

## RAJYA SABHA

Tuesday, the 20th March, 1979/29th  
Phalgun, 1900 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the  
clock, Mr. Chairman in the Chair.

### ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

#### Resentment in the tea industry

\*331. SHRI TILOK GOGOI:†  
SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE,  
CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware  
that there is a strong resentment in  
the tea industry for not nominating any  
resident of Assam amongst the pro-  
ducer members to the Tea Board;  
and

(b) if so, what steps Government  
propose to take to remedy the situa-  
tion?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN  
THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE,  
CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION (SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR  
GOYAL): (a) and (b) The members  
of the Board have been appointed by  
Government on the basis of nomina-  
tions received from different Asso-  
ciations of producers, manufacturers,  
dealers and other interests. Producers' representatives on the Board  
have substantial interest in the tea  
plantations located in Assam. Joint  
Secretary to the Government of  
Assam, Industries Department is a  
member of the Tea Board. One of  
the M.Ps. appointed as a member of  
the Board is also a resident of Assam.

SHRI TILOK GOGOI: Sir, Assam  
produces 50 per cent of the total tea  
in India, and a major part of it goes  
for exports and earns foreign ex-

change. And more than 60 per cent  
of the tea producers are residents of  
Assam. The Tea Board was recons-  
tituted by the Government about  
eight months back. May I know from  
the hon. Minister—What is the cri-  
terion to reconstitute the Tea Board?  
What is its strength? Are all the  
members nominated to the Board,  
including the labour representatives  
and, if not, why not?

In view of these facts, will the  
hon. Minister agree that the Assam  
tea producers have a rightful claim  
to have a representative on the  
Board from amongst the permanent  
residents of the States and also as-  
sure the House that in future Gov-  
ernment will look into it?

SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR GOYAL:  
Yes, Sir. Thought the strength of  
the Tea Board is 30, only 24 members  
have been appointed so far. Five  
members, representatives of labour  
interest are yet to be nominated on  
the basis of suggestions from the  
Labour Ministry. There is also one  
vacancy representing the consumer  
interest. I would like to say that  
membership is not based on geogra-  
phical units but is according to the  
diverse, connected interests. The  
only exception is the representation  
of tea-producing State Governments.

SHRI TILOK GOGOI: As it in-  
volves the policy of the Government  
the Commerce Ministry recently re-  
organised the tea zones, from two to  
five, with the intention of giving re-  
lief to the sick and low-producing  
tea gardens without losing Govern-  
ment revenue. As per the policy of  
the Government, some sick and low-  
producing tea gardens are to pay a  
high excise duty along with others  
on a zonal basis. For example, in  
the Nazira Circle and Golaghat Sub-  
Division in Assam, due to scanty  
rainfall, some tea gardens have be-  
come sick. What remedial steps are  
the Government proposing to take  
for the survival of these tea gardens?

Then Sir, according to the Planta-  
tion Labour Act, housing facilities

†The question was actually asked  
on the floor of the House by Shri  
Tilok Gogoi.

to the labourers are a must, along with other facilities like medical facility, supply of fuel, water, etc. Formerly, in Assam, the State Government provided a quota of cement for the tea industries separately for this purpose. At present, the housing facility is completely closed because of want of cement. In view of this, will the Minister be pleased to allot a cement quota for the tea industry there separately?

SHRI MOHAN DHARIA: Sir, I do share the concern of the hon. Member. The Government has taken up several schemes for replenishment and new plantation, and naturally, under these schemes wherever the plantations have gone old, all possible cooperation and assistance are being extended by the Government. Regarding cement, yes, there is a shortage of cement. However, with a view to having this housing programme implemented, I shall take up the matter with the concerned Ministry.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: Sir, the Minister just now said that representation on the Tea Board should not be on the basis of geographical interest. I agree with this but at the same time when Assam contributes a major share in respect of tea, their share of representation on the Tea Board is of vital importance so far as the proper development of the industry is concerned. According to my information, among the producer-members, there is none who has really any vital interest in Assam and, therefore, I would like to know whether the Government would consider the matter so that at least one representative from the producers from Assam can be accommodated on the Tea Board. Secondly, as the hon. Minister in his reply has widened the scope of the question, may I know whether it is a fact that the zonal division so far as tea is concerned, is not based on any rational basis? Even in case of Assam, it was not based on any rational basis. Has the Government considered it on a rational basis this time or in it on

an *ad hoc* basis? Will there be a rational approach to this problem so far as representation from different zones is concerned?

SHRI PILOO MODY: This is not an *ad hoc* Government.

SHRI MOHAN DHARIA: So far as the first part of the question is concerned, I would like to fairly concede that those who are from Assam and have their office in Assam, have not been properly represented on the Tea Board. Certainly, whenever we get the opportunity, we would like to rectify it. Similarly, I would like to assure the hon. Member that five members from the labour section are to be taken on this Tea Board. We have requested the Labour Minister and here also I would certainly take up the matter with him so that those who are from that area, have some more prominence and this will be considered. Regarding the zones, the query raised by the hon. Member is equally important. It is true that today there is no rationality whatsoever in having these zones and this point is under consideration.

SHRI U. K. LAKSHMANA GOWDA: I am glad this subject has been raised here. The whole difficulty with regard to lack of proper representation for the producers results from the fact that a few years ago, the Government took a decision to reduce the number of representatives on all the commodity boards. Same is the case with Tea Board. Now there are several tea producing States in the country; Assam is one and then West Bengal is there and there are three southern States, Kerala, Madras and Karnataka. I would like to know from the Minister whether he would make a categorical statement and say that he would review the position and restore the Coffee Board and other commodity boards to the original level. Secondly, I would like to know whether he would consider giving proper representation to all the tea producing States in the country when the next nominations take place.

SHRI MOHAN DHARIA: It is true that the number has been brought down from 40 to 28. But then it was the question of proper and effective functioning of the Tea Board . . .

SHRI U. K. LAKSHMANA GOWDA: I am not referring to that. You have reduced the producers' representation on all the Boards. Would you look into that matter?

SHRI MOHAN DHARIA: I shall look into the matter.

SHRI JAHARLAL BANERJEE: Will the Minister let the House know how the consumers' representative is selected? What is the principle followed with regard to selection of the consumers' representative on the Board?

SHRI MOHAN DHARIA: Sir, these are, of course, based on the recommendations of the Tea Board and according to law itself, these various categories have been fixed. Naturally, on the basis of recommendations from the Tea Board and from other institutions, the choice is made.

#### Development of tourism in West Bengal

\*382. SHRI ANANDA PATHAK: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the aid given to the West Bengal Government by the Central Government for the development of tourism during the last three years;

(b) the amount of aid utilised for Centres of tourist attraction in the hill areas of West Bengal; and

(c) what are the names of places in Darjeeling District for which such aid was given and what is the amount spent so far?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PURUSHOTTAM KAUSHIK): (a) and (b) Since the beginning of the Fourth Five Year Plan, tourism schemes are taken up either in the Central Sector or in the State Sector. A Statement indicating tourism sche-

mes together with expenditure incurred in West Bengal including hill areas during the last three years is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

(c) A Youth Hostel at Darjeeling was commissioned in 1975 at a cost of Rs. 4.86 lakhs. Expansion of the existing Tourist Lodge was also undertaken at an estimated cost of Rs. 4.85 lakhs by adding 14 double rooms. As the area holds a high potential for trekking, it is proposed to develop this activity along the Sandakphu-Phalut route for attracting both domestic and international tourists, in pursuance of the recommendations made at the State Tourism Ministers' Conference held in New Delhi in November 1978.

#### Statement

(Rs. in lakhs)

#### 1975-76

##### Department of Tourism

- |   |      |
|---|------|
| 1. Extension of Tourist Lodge at Darjeeling . . . . . | 0.50 |
| 2. Completion of Forest Lodge at Jaldapara . . . . .  | 0.88 |

##### India Tourism Development Corporation

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| *1. Airport Hotel at Dum Dum . . . . . | 41.00 |
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#### 1976-77

##### Department of Tourism

- |  |      |
|--|------|
| 1. Expansion of Tourist Bungalow at Darjeeling . . . . . | 4.85 |
|--|------|

##### India Tourism Development Corporation :

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| *1. Airport Hotel at Calcutta . . . . .         | 12.67 |
| 2. Flight Kitchen at Calcutta Airport . . . . . | 2.86  |

#### 1977-78

##### India Tourism Development Corporation :

- |   |      |
|---|------|
| 1. Flight Kitchen at Calcutta Airport . . . . . | 1.62 |
|---|------|

TOTAL . . . . .	64.38
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\*The total cost of the Airport Hotel at Calcutta was approximately Rs. 300 lakhs.