश) :
श्रीमान, यह काम जबरदस्ती का काम
हो गया है और करीब-करीब हर साल
इसके दाम बढ़ते हैं। अब मैं पहले बोझ

[श्री सत्यपाल मलिक]

शिष्टाचार बरतते थे कि इस तरह का काम आर्डिनेंस के जरिये करते थे लेकिन अब की एक्जीक्यूटिव आर्डर्स से कर दिया। और, वह इनके मिजाज का हिस्सा है। मैं इस बात को छोड़ देता हूँ। मैं तो जो एक साधारण बात देखने में लगती हूँ, लेकिन महत्वपूर्ण है, उसी का जिक्र करना चाहता हूँ।

मेरी राय में यह जो दाम आपने बढ़ाये हैं इसका असर आखिरकार हिन्दुस्तान के सब से गरीब तबके और आम आदमी पर सब से ज्यादा पड़ेगा और आप जितने भी आंकड़े बतायें, अर्ज करें, दावा करें कि इससे दाम नहीं बढ़ेंगे, वह गलत साबित होंगे। वह आप अगले साल मानेंगे, इस साल मानने वाले नहीं हैं। जो सब से बड़ा नुकसान होने वाला है, वह यह है कि जो डीजल का दाम बढ़ा है, उसकी बजह से परिवहन की जितनी चीजें हैं, आदमी का घूमना-फिरना, सारा कुछ, वह सबही कहा भाई महावीर जी ने, वह निश्चित तौर से उपभोक्ता के ऊपर सारे देश में असर पड़ेगा। सब से ज्यादा प्रभाव पड़ेगा कृषि के उत्पादन पर। किसान की इतनी दुर्गति है कि जितने सूबों के बिजली बोर्ड हैं, सबों ने हाल ही में बिजली का दाम कई गुना, जो बिजली का फ्लैट का रेट था, बढ़ा दिया। बिजली मिलती नहीं और तर्क यह दिया जाता है—सरकार जो दे रही है, कि हम घाटे में हैं, बिजली बोर्ड घाटे में हैं, इसलिए दाम बढ़ा दिया है। आप भी दाम बढ़ा देते हैं कि हमारा इम्पोर्ट बिल का मसला है। आपकी बदइतजामी सरकार की नालायकी की वजह से जो घाटे होते हैं, वह घाटे आप आम आदमी और किसान का पेट काट करके पूरा करना चाहते हैं। गरीब उपभोक्ता या किसान या मजदूर—उसके घाटे की बाबत भी कभी कुछ होगा, कुछ कभी सोचा

है, कि वह कहाँ से पूरा होता है। 40 प्रतिशत से ज्यादा उत्पादन नहीं है जो बिजली के पावर प्लांट हैं, क्या घपला है और वहाँ आप दाम बढ़ा देते हैं। इसी तरह से आपने इसके दाम बढ़ा दिये। तो जो फसल तैयार खड़ी थी, उसमें जो बिजली नहीं मिलती थी और डीजल का इस्तेमाल करके काम चलाने वाले थे, वह खत्म हो जाएगा और अब नतीजा यह होगा कि डीजल मिलेगा नहीं।

इसी तरह से मिट्टी के तेल का मामला है। आपने तर्क दे दिया कि मिलावट है और बड़ा भारी तर्क हर साल मिलावट का दिया जाता है। तो मिलावट तो दूध में पानी की भी होती है और पानी आम आदमी के इस्तेमाल की चीज है। तो यही तर्क दे दें। पर मिलावट आप रोक नहीं सकते हैं। आपके पास कोई इंतजाम नहीं है, आप डीजल की मिलावट नहीं रोक सकते हैं, जो चीज मिलाई जाती है, उसके दाम बढ़ा देते हैं बिना यह सोचे-समझे कि उसका इस्तेमाल कौन करता है।

मान्यवर, आप यकीन कीजियेगा, आजमगढ़ जिले से तीन चिट्ठियाँ चौधरी चरण सिंह जी के पास आई, जब वे वित्त मंत्री थे—तीन चरवाहे लड़कों ने लिखी थी कि हम हाई स्कूल का इस्तहान देने वाले हैं और हमको किसी भी तरह से, हम अपने एम0एल0ए0 तक पहुँच चुके हैं हमको किसी भी तरह से मिट्टी का तेल नहीं मिलता है पढ़ने के लिये, हम इस्तहान नहीं दे पायेंगे क्योंकि दिन में हमको ढोर चराने पड़ते हैं। देखने में चीज बहुत मामूली है, लेकिन इसका असर देखिये किन लोगों के ऊपर कहाँ पड़ा है।

मैं इस संसद का सदस्य हूँ। यह बड़ी भारी चीज समझी जाती है। आप

मेरा यकीन कीजिए और इसकी मैंने जांच करवाई है, मेरे अपने गांव में जब मैं पूछता हूँ कि किस चीज की जरूरत है, तो ज्यादा यह कहा जाता है कि मिट्टी का तेल—अपने दिल्ली के कोटे का भी हमारे पास भेजिये। गांव में मिट्टी का तेल नहीं मिलता है और आप फिजूल का दावा करते हैं।

आज किसी भी तरह से जो बिल्कुल मामूली आदमी है गांव का, जिसको मिट्टी के तेल की जरूरत है अपने बच्चों की पढ़ाई के लिये, अपनी देखभाल के लिये भी, अपनी हिफाजत के लिये भी और जो मिडिल क्लास और निचली मिडिल क्लास के आदमी हैं जिनको खाना बनाने के लिये जरूरत है, उन सारे घरों में आप कुहाम पैदा कर देंगे। आपके पास कोई इंतजाम नहीं है कि आप इसको देख सके और इस तर्ज को आप खत्म कर दीजिये कि हमने इसलिये बढ़ाया है कि मितावट है। मितावट आपके यहां सब चीजों में है। आप उसको रोक नहीं पा रहे हैं। आप इस नाकामयाबी को भी कबूल करें।

मान्यवर, एक प्रश्न मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से यह करना चाहता हूँ कि आप जो हर साल अपनी फिजूलखर्ची, अपनी गलती, या बढ़ते हुए इम्पोर्ट बिल के ऊपर जो इस तरह से दाम बढ़ा देते हैं, इस तरह से काम चलने वाला नहीं है। आप एनर्जी के लिये कहते हैं कि दूसरे स्रोत—जोयता हो, बिजली हो, सब में आपने यहां घाटा है, उत्पादन बढ़ नहीं रहा है, बिजली व्यवस्था कुछ हल नहीं कर पाते। मैं सिर्फ यह पूछना चाहता हूँ आपसे कि क्या आपके पास कोई कमिन्हेन्सिव पालिसी है जिसमें ऊर्जा का जो इस्तेमाल है, उसके रोकने की आपने कोई बात सोची हों? इसमें थोड़ी हल कर के बात है, लेकिन काम की बात

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है—मेरे घर के सामने से फौज के बड़े-बड़े अफसर—मैंने देखा है कि ब्रिगेडियर के स्तर के अफसर, चार-चार अफसर बैठ कर के एक कार में आते हैं दफतर अटेंड करने के लिये पेट्रोल का पैसा नहीं दे सकते हैं, लेकिन आपके सिविल के अफसर कंपनियों के अफसर और इस देश के घना सेठ किताबें बड़े पैमाने पर पेट्रोल की फिजूलखर्ची करते हैं, उनको रोकने की आप कोई कोशिश नहीं करते हैं, कोई आपकी तरफ से कोशिश ऐसी नहीं है कि उनको रोका जाये। किसान जो डीजल इस्तेमाल करता है, उसके जो डीजल के पम्प बनाये जा रहे हैं, वह इतने सब-स्टेण्डर्ड हैं कि जितना डीजल कायदे में उनमें लगना चाहिये, उतने ज्यादा लगता है और डीजल इतना सब-स्टेण्डर्ड है कि अगर उसका पम्प दो साल चलना चाहिये तो वह एक हो साल चलता है। तो यह जो प्रक्रिया है फिजूलखर्ची की इस को रोकने का कोई कम्प्रोहेंसिव प्लान आप ने बनाया है? आखिर मैं मैं फिर निवेदन करना चाहता हूँ कि माननीय मंत्री जी जो मामूली आदमी को एफेक्ट करने वाली चीजें हैं उन के संबंध में बिल्कुल सतही तौर से ऐसे फैसले न लिया करें और इस को बजट के जरिये ही करें ताकि देश को यकीन हो कि उन की बातों पर संसद में बहुत हुई।

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR: The only question relevant for the purpose of this discussion that the hon. Member has raised while making his observations is with reference to the conservation of energy. This is not the occasion when I should go into details as to what steps are being taken for conservation of energy. I would only say that the Government on its part is trying its level best in various sectors, be it power, be it coal or be it oil, to take various steps for the purpose of conservation. Even

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non-conventional sources of energy are encouraged. But this is not a subject which I think I should deal with at this stage.

DR. MALCOLM S. ADISESHIAH (Nominated): Mr. Deputy Chairman, I shall be brief. I must begin by stating that I am one of those economists who in relation to the coming budget had said that there should be a rise in the prices of petroleum products as one means of stopping what I regard as the unacceptable rate of increased consumption of petroleum products in the country which is not referred to here. For this year we will be finishing up with a 15 per cent increase in the consumption of petroleum products. This is unacceptable in relation to this being a very high price scarce product and, therefore, I have been proposing that there should be a rise in the price of these products.

But I disagree with my friend Mr. Bhandare. I am sorry that this decision to raise the price was not part of the budget. It is not only because the decision erodes Parliamentary powers but because I would like to see it in the light of the total revenue raising proposals before us. I cannot judge the importance of this in isolation without seeing the other revenue raising proposals that are going to be placed before us by the Finance Minister. I would like to see this as part of the total budget picture.

I support the increases that have been proposed by the hon. Minister on six items. I have four questions three of which are minor. My first minor question is in respect of paragraph 2 of his statement where he relies on self-reliance to improve balance of payment position. I do not think that this is quite right. Yesterday there was a debate between him and some members on this side of the house about the marginal difference between turning coal into oil and

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importing oil. He reported that the Government decided to import since that would be cheaper. Therefore, this relationship between self-reliance and balance of payment is not so evident as he makes out in paragraph 2.

In paragraph 3 he makes out a case for the price rise of petroleum products on the basis of reduction in crude imports. Yes. But I think more important is the reduction in crude consumption in regard to consumption. I think we should discipline our poor country. Look at the last five years. Every year crude consumption is increasing and this should be stopped.

My third minor point is that you referred to substitution of oil products by other energy sources. May I say that there is also what is called inter-petroleum product substitution? That is to say, we should, wherever possible substitute petrol with USD, we should substitute, wherever possible, HSD with LSD, and we should, wherever possible, substitute LSD with furnace oil and so on so that there is also substitution between the products. Now, my main question is—it has been asked by one or two Members in an indirect way—that the result of your decision is to increase the gap between the prices of HSD and that of kerosene, subsidized kerosene. Mr. Minister, I do not know whether you have received, but many of us in Parliament have received, a letter from All-India Motor Transporters' Association which says that the creation of non-levy and levy kerosene is going to create more problems than it intends to solve because of the further widened gap between the price of levy kerosene and diesel and the unscrupulous people will be more tempted to adulterate this with kerosene and the weaker sections would be starved of their requirements. They have sent you and also Mrs. Gandhi a cable. My question now is—this: Since the gap between the subsidized kerosene and diesel is increased, what measures are we taking or

we are able to take to prevent the subsidized kerosene being used to adulterate diesel? I will end by saying that I have some doubts as to whether you should equate 70 per cent of the kerosene with the weaker sections. I think it would be very good if you can ask the State Governments, if you cannot do it yourself, to make a survey in some urban areas to find out as to who consumes the subsidized kerosene. May I say to you that my wife has to buy kerosene every month because the LPG supply is delayed, the gas deliveries are delayed, and sometimes the delay is as long as three weeks, and I cannot be regarded as belonging to the weaker sections and many people like me are consuming the subsidized kerosene. Therefore, the system that you are referring to, I think, should like the delivery of subsidized kerosene to be supplied to the poorer sections to those who are holding the ration cards for drawing subsidized rice. At least in my State only those whose monthly income is below five hundred rupees can draw these rations and this kind of a thing we should insist on because there is the real danger of misuse and adulteration.

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR: Sir, what I have mentioned in para 2 is a matter of policy wherein I have said that because of the severe adverse balance in our foreign trade we have been facing difficulties and I have said that in order to reduce the balance of payments gap, we have to ensure self-reliance and to take these measures to reduce this gap. I have said it as a matter of policy. We have to necessarily work in a manner to achieve self-reliance in crude production. Now, for that purpose, while we have to make every effort to see that production increases, we have also to see that the imports decrease. It is in that context that I have referred to the self-reliance concept. This is only a process and one cannot say that we can achieve it immediately when there is an increase in the prices. I would not like to dilate fur-

ther on this aspect and I would directly go to the main question which my honourable friend has raised with reference to the question of adulteration with subsidized kerosene of HSD. I do not fully rule out the possibility of such kerosene being used for adulterating HSD. But the fact is that if the vulnerable sections of people, to whom kerosene is provided at subsidized rates, would like to sell it for the purpose of adulteration of HSD, to that extent the Government would take the measures that it can.

श्री रामेश्वर सिंह : (उत्तरप्रदेश) :
मन्त्री जी गरीब तेल नहीं बेचता । आप गरीब की बात मत करिये । आइतिया तेल बेचता है । गरीब तो दो लीटर, पांच लीटर तेल खरीदता है । आइतिया ड्रम तेल खरीदता है और अपनी टंकी भ्रम मिलाकर बेचता है ।

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR: I do not also rule out the possibility of the dealers themselves selling the kerosene directly to high-speed dealers. I am not ruling out the possibility. But for that what is more important is to strengthen the distribution system and to strengthen the vigilance system also. I have already instructed the States, and on our part also we are strengthening our vigilance system properly, so that this type of malpractice is curbed to the extent it is possible. My hon. friend has also stated the measures which can be taken. I am aware it is possible. These are the difficulties. But they have got to be solved, and on the part of the Government we would certainly take steps to see that this type of malpractice is checked. As observed by the hon. Members, I have already requested officers to make the survey of the vulnerable sections. We have given the guidelines based on the salary content on the economic content of this class. I have given different guidelines, on the basis of which I am sure, within four months, this work would be completed.

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The hon. Member has also referred to his purchasing kerosene. I do not know; I will also again go back to see, because I have already directed all the companies to supply second cylinder. I had to take this decision because the supply of gas cylinders was getting delayed. As a result, the people were not only consuming more kerosene but they were also facing hardship. That is why notwithstanding the fact that some of the hon. Members felt that this would retard the supply of gas cylinders to the rural areas. I took this decision so that the unhappiness could be minimised. I am sure the hon. Members would take advantage of this standby gas cylinder.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN; Mr. Kalmadi. Be brief.

SHRI SURESH KALMADI (Maharashtra): Even before I started, you are...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Everything has been discussed. There is nothing more.

SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Not this one. It is surprising that while all over the world the prices are falling—not only falling but they are crashing—we are raising the prices of our products. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether we are the highest taxed country in the world as far as petroleum products are concerned. I will just read out a part of your statement:—

"Significant quantities of Kerosene were being used by anti-social elements for adulteration with high speed diesel oil. As a result of these malpractices, the growth in consumption of kerosene in the last two years has been much higher than the normal growth in consumption..."

This is a frank admission that the Government was a mere spectator for the last two years and you could not control adulteration in this particular product. And if you think that by this

new dual policy you are going to succeed, I think you are sadly mistaken. We in Maharashtra have tried it at sugar and cement—dual pricing. It has totally failed. At times of shortages there is a lot of blackmarketing, etc. The main cause of adulteration among petroleum dealers is the basic fact that commissions have been stagnant for many years. Whereas in 1960-65, the commission on petroleum products was as high as 7 per cent to the dealer, he is now getting only 2 per cent margin and this is the reason why the petroleum dealer goes into adulteration. This will not be there if you give him proper commission and proper share. And you have to go into this basic question of how to prevent adulteration. And I would like to know if the Government is thinking in terms of increasing the commission of the petroleum dealers.

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR; Sir, one pertinent question which has been raised by the hon. Member is whether the price of the petroleum products in our country is the highest. I must submit that the prices of most of the petroleum products even after this increase are lower than or are comparable with the prices in most of the countries in the world. I have got detailed figures but it would be unnecessary for me to go into that at this stage. Since a general question has been asked, I thought that a general answer should be furnished.

SHRI SURESH KALMADI: What about the commission? Are you thinking in terms of increasing the commission because in the last ten years it has come down from 7 per cent to 2 per cent which is leading to adulteration?

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR: Some time back we had taken a decision to increase slightly. In fact, my predecessor had also taken the decision. With reference to different products, the commission has been raised. I had also worked out. And this decision we have taken something like 6

or 7 months back; I am not sure about it. Presently, there is no proposal for enhancing the commission.

SHRI SURESH KALMADI: That will lead to more adulteration.

SHRI GHULAM RASOOL MATTO (Jammu & Kashmir): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, yesterday, it has been talked out—I should say—that on the eve of the session of Parliament these increases are made. I would request through you, your medium, Sir, all the Ministries in the Government that whenever they have got to increase their rates, they should carry it out in the session rather than out of the session. Particularly, the Minister for Petroleum is here and I would like to get an assurance from him personally whether he agrees with my view.

Sir, I have come from Kashmir only two days back. The question of kerosene is the burning topic everywhere. Now, in Kashmir, kerosene is being used to save forest wealth. In Kashmir, in the low-lying areas, forests are being denuded for using as firewood. The Government there is encouraging the people living on the fringes of the forest to use kerosene instead of this thing. Now, according to the statement made earlier and according to the newspaper report that had appeared in the press, the Government has yet to evolve the machinery to make this 70 per cent available. 70 per cent is a good quantity. I would only submit a practical solution to tide over the present difficulty. In every State there has a depot. Let him send a SOS right now to every State that according to the present stocks of kerosene in that particular State, 70 per cent should be earmarked immediately for the weaker sections and handed over to the State Government for immediate distribution. Is the hon. Minister agreeable to this proposition because it is only through this proposition that within a matter of days, every remote corner of the State—it is, of course, the question of distribution of the State Government—far-flung areas can be ensured to get this 70 per cent kerosene. Otherwise he has to wait for a

long time to set up that machinery. I would request him to kindly enlighten us whether he is prepared to accept my plea on this.

SHRI p. SHIV SHANKAR: Leaving out why it has happened, the fact remains that on the very day itself when we took the decision, we advised that the State Governments should be supplied 70 per cent of their allocations at the subsidised rate. This has already been directed and this is followed also. Therefore, I do not see any difficulty with respect to that part of it. As I said, in the interim period the mechanism is there in the sense that so far as sugar is concerned that is being supplied on sugar cards everywhere and that mechanism will be used in the interim period for the purpose of supplying kerosene also. Though we have left it to the State Governments to devise the mechanism, but this we thought would be better for the purpose of supplying kerosene in the mean time.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

After lunch we shall take up Motion of Thanks on the President's Address. Of course, special meetings are also there. Then we shall have further discussion regarding Assam at 4 p.m.

सदन की कार्यवाही 2.15 बजे तक के लिये स्थगित की जाती है।

The House then adjourned for lunch at twenty minutes past one of the clock.

The House reassembled after lunch at eighteen minutes past two of the clock.

[The Vice-Chairman (Shri Sat Paul Mittal) in the Chair]

REFERENCE TO THE ALLEGED BURNING OF JHUGGIS 'N WAZIR-PUR INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, DELHI

श्री राधेश्वर सिंह: (उत्तर प्रदेश) :
श्रीमान्, उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, आज सदन