

RAJYA SABHA

Thursday, the 1st March, 1974/ the 16/i
Phalgun, 1895 (Saka)

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

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Glass industry

*324. SHRI HARSH DEO
MALAVIYA :t SHRI MAQSOOD ALI
KHAN: SHRI IBRAHIM
KALANIYA: MISS SAROJ
PURUSHOTTAM

KHAPARDE: SHRI SARDAR AMJAD
ALI: SHRI N. R. CHOUDHURY: SHRI
VITHAL GADGIL: Will the Minister of
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be
pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that glass industry
in the country has suffered heavily due to
scarce supply of soda ash, borax, selenium
and arsenic; and

(b) if so, what steps have been taken by
Government to remedy the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE
MINISTRY OF INDUSTRIAL DE-
VELOPMENT (SHRI M. B. RANA): (a)
and (b) Government have not received any
report about the scarce supply of borax,
selenium and arsenic required for the glass
industry. However, there is some shortage of
soda ash from indigenous sources which is
being made good by imports.

SHRI HARSH DEO MALAVIYA: Sir, I
would like to know what our normal re-
quirement of these materials is and what is
the shortfall, except in the case of soda ash.
Will the hon. Minister also tell us what is the
quantum of loss incurred on account of these
shortfalls, if he possibly knows?

SHRI M. B. RANA: Sir, our normal
requirement of borax is one thousand
tonnes.

SHRI HARSH DEO MALAVIYA: Are
you sure of the figures. Just now you said
that there is no scarce supply of borax.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, now kindly
listen.

The question was actually asked on the
floor of the House by Shri. Harsh Deo
Malaviya.

SHRI HARSH DEO MALAVIYA: What
about selenium, arsenic and soda ash?

SHRI M. B. RANA: Arsenic also is in
short-supply. 0.5 per cent is being imported
from outside. Soda ash is indigenously
available. The production in 1973 was 4.78
lakh tonnes. The production in 1978-79 is
expected to be 8.80 lakh tonnes.

SHRI HARSH DEO MALAVIYA: Sir, I
wanted to know what the shortfall is. First the
hon. Minister stated that except in soda ash
there is no shortage. Now, the hon. Minister
accepts that in selenium and arsenic also there
is shortage. Now, I want to know whether you
expect a shortfall in the production of soda
ash, what is the quantum of the shortfall and
how do you propose to meet it. This is my
question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is the second
question.

SHRI HARSH DEO MALAVIYA: Sir, this
is' my first question only.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What is the shortfall, is
the first question and how it is proposed to be
met, is the second question.

SHRI M. B. RANA: Sir, the shortfall is met
by imports through the S.T.C. In 1972-73 we
imported 2,900 tonnes and in 1973-74, 1,275
tonnes were imported.

SHRI MAQSOOD ALI KHAN: Sir, during
the last 12 or 15 years cheap plastic goods
have greatly substituted glass articles in the
market. Now that the petrochemicals have
gone dearer in price, the production of
consumer plastic goods is bound to fall. In
this context, I want to know whether
Government would take a fresh look at the
targets fixed for the industry in the Fifth Five
Year Plan and provide ways and means to
boost up production at a much speedier pace
?

SHRI M. B. RANA: Sir, we cannot be
expected to make up for the shortfall in the
production of the plastic goods. But* we are
certainly making progress in the production of
glassware.

SHRI SARDAR AMJAD ALI: In his initial
reply, the hon. Minister said that there is no
complaint about the non-availability of this
raw material. But, Sir, I know it for certain
that there have been complaints and inasmuch
as these 4 chemicals are within the
administrative Ministry

of Petroleum and Chemicals complaints have been there. I myself had raised a complaint for my State and I know it for certain that from Assam also there is a complaint. May I know from the hon. Minister whether it is a fact that particularly these two chemicals, soda ash and borax, are being prepared by Hindustan Levers and Morarji and some such big industries and there is no restriction on their part to distribute it to small and medium sector industries? They distribute it through their own agents and small and medium sector industries do not get it according to their need. So may I know whether Government is going to impose any restriction on them or to impose any condition upon them to release a certain percentage to the small and medium sector industries? That is with regard to soda ash and borax.

With regard to selenium and arsenic, these are two imported chemicals and S.T.C. creates bungle so far as availability of this material to small and medium sector industries is concerned. What steps is the Government going to take with regard to availability of selenium and arsenic through STC and availability of soda ash and borax to small and medium sector industries?

SHRI M. B. RANA: Except for the small production of borax and soda ash, the lag behind cannot be made up. We are trying to make up for the small production of borax as well as soda ash. As regards the other items which are imported through STC, well we have not come across any example of the bungle being made by STC.

SHRI N. R. CHOUDHURY: Sir, Minister, in his reply, agreed that there is shortage in production of soda ash and borax and also he said that he is going to meet the situation by import. But he did not say what is the shortfall, what is the actual requirement and what is the actual production and what is the gap between the two. He did not say. He also did not say whether the import made by his Ministry is able to meet the gap. I would like to know from him whether the quantity imported would meet the gap, and ...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, your question has come; it is very clear.

SHRI N. R. CHOUDHURY: It is not very clear, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is clear to me.

SHRI N. R. CHOUDHURY: I want to ask how long we will have to depend on the import and whether he has got any plan to supplement the production by indigenous production. If so, when that production is coming?

SHRI M. B. RANA: As regards soda ash, Letters of Intent for a total capacity of 7,57,000 tonnes per annum for the manufacture of soda ash have been issued by the Government. As soon as manufacturing starts, we shall not be short of soda ash.

SHRI NIREN GHOSH: Sir, he is so laconic, he does not reply.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You don't put a question then.

SHRI NIREN GHOSH: So I put specific question. It is this that 174 small-scale lime manufacturing units have gone out of commission due to want of raw materials and soda ash is one of them. Hindustan Levers are not distributing the material to them properly and 25,000 workers are being rendered unemployed. You said you are making up the short-fall. To whom have the Letters of Intent been issued? Where the units have to be located? Has the Central Ceramic and Glass Institute developed any new technology which can be commercially utilized indigenously inside the country? If so, what is that?

SHRI M. B. RANA: I have not got the names of the parties to whom the two Letters of Intent have been issued by the Government for the manufacture of soda ash. If you would like, I would let you know later on the names of the parties who have been given the Letters of Intent and their capacity.

SHRI NIREN GHOSH: The other question he did not reply. Because raw materials have not been properly distributed 174 small-scale units have gone out of commission during the last few days and 25,000 workers rendered unemployed. This is in one State, West Bengal, only. Is the same must be the case in the other States also. Would you do something about it?

SHRI DWIJENDRALAL SEN GUPTA: Also to whom the licences have been given.

SHRI M. B. RANA: We have no information about smaller units going out of business; if I get the names I will enquire and let you know.

Post of Chairman of Joint Intelligence Committee

*325. SHRI J. S. TILAK:

SHRI GURMUKH SINGH
MUSAFIR:

SHRI KALI MUKHERJEE:

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR:

The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Kali Mukherjee.