

RAJYA SABHA

Thursday, the 7th March, 1974/the 16th
Phalguna, 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:†

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 DEVELOPMENT (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 requirement 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 glass 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 as much 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. 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.