

to end the unequal competition between the handloom and the textile mills, demarcating the spheres of production for handlooms, powerlooms and textile mills. That is the first thing. The second thing is you must also guarantee supply of yarn, quality yarn, at a cheaper rate through decentralised weaving centres by nationalising the textile industry. This will be something shocking to our friends who are no longer interested in nationalisation. But as far as the textile industries are concerned, there is no short-cut solution to meet this monstrous problem. Heavy taxes are levied on yarn consumed by handlooms, you see the paradox, while the mill's are exempted...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI U. K. LAKSHMANA GOWDA): You please give your suggestions.

SHRI LAKSHMANA MAHA-PATRO: These taxes should be immediately withdrawn. The excise duty should also be withdrawn. The Handloom Corporation who exploit the weavers much more than the master weavers, should be asked to behave. The handloom corporations should be better democratised by replacing the bureaucrats by non-officials drawn from the industry. Then, every weaver should be given at least Rs. 12 if he works under the corporation schemes and recruitment of personnel from among weavers in the corporations should be made a must. The corporations should be required to increase the purchase price of cloth when the yarn price goes up. Lastly, we have been hearing our friends quoting from the Janata Party manifesto. I am also quoting. Unfortunately, I have to do it painfully. I want to know from my friends one thing. What kind of a catastrophe have you brought about on the weavers? Is it compatible with what you have said in your election manifesto regarding lowering of prices, regarding unemployment or the populist concept of ruralism? Are you really going to help cottage industries or small industries? Or, are you going to throttle every little thing that is

in existence in this country? Now, with a view to ameliorating the conditions of these artisans, I appeal to them to take all the measures I have suggested without still continuing in the same apathetic fashion as they have been doing so long.

REFERENCE TO CRASH FALL IN PRICE OF GUR AND KHANDSARI

SHRI SUJAN SINGH (Haryana): Sir, on the 22nd February, my friends moved a Motion in the House drawing the attention of the hon. Minister for Agriculture to the steady fall in the price of khandsari. The hon. Minister promised to take all possible steps to see that the price does not fall further and the price regains. In this connection, the Government have taken two steps so far. The issue of a notification is the first step the Government have taken. I will read out the notification. "The Central Government has fixed the limit of storing of khandsari upto 1,000 quintals by the dealers which is against the declared policy of the Government to encourage storage so that the low price of khandsari may rise up."

This step is against the interests of the farmers and is against the declared policy of the Government. By fixing the limit at 1,000 quintals, there will be less number of buyers and that will lead to a further fall in price in the market.

Secondly, the Reserve Bank has taken another step. They have reduced the minimum margin for commercial bank advances against gur and khandsari from 60 per cent to 35 per cent for manufacturers and from 75 per cent to 45 per cent for others. The minimum margin for advances against warehouse receipts has also been reduced from 55 per cent to 30 per cent. The result of this would be that the people who store this commodity would be required by the banks to clear their accounts and sell the produce stored by them or they will have to deposit more money

[Shri Sujan Singh]

to fill the gap. So, in this case, I know that the Government cannot do much because the trading community, the banks and the warehouses are involved. But the Government can help in one way. The Government can give loans to the people who are storing this item so that they may be able to fill the gap created by the low prices. After the recent instructions by the banks, there has been some weaknesses in the market trends also because the people have begun to feel that the prices are going to fall still further, by another thirty per cent or so, as the margin provided by the banks has been reduced by about thirty per cent. On account of this, the prices may fall further, by another thirty per cent or so. I would, therefore, request the honourable Minister to clarify the position with regard to these things which are against the interests of the farmers.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH): Sir, I will just take two minutes to clarify the point arising out of the special mention just now made by the honourable Member.

Firstly, Sir, the limit is not 1,000 quintals, but 5,000 quintals. Secondly, about the margin, when the margin is reduced, the stockists have an additional facility, not otherwise, as understood by the honourable Member. In fact, we have provided facility for the storage of more khandsari because we are faced with a situation of surplus and the best thing under these circumstances is to see that some of the products are stocked somewhere and for that purpose only we have increased the limit and also provided with bank facility. It is not as he understands it; but just the opposite. Margin means that the stockist will get 70 per cent and not, as he understands, that they will get only thirty per cent.

SHRI LAKSHMANA MAHA-PATRO (Orissa): Sir, there are nation wide agitations and demonstrations going on. At least, Sir, we must know the reaction of the Minister here. I mentioned about the weavers.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI U. K. LAKSHMANA GOWDA): You have made your point. Now, we go on to the next item, that is, the Railway Budget.

SHRI SUJAN SINGH: Sir, I have got the cutting with me. I would request the Minister to clarify the position.

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH: I have already cleared the position.

THE BUDGET (RAILWAYS) 1978. 79—GENERAL DISCUSSION

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI U. K. LAKSHMANA GOWDA): Now, we take up the Railway Budget. From the Congress Party, Mr. Buragohain is not here. Yes, Mr. Dhabe.

SHRI S. W. DHABE (Maharashtra): Sir, the Railway Budget, which we are discussing today, is a patchwork of some small promise which have been fulfilled. But it does not indicate any larger perspective in the planning of the railway lines nor does it even seem to touch upon the general problems of the railway employees.

Sir, the year 1977-78 has been a year of sorrow so far as the railways are concerned because during this period there were a large number of accidents. Sir, when a respected Member of this House, Shri Prakash Veer Shastri, died in a railway mishap, it was said that the accident was due to the fish-plates having been removed and, in certain other cases, it was said that they were due to sabotage activities. But, in the whole Budget speech, there is no indication at all as to what steps