

RAJYA SABHA

Wednesday, the 7th December, 1977/ the 16th, Agrahayana, 1899 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the Clock, MR. CHAIRMAN *in the Chair*.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

Setting up of a fruit processing plant

*451. SHRI BIR CHANDRA DEB BURMAN:

SHRI SANAT KUMAR RAHA:t

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to set-up a fruit processing plant in the country with financial assistance from the German Democratic Republic;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(c) at what place is the proposed plant likely to be set-up?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH): (a) to (c) The National Agricultural Co-operative Marketing Federation is considering the possibility of setting up a fruit and Vegetable Processing plant at Silchar in Assam or any other suitable place in the North-Eastern Region. A Techno-Economic feasibility report has been prepared jointly by the experts of GDR and NAFED which envisages processing of pine-apples,

tThe question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Sanat Kumar Raha.

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oranges and tomatoes, GDR is expected to provide financial assistance in the form of loan to cover the cost of machinery imported from GDR or any other socialist country.

SHRI SANAT KUMAR RAHA: I want to know whether any indigenous projects will be encouraged before inviting foreign firms from abroad.

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH: Indigenous projects are also under very active consideration. But those will be set up in other parts of the country. If this fails, then we will also try to substitute it with indigenous production.

SHRI SANAT KUMAR RAHA: I want to know whether any attempt was there on behalf of the Government to think over this matter before inviting multi-nationals from abroad.

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH: We did not invite anyone; sometimes offers are received and we consider those offers. That is all.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question was whether it was considered prior to this.

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH: We keep on considering these projects but the most difficult part of making a success of such projects is the marketing part. There is not much scope for processed material in this country. So, we seek foreign assistance mainly because they guarantee the purchase of the produce.

SHRI SAWAISINGH SISODIA: I want to know from the hon. Minister whether the Agriculture Ministry or the NCDC or any other agency has managed to get a complete survey made of the area where fruit processing is feasible and what the report in this connection is, I would further

like to know whether the German Democratic Republic have themselves proposed to finance this or give some financial aid for this or whether we ourselves have demanded aid or any financial assistance from them.

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH: I may make one point clear that the Government of India at this stage is not at all involved. If at all it materialises, it will be an agreement between the NAFED and the GDR. They have to arrive at an agreement; then only we will see whether we approve of it or not. And we have an Indo-German collaboration scheme under which such proposals are discussed.

श्री प्रेम मनोहर : जैसा माननीय मंत्री महोदय जानते हैं, जितने भी हमारे पहाड़ी क्षेत्र हैं, जैसे हिमाचल प्रदेश और उत्तर प्रदेश का कुमायूँ क्षेत्र तथा काश्मीर आदि, यहां पर जो छोटे सेब होते हैं उनको लाने ले-जाने में बहुत अधिक कास्ट पड़ती है। इसके अलावा इनकी विक्री भी कम होती है। इसका परिणाम यह होता है कि ये छोटे सेब सड़ जाते हैं और बर्बाद हो जाते हैं। ऐसी स्थिति में मैं माननीय मंत्री महोदय से यह जानना चाहता हूं कि क्या आपके मंत्रालय ने कोई ऐसी योजना बनाई है, जिससे जो छोटा सेब होता है और जो बिकता नहीं है, उसका सदुप-ययोग हो सके और उसको कंसन्ट्रेट करके जूस के रूप में मिडिल ईस्ट और गल्फ कन्ट्रीज में एक्सपोर्ट किया जा सके ?

श्री भानु प्रताप सिंह : श्रीमन्, जिस बात की चर्चा माननीय सदस्य ने अपने प्रश्न में की है, ठीक वैसा ही काम हो रहा है। इस काम के लिए जो योजना बनी है, उसके अन्तर्गत फलों को कंसन्ट्रेट करके जूस तैयार किया जायेगा। इसकी शुरुआत पहले दिल्ली से की जा रही है। इसको केवल बोटलों में तैयार न करके सीधे तौर पर डिस्पेंसर के द्वारा डिस्ट्रिब्यूट करने के लिए व्यवस्था की

जा रही है। उसके कुछ नमूने एग्रो-एक्सपो एग्जिबिशन में भी देखे जा सकते हैं। उसी प्रकार के काम को आगे बढ़ाया जायेगा। इसके साथ-साथ मैं यह भी कहना चाहता हूं कि कुछ दिन पूर्व हमारे देश में जो एग्रो-इन्डस्ट्रीज कारपोरेशंस हैं और जो फ्रूट प्रोसेसिंग का काम करते हैं उनके प्रतिनिधि यहां बुलाये गये थे। उन सब ने मिलकर यह तय किया है कि वे अपने फ्रूट जूस को एक ब्रॉन्ड नेम के अन्दर बेचेंगे।

SHRI U. R. KRISHNAN: I would like to know whether the Government will come forward to give financial aid to rural villages for setting up cold storage plants.

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH: Such schemes are considered and approved by the State Governments.

DR. M. M. S. SIDDHU: Sir, the policy of the Janata Government is to provide more encouragements to small scale industries. Now, in such processing plants which are automatic, how many persons will get employment? This is one. Secondly, is the Minister aware that the cost of the containers is so prohibitive that no fruit processing plants could be set up and the products could be marketed in our country? So, will the Government think of it along with the question of fruit processing and see that the containers are made available at cheaper rates so that our consumers could benefit from it.

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH: Sir, it is just to avoid the difficulty about the containers that a new scheme is being considered in which we will have dispensers instead of trying to bottle it or to put it in cans. But at the same time, all efforts will be made to see that the price of the containers is brought down. The difficulty is that while we want the price of the containers to be reduced, there is no guarantee that the same containers will not be used for other purposes.

SHRI NRIPATI RANJAN CHOU-DHURY: Sir, I am glad that the Minister has announced today that they are examining Silchar as the probable site for setting up the processing plant. May I know from the hon. Minister as to how long will it take to finalise the proposal and what is the expected date when the fruit processing plant will be set up?

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH: I would like to clarify one thing that the Government of India as such is not considering the project just now. It is being discussed between the NAFED and the G.D.R. It is very difficult to say precisely when an agreement will be arrived at specially when a foreign Government is involved.

SHRI BRAHMANANDA PANDA: Sir, I would like to know from the Government whether they have made any survey of the types of fruits that are available for processing in different parts of the country. This is one. Secondly, what is our domestic consumption in general and what is the quantity that we are going to export? Otherwise, we will just be beating about the bush. We do not know what is the amount of fruit available with us, what is the domestic market and how much we are going to send abroad and in what form. So, I would like to know whether the statistics are available with the Government.

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH: I do not have the statistics just now. But I can say, generally speaking, India is very richly endowed as far as fruits and their varieties are concerned. Perhaps there is no other country in the world which can compare with us in the richness and the variety of fruits that we produce. Our difficulty is not lack of production. We need not go in for those detailed surveys. All that is required is how to market our fruits to the best advantage of the producers.

SHRI B. N. BANERJEE: Does the hon. Minister of State want the House to accept that the Government of India is not in any way involved in this negotiation? Can the NAFED get into any transaction with the GDR authorities without the Government of India coming into the picture at all?

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH: Generally speaking, the Government of India approves such negotiations, but the details are being worked out by the NAFED and the GDR.

Minister's foreign travel without valid travel documents

*452. SHRI PRAKASH MEHROTRA:f

SHRI RISHI KUMAR MISHRA: SHRI SITARAM KESRI:

SHRI BHISHMA NARAIN SINGH:

SHRI DHARAMCHAND JAIN:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news report which appeared in the 'Indian Express' of the 26th August, 1977 regarding foreign travel by Shri Brij Lal Varma, Minister of Communications without valid travel documents;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard;

(c) whether it is a fact that the Minister was quarantined on his return from Surinam on the 24th August, 1977;

(d) whether Government have made any inquiry in the matter; and

(e) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

tThe question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Prakash Mehrotra.