

the MPs and Ministers for something and they do help them with no other intention but to help—appear to have recommended this particular case and they might have done it with the best intentions...

SHRI MAHAVIR TYAGI : Which party do they belong to ?

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE : Tyagi, if you come to me I will have to help you or if I come to you, you will be good enough to help me.

DR. BHAI MAHAVIR : This time it happens to be a Congressman. Let us be frank about it.

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE : I do not think this is a party issue because if something illegal has been done let the law take its course and if somebody has committed an offence let him be punished. I do not think we should bring in politics and party politics here in this issue.

SHRI K. P. SUBRAMANIA MENON : They will never be punished.

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE : Then, Sir, the only other point is that under the Fertilizer Control Order the Delhi Administration has full authority even though it has a little different, a little separate status, from that of the normal State Governments and they have delegated powers under the law to prosecute and take action and we have drawn their attention to this matter to find out what legal action could be taken against them.

DR. BHAI MAHAVIR : Sir, I asked if he is aware that a wrong affidavit was given and it was recommended by a Minister. The Minister is supposed to know that a person employed in the Congress party office is not unemployed obviously.

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE : I have already stated that a Member of Parliament has recommended.

DR. BHAI MAHAVIR : It is a Minister. I have information...

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE : I said that the person who recommended him was not a Minister.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Yes, he has given the answer.

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE : As far as the dealers are concerned, I think in the investigations all these questions can be looked into.

DR. BHAI MAHAVIR : Is any investigation going on now ?

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE : I will take it up with the Delhi Administration.

SHRIMATI PURABI MUKHOPADHYAYA : The person involved in the Party secretariat has already been served with a notice and he will be dismissed if anything is proved against him. Anybody who is indulging in fraudulent deal in the party...

MR. CHAIRMAN : Are you putting a question ?

SHRIMATI PURABI MUKHOPADHYAYA : No, I am just giving some information...

MR. CHAIRMAN : You can't give information like this. I do not want information...

(Interruptions)

Next question.

SLAVERY IN BIHAR

*323. SHRI M. K. MOHTA :

SHRI DEBANANDA AMAT :†

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO :

SHRI SUNDAR MANI PATEL :

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA :

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL :

Will the Minister of EDUCATION, SOCIAL WELFARE AND CULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been invited to a statement made by Shri Ram Sunder Das, a member of the Legislative Council of Bihar on March 12, 1972 to the effect that slavery is still in vogue in certain Districts of Bihar; and

(b) if so, whether the Government have made any inquiry into this matter and with what result ?

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Debananda Amat.

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) What Shri Ram Sunder Das referred to was in fact a form of 'bonded labour'. Government of Bihar have called for a report, which is still awaited.

SHRI DEBANANDA AMAT: Mr. Chairman, Sir, since the inception of the exalted office of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the year 1950, I know about twenty voluminous reports have been submitted to the Government. May I know whether it is not a fact that due to the non-implementation of the recommendations for the amelioration of the condition of the weaker sections, these things are happening?

SHRI ARVIND NETAM: Sir, the question raised about the reports of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Commissioner concerns the Home Ministry. So it is better to refer this question to the Home Ministry.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Amat. Your second question.

SHRI DEBANANDA AMAT: Sir, this happened in a single village in Banka police station of Palamau district in Bihar. An Adivasi took a loan of Rs. 175 from a money-lender and he could not repay it. So he had to work for 12 years as slave under that money-lender. The second instance is that in that village another Adivasi took a loan of Rs. 105 he could not repay and he had to work for 16 years under him. The third instance is more heinous. He took only Rs. 91; he could not repay and so he had to render work as slave under that money-lender for two decades. I would like to know from the Minister what remedial steps they are going to take to check such things, which are inhuman and anti-social, which are happening even in this 26th year of our independence.

PROF. S. NURUL HASAN: Sir, this is a matter which, as my colleague just now pointed out, is now being dealt with by the Home Ministry. But before it was transferred to the Home Ministry, I had myself addressed a letter to the Minister

of the State Governments suggesting by a course of action for stopping this bonded labour. And according to the report submitted by the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, into the details of which I need not go, this practice is showing some decline. But this does not mean that it should be tolerated. But what I am trying to submit is that, as my colleague just now said, this particular matter is being dealt with by the Home Ministry and the detailed questions, if any, can be answered more with greater knowledge by my colleague the Home Minister.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Sundar Mani Patel.

SHRI SUNDAR MANI PATEL: I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government of India were seized of these events before the revelation in the Bihar Assembly?

PROF. S. NURUL HASAN: This matter of bonded labour has been referred to in several committees' reports and this has been discussed in both Houses of Parliament. It has also been considered by the Joint Committee on Untouchability. It is a matter of very great importance to all hon. Members and, in fact, to all citizens of India. It is a matter of shame that in spite of the laws it is continuing. Sir, all that I am trying to submit is that it has to be looked at from two points of view. Firstly, the economic position of the weaker sections of the population has to be improved so that they do not fall a prey to it and secondly, the laws have to be made more stringent. After all, the Constitution itself has abolished slavery and *begar*. This has to be brought to the notice of all the citizens. Since it is affecting the Scheduled Castes, and Scheduled Tribes and other backward classes mainly, this matter is being taken up by the Home Ministry.

SHRI SUNDAR MANI PATEL: I had asked what steps had been taken by the Government. Am I to understand that no positive steps have yet been taken by the Government to curb such a system in the country?

MR. CHAIRMAN: There should be no second question.

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL : Sir, I was amazed at the answer given in this connection. I think the Cabinet functions on a system of collective responsibility. The answer that it is being dealt with by the Home Ministry is only an alibi. If we have this practice after 25 years of freedom, it is a very sad commentary on the administration of this country by the Congress Government which seems to talk so much of social welfare and doing welfare to the Harijans. Sir, I am sure you will agree that this is something very serious and it needs much more serious attention than the hon. Minister seems to have given it. We want to know what positive steps the Government have taken to see that it is stopped at once. Serious, deterrent and exemplary punishment should be given to people who do this thing.

PROF. S. NURUL HASAN : Sir, it is always a pleasure to hear hon. Member's sentiments. However, I have already made a statement that this matter is being dealt with by my colleague, the Home Minister and he would be able to give greater details about further action. I have given a report up to the date I was handling this matter.

SHRI K. P. SUBRAMANIA MENON : We are in a very uncomfortable position because the hon. Minister has already said that the whole question is being looked into by the Home Ministry.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Under the rules, he cannot be compelled to answer.

SHRI K. P. SUBRAMANIA MENON : Sir, this system of bonded labour is, by and large, prevalent in many parts of the country even now. As the Minister pointed out, a number of Commissions have stated it and the Scheduled Castes Commissioner points out these things every year. Still the system prevails and it continues unabated. As Mr. Dahyabhai Patel asked, what specific measures are being taken?

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Subramania Menon, the question does not relate to his Ministry. You yourself know it. You have said it. You are repeating what Shri Dahyabhai Patel said. Therefore, you please sit down. It is a very good question but addressed to a wrong person.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI : The Minister has said that the question of deterrent punishment is being looked into by the Home Ministry. It is claimed that slavery is still going on in Bihar. In Maharashtra, I mentioned the case of Marathwada where a couple of Harijans requested the Deputy Collector to keep them as slaves. Is the Government taking proper action to see that the Harijans get their desired place in the community?

PROF. S. NURUL HASAN : I cannot invent a new answer.

SHRI KALYAN ROY : The question should be addressed to the Home Minister. I think we are wasting the time of the House.

SHRI N. H. KUMBHARE : The slavery has been abolished under the Constitution. Is the Government contemplating to have an Act stating that such a practice shall be cognizable and those who indulge in it will be awarded jail sentence? Is there any scheme with the Government to make a law on this and to see that the whole practice is dealt with with strong hands?

PROF. S. NURUL HASAN : I have already answered this question, that before this subject was transferred from my Ministry I had addressed a letter to the State Governments. I do not know what the latest position is and my colleague the Home Minister would be in a better position to answer it.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR : I rise on a point of order on this issue because this is a question of continuing slavery in this country after 26 years of freedom. I shall like to know from you when such a question...

MR. CHAIRMAN : From me?

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR : Of course, Mr. Chairman, from you. I want to know from you, not from the Government, because this is not an ordinary interpellation. This is a most serious question of the country Parliament can think of and under these circumstances if the question is on the Question Paper, is this the way the Government is going to reply and create an atmosphere in the country that even on such a serious issue there is a difference

about departmental domain, whether this Ministry is concerned with it or not? Mr. Chairman, Sir, whether this Ministry is concerned or that Ministry is concerned or whether the Government is concerned or not, is it not your responsibility, Mr. Chairman, Sir, as the custodian of this House that this question should not be treated at this level? If it is not replied, I can understand. But I know Shri Ram Sunder Das is a very responsible person and when he raised this question the Government should come out with a statement and this matter should be treated on a totally different path. This matter should not have been allowed at all, and if it has been allowed it should not be dealt with in this manner. So, when such a matter has come to your notice, Mr. Chairman, Sir, you should direct the Government to make a proper statement on this question and to get it discussed. If such a shameful thing as slavery still continues in this country, the impression will be carried in the country that the Rajya Sabha or Parliament treats even such serious matters as just ordinary questions. Such an impression should not...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, when the question was received by my office, the subject belonged to the Ministry of Education. Now it is...

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Why?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question was addressed like this to the Ministry of Education.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: How, Sir...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let me finish. Now it is for the Ministry to transfer it to another Ministry if the question does not relate to his Ministry. The question was addressed to the Education Ministry. I treat it as a serious matter. The Minister himself has said that this is a serious matter and it should be treated as a serious matter. But I cannot transfer the question myself.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR: The Minister should be asked to make a statement because, I think, Mr. Chairman, Sir, that there is something like joint responsibility in a parliamentary form of Government. And, Mr. Chairman, this is not the

way that on every question it should be said by the Minister that it is in the domain of another Ministry. I am not in the habit of rising on every question and I think that if we treat this question in this way, the impression will go among the poorer sections that this Parliament has failed to express their aspirations. I want to register my protest that this is not the way of dealing with such questions.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I have a submission, Sir. Because this session will be ending in a day or two, you will kindly direct, as Mr. Chandra Shekhar has very rightly suggested, that the Government should make a statement and this is a fit matter to be discussed in this House. Therefore, this should not be allowed to be deferred to the next session. The fact that the question has come does not mean that the Minister cannot make a statement.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: They are being treated as slaves.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: The Minister of Home Affairs...

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: I quoted the example of the Marathwada Harijans requesting to be treated as slaves. It is a shame.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT: You order the Home Ministry to make a statement.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: The Ministry of Home Affairs should be asked to make a statement and we should be allowed to ask questions on the basis of the statement.

SHRI K. CHANDRASEKHARAN: May I have a word, Sir? It is admitted now that the subject-matter of this question had been transferred by the Education Ministry to the Home Ministry. It is very right on the part of the Rajya Sabha office to have sent this over to the Education Minister because the subject-matter of this question deals with Education Ministry and the Education Minister alone is aware of the fact that it has been transferred to the Home Minister. May I know whether this transfer was effected prior to the notice of this question and if the transfer had been effected prior to this question why was not this question transferred to

the Home Ministry ? I charge the Education Minister with rather lightness and lack of seriousness in regard to the replies given to this question.

SHRI MAHAVIR TYAGI : As things stand I do not think there will be any irregularity in your asking the Home Minister to come and make a statement on this issue. These are the sentiments of the House and the Minister has to respond to it. So our request to you is that you should direct the Home Minister to make a statement before the House adjourns.

MR. CHAIRMAN : So far as the question itself is concerned it has been answered when the Education Minister stated that the report was called for from the Bihar Government and it is awaited.

SHRI K. CHANDRASEKHARAN : But part (b) asks with what result.

MR. CHAIRMAN : The report has not come, I understand.

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL : This matter was published in the papers on the 12th March and still there is no information with them.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI : You should direct the Home Minister to make a proper statement on any day he likes.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I am giving this ruling that as soon as the report is received and the Government is able to give an answer to this question, the Government should make a statement in the House. They cannot make a statement when there is no report.

SHRI MAHAVIR TYAGI : Even in regard to the present position the Home Minister may come and make a statement. He can say that enquiries are being made and the matter is being looked into.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT : Sir, we are going to discuss the Approach to the Fifth Plan. When slavery is still existing in the country, what shall we discuss about the Fifth Plan ? The whole debate on the Fifth Plan Approach would be infructuous when slavery continues in the country. Sir, Patna is not far off. The report can be obtained. It can be obtained on the telephone or the teleprinter. Otherwise the whole Plan debate will become useless and

infructuous if we do not have a clear picture of this. Can't you tell the Home Ministry to make a statement before the 19th ? Today is only 16th (*Interruptions*).

MR. CHAIRMAN : All right; you go on only with this question. The same thing is being repeated over and over again.

SHRI MAHAVIR TYAGI : This matter came up in March and till today the Government is not posted with the relevant information. This is an instance where the Government deserves to be censured.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : My point is this. Please do not leave it to the Bihar Government. Suppose the Bihar Government does not give a reply in time; what happens ? Are we not entitled to know the details ? The Central Government has its own agencies in Bihar. It can even rush a person to have the matter investigated. The Central Government in a matter like this should take the responsibility itself rather than treat it in a routine manner and wait for getting a report from Bihar Government.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I have already given a direction that the Government should collect the information as early as possible and should make a statement in the House. That I have already said.

Now let us proceed.

SHRI SASANKASEKHAR SANYAL : If the Government does not do that I hope the Chairman will from time to time reprimand the Minister.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I do not know whom I shall reprimand.

श्री ओ३म्प्रकाश त्यागी : सभापति महोदय, मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि अभी मंत्री महोदय ने जवाब दिया कि बिहार गवर्नमेंट से पूछ रहे हैं। इनके पास जब डाइरेक्ट एजेन्सीज हैं, शैड्यूल कास्ट और शैड्यूल ट्राइज के कमिश्नर हैं...

MR. CHAIRMAN : यह सब सुन चुका हूँ। You are merely repeating,

श्री ओ३म्प्रकाश त्यागी : जब इनकी अपनी एजेन्सीज वहाँ पर हैं तो इन्होंने क्यों इन्क्वायरी नहीं की ?

श्री सभापति : जब मैंने यह डाइरेक्शन दे दिया है तो यह सवाल इस वक़्त नहीं पूछा जा सकता।

*324. [The questioner (Shri N. R. Choudhury) was absent. For answer vide cols. 30-31 infra.]

*325. [The questioners (Shri Shyam'al Gupta and Shri K. P. Singh Deo) were absent. For answer, vide cols. 31-36 infra.]

*326. [The questioner (Shri V. K. Sakshilecha) was absent. For answer, vide cols. 37-39 infra.]

327. [The questioner (Dr. V. B. Singh) was absent. For answer, vide cols. 39-40 infra.]

PURCHASE OF WHEAT BY GOVERNMENT

*328. DR. BHAI MAHAVIR :†

SHRI JAGDISH PRASHAD
MATHUR :

SHRI O. P. TYAGI :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) the total quantity of wheat purchased by Government during each of the last three years :

(b) the quantity of wheat out of the same lost or damaged on account of rodents, insects, and pests, exposure to rains and other reasons; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to minimise such damage in future ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ANNASAHAB SHINDE) : (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

STATEMENT

(a) Total quantity of wheat purchased by all Government agencies during each of the last three years are indicated below :

Marketing year (April—March)	(In lakh tonnes) Quantity
1970-71	31.92
1971-72	51.01
1972-73	50.06

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Dr. Bhai Mahavir.

(b) The quantity of wheat out of the same, lost or damaged on account of all factors, i.e. rodents, insects and pest, exposure to rains, driage and other reasons is indicated below :—

Marketing year (April—March)	(In lakh tonnes) Quantity
1970-71	0.47
1971-72	0.48
1972-73	The loss is being worked out.

(c) Steps taken by the Government to prevent and minimise wastage/damage are as follows :—

1. The godowns constructed by the Government of India, as also the godowns of FCI and the CWC/ SWC's which are taken on hire are rat and damp-proof. Even where godowns are taken on hire from private parties or where cover-and-plinth (CAP) storage capacity is created, necessary precautions are taken to see that damage due to rats and dampness is reduced to the minimum.

2. Necessary dunnage is provided for storing of foodgrains in the godowns to prevent damage due to seepage of sub-soil water.

3. Pre-monsoon inspection of the godowns is carried out and repairs undertaken to prevent leakage of rain water.

4. Suitable pest control measures are taken to check the insect, rodent and bird trouble.

5. Qualified and technically trained staff is deployed for periodical inspection and proper up-keep of the foodgrains.

6. Necessary precautions are also taken at the time of handling of foodgrains at various stages.

7. Mechanical handling devices are also introduced to minimise the handling losses.

डा० भाई महावीर : श्रीमन्, मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि चूहों, कीड़ों, बरसात में भीग जाने के कारण या दूसरे कारणों से जो अनाज की बरबादी होती है और जिसके लिए गवर्नमेंट