

Production of white printing paper

*239. SHRIMATI LEELA DAMADARA MENON:†

SHRI HARSH DEO MALAVIYA:

DR. V. A. SEYID MUHAMMAD:

SHRI SARDAR AMJAD ALI:

SHRI N. R. CHOUDHURY:

Will the Minister of INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a sharp decline in the production of white printing paper in the country;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether Government have formulated any plans to step up the production of white printing paper and also to streamline the distribution procedure?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM): (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) There has been a gradual decline in the output of white printing paper over the past few years.

(b) The total production of paper has declined due to various factors e.g. power shortage, inadequate availability of coal, transport bottlenecks, labour unrest etc. Apart from this, there has also been a shift in production from white printing paper to other varieties of paper by the mills.

(c) The industry has agreed to step up the production of white printing paper to a level of 2 lakh tonnes per annum and to make it available for the educational sector and the Government at a fixed price. With a view to evolving a rational distribution arrangement for this paper, a National Co-ordination Committee consisting of the representatives of Government, industry, trade and consumers has

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shrimati Leela Damodara Menon.

been constituted. This Committee will make State-wise allocations keeping in view the requirements of the various states. The distribution of paper from the allocations made to States will be the responsibility of State Level Committees comprising of the representatives of the State Governments, the trade and the consumers.

In addition, certain other measures to ensure that production of essential varieties of white printing paper does not fall below certain minimum levels and also to limit inessential uses of paper, are under active consideration.

SHRIMATI LEELA DAMODARA MENON: When the total production of paper has declined, has there been any relative decrease in the export of white paper?

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: As far as writing and printing paper is concerned, we have stopped the export now.

SHRIMATI LEELA DAMODARA MENON: One of the reasons for the decline of production of paper is scarcity of raw materials and that scarcity is going to be felt all the more in the future because of deterioration of stock position in bamboo. Will the Government take measures to see that large plantations of soft wood like Eucalyptus or bamboo are started so that the new paper factories will not feel the pinch of raw materials?

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: Yes, Sir. This matter has been taken notice of and the various State Governments have a programme of afforestation, particularly of wood which would be suitable for the paper industry.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr. Malaviya.

SHRI HARSH DEO MALAVIYA: Sir, is the Government aware that certain journals and papers published by the monopolists in the Press industry are using white printing paper and that too much above the quota allotted to them? Can it be deduced that the whole white printing paper produced is not coming to the market, but is sold in the blackmarket?

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: Sir, I had a talk with the industry just in the beginning of this year and there was an understanding that they would step up the production of this white printing paper to the level of two lakh tonnes and that this paper would be allotted according to the directions of a high-level Committee to the various State Governments particularly to meet the requirements of the book industry and for the production of exercise books, etc. While to a certain extent this has been honoured, I am afraid, the industry has not come up to our expectations. That is why today we are intending to issue two orders regulating the pattern of production and also the use of white paper.

SHRI HARSH DEO MALAVIYA: Sir, there are certain papers—I do not want to name them—and there are even certain dailies which have been printing their papers in the white printing paper. How do they get it? He has to answer my question.

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: They get it from the producers.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr. Amjad Ali.

SHRI SARDAR AMJAD ALI: Sir, I would like to know from the honourable Minister whether it is a fact that during last May, while addressing the Development Council for Paper, Pulp and Allied Industries, the Minister expressed his concern over the fact that the paper mills are not giving proper account to the Ministry with regard to their production and that he has pointed out that in a particular year, when these industries had stated to the Government that they had produced about 42,000 tonnes actually it was shown as 36,000 tonnes only. I want to know whether this is a fact and whether the Minister has mentioned like this and, if so, what steps the Government has taken. In this connection, Sir, I would also like to know whether in that meeting the paper industry has given a commitment to the Government that for April—June, 30,000 tonnes of white printing paper would be made available for printing text-books in the nationalised sector and about 8,000

tonnes for making exercise books. I would like to know whether this commitment has been fulfilled or not.

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: Sir, I have already stated that these commitments have been fulfilled only partially. But I am not quite satisfied with the performance of the various paper units and that is why I have stated that we are issuing two orders under the Essential Commodities Act regulating the production and also imposing certain restrictions with regard to the use of paper.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr. N. R. Choudhury.

SHRI N. R. CHOUDHURY: Sir, in the statement, the honourable Minister has stated that the shift in production, from white printing paper to other varieties, by the mills is one of the causes for the present shortage of white paper and also that the industries have agreed to step up production of white printing paper to a level of 2 lakh tonnes. This is for this year. In view of this, I would like to know from the honourable Minister one thing: Even the educational institutions are on the point of closure because of shortage of text-books. For example, the Board of Higher Secondary Education in Assam is not able to supply text-books to the schools for want of paper and, you see, till today the classes have been closed and no classes can be conducted, at a time like this, why do they allow the mills to make a shift in their production from white printing paper to other varieties? I would also like to know from the Minister, whether while entering into an agreement with the industry for the production of this white printing paper, they have taken into account the actual requirement and, if so, what the actual requirement of white printing paper is. On these points I would like to have a reply from the Minister.

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: Sir, if two lakh tonnes are produced per year, it should more or less meet our requirements, and that is why we have said that the production should be at a level of 2 lakh tonnes, and we insist that a certain percentage of the production should be of white printing paper, which should be at the level of nearly 40,000 tonnes.

As far as the requirement for text books is concerned, for Assam I find that we have already allotted 110 tonnes of paper for nationalised books, text-books and other reference books published by private publishers and 100 tonnes for exercise books and for examination paper 10 tonnes. Therefore, the total to Assam, as I have already stated, . . .

SHRI N. R. CHOUDHURY: What was the requisition?

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: On the basis of requirement this allotment has been made. If it had been properly utilized, they should not have the situation which the hon. Member mentioned here.

DR. K. NAGAPPA ALVA: Now that the Minister of Industrial Development and Science and Technology have decided to constitute a National Coordination Committee to evolve a rational distribution arrangement of paper, will the Minister give an assurance to this House that a representative of the Education Department also will be included in the committee both at the national level and at the State level, in addition to the representatives of Government, Industry, Trade and Commerce?

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: I shall keep in mind the suggestion made by the hon. Member.

SHRI SHYAMLAL GUPTA: I know that the Government have failed in the distribution of paper. I can say because I happen to be the Chairman of the Federation. During the last . . .

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: Which Federation?

SHRI SHYAMLAL GUPTA: Of paper users. My question is this. The understanding was that the price charged would be only Rs. 2750. This has not been done. During the last one and a half years, the price has gone up three times, from Rs. 2 per kg. to Rs. 6 per kg. If the cost of paper goes on unabated, I do not know whether textbooks will be available in future. The price was allowed to be raised to the extent of 50 per cent . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Your question is clear.

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: As a matter of fact, till the end of the last month, we had allotted more than 30,000 tonnes to the various States on the basis of their requirements, and continuously as the production comes about we are making further allocations. The hon. Member mentioned about the price. Yes, the understanding was that the price to be charged should be only Rs. 2750/- per tonne, as for as 30,000 tonnes are concerned. I am, however, aware that some of the balance of the quantities available with paper units have been sold at a much higher price. That's why we are bringing some statutory regulations to see that the commitment is observed.

SHRI SHYAMLAL GUPTA: Sir, my question. . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: No other question. M. Puri.

SHRI D. D. PURI: The Minister has mentioned about the voluntary agreement with the industry and stated that he was not quite satisfied with the implementation. Will he kindly be a little more precise and tell us as to what was the implementation—70% or 50% or what? What was the exact quantity of paper, in terms of percentage, that they agreed to supply under the voluntary agreement?

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: This understanding, I think, was in January or February, and I reviewed the situation in May. The production levels have not been reached, as it was pointed out; instead of 40,000 it was only 30,000. But apart from that, a commitment was made that this quantity of paper will be supplied @ Rs. 2750 per ton, but only a portion of that quantity was made available at this price; the rest has been sold outside this . . .

SHRI D. D. PURI: What is the approximate in terms of percentage?

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: I have distributed only 30 thousand and odd. One lakh tonnes should have been produced according to the agreement. We

have distributed only 30,000 tonnes. The rest of the calculation can be made. So it has become necessary not merely to depend upon the gentleman's agreement, it looks it requires a statutory backing. That is why these orders are being issued.

SHRI SANAT KUMAR RAHA: I want to know from the Minister whether it is a fact that recently Dehradun Forest Research Institute has developed a new process of manufacturing paper out of jute sticks and whether Government has got any plan to manufacture this sort of paper out of jute sticks to meet the demands of the white printing paper and if the demand of white printing paper can be satisfied by this paper out of jute sticks.

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: If there is a proposal to utilise this process for production of paper, certainly we shall give sympathetic consideration to it.

SHRI KAMESHWAR SINGH: The Minister has replied in his answer just now that "In addition, certain other measures to ensure that production of essential varieties of white printing paper does not fall below certain minimum levels and also to limit inessential uses of paper, are under active consideration". I would like to know what are the measures under consideration to limit inessential uses of paper.

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: I just now mentioned that two orders are under issue today for this purpose.

SHRI KAMESHWAR SINGH: This is not a proper reply. I want to know what are the concrete measures being taken to limit the inessential uses of paper.

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: Of course, he will have a copy of the orders.

SHRI KAMESHWAR SINGH: This is not the answer.

श्री रवी राय : श्रीमन्, मंत्री महोदय से पार्टी सी सवाल के सम्बन्ध में जानना चाहता हूँ जो उत्पादन बढ़ाने के सिलसिले में हैं, कि क्या उनको मालूम है कि ईस्टर्न रीजन — जैसा कि आप जानते हैं कि दो दिन पहले इस सदन में चहुवाण साहब ने बताया था कि 37 परसेंट से घटकर 26 पर-

सेंट इन्वैस्टमेंट आ गया है। क्या उनको मालूम है कि बंगाल में नार्थ बंगाल और उड़ीसा में कोरा-पुट में पेपर इंडस्ट्री स्थापित करने के लिये आपकी अनुमति मांगी गई थी क्योंकि पश्चिम बंगाल के मुख्य मंत्री ने पेपर क्रेडिट एग्रीमेंटेशन में भाषण देते हुए कहा कि—

"But the unfortunate part is that the Centre is not giving is the green signal".

एक पेपर इंडस्ट्री गठन करने के लिये पश्चिम बंगाल के मुख्य मंत्री शिकायत करते हैं। तो मैं जानता हूँ कि इन स्थानों पर पेपर इंडस्ट्री स्थापित करने के लिये आप क्या कर रहे हैं? यह पश्चिम बंगाल के चीफ मिनिस्टर का बयान है। मैं कोई असत्य बात नहीं बोलता हूँ। उनके बयान से बता रहा हूँ।

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: As far as I recollect, there are no proposals pending with the Government with regard to production of white printing paper either in North Bengal or Orissa.

श्री रवी राय : मैंने तो उनका बयान बताया है।

MR. CHAIRMAN: But his reply has come.

श्री राजनारायण : श्रीमन् मेरा प्वाइंट आफ ऑर्डर है। श्री रवी राय ने कहा कि पश्चिम बंगाल के मुख्य मंत्री का बयान मैं पढ़ रहा हूँ और मातनीय मंत्री जी कह रहे हैं कि सरकार के पास कोई एप्लीकेशन नहीं है, कोई आग्रह नहीं है कि वहां कागज की मिल खोली जाए। मैं प्वाइंट आफ ऑर्डर इसी पर रोज कर रहा हूँ।

MR. CHAIRMAN: I overrule your point of order.

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: I only said I do not recollect.

श्री राजनारायण : माननीय मंत्री जी ने कहा कि सरकार के पास कोई ऐसा प्रार्थना-पत्र नहीं है। मंत्री जी ने दो मिनट के अन्दर दो तरह के उत्तर दिए। यह सदन का अपमान कर रहे

है। यह ब्रीच आफ प्रिविलेज है। इससे बड़ा और कोई प्रिविलेज नहीं हो सकता।

MR. CHAIRMAN: I over-rule you. Now, please sit down. Next Question—Mr. Swamy.

House Rent Allowance for employees of Indian Standards Institution

*240. SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: |

SHRI B. S. SHEKHAWAT:

SHRI D. K. PATEL:

SHRI V. K. SAKHLECHA:

Will the Minister of INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the house rent allowance paid to the employees of the Indian Standards Institution has been reduced recently; and

(b) if so, the extent to which it has been reduced?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM): (a) and (b) From September, 1972, the rate of house rent allowance admissible to Grades II, III and IV employees of the Indian Standards Institution was 25 per cent of pay in the old scales of pay. With the implementation of Pay Commission's recommendations with effect from 1-1-1973, the rate of house rent allowance was revised to 20 per cent of pay in the new pay scales, subject to the condition that there would be no reduction in the existing quantum of house rent allowance being paid to any employee. For about 95% of the employees H.R.A. at 20% of the revised pay is more than at 25% of the old pay. The employees were given the option to draw pay in the old scales and house rent allowance at 25% of pay in those scales.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: Sir, Mr. Subramaniam is a very capable Minister and has a reputation of being very fair

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Subramanian Swamy.

and objective. He is also an exception in the Cabinet. But, Sir, I am surprised at the way he has handled or his Ministry has handled the management of the Indian Standards Institution. Is it not a fact that there was an employees' agitation there and the Institution had to be closed down, and if so, what are the issues over which this action was taken?

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM. Evidently, the hon. Member thinks that every Subramaniam is very intelligent. Sir, as far as this incident which the hon. Member is mentioning, that is, the lockout in the Indian Standards Institution is concerned, it was because there was an agitation to restore this 25 per cent house rent allowance. But that agitation was conducted in such a manner that no business could be carried on in the Institution. After having patiently waited and suffering this for quite a few weeks, the Institution had to be closed down. And later on, some agreement was arrived at that all the striking members would give a written undertaking that they would hereafter function properly. And on that basis, the Institution was reopened, and is functioning quite normally.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: The hon. Minister should not pull wool over my eye. I have taken part in a number of agitations. Did you meet the representatives of the employees association? Did you look into their charter of demands? Is it not a fact that the file sent to you by the Director of the Indian Standards Institution was greatly tempered with, and a false picture was given to you. Did you meet the leaders of the union, and if so, when? Did you meet them before the lockout or after the lockout?

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: Sir, I met the representatives of the employees after the lockout. Nobody came and met me before the lockout. And they made representations with regard to that and I went into the whole case. My judgment was that there was absolutely no basis for the agitation to restore that 25 per cent H.R.A. because, as the hon. Members are aware, it is only 15 per cent which the other Government servants get. And we did not reduce it to 15, but we reduced it to 20 per cent. Therefore, in my view, there