

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : As I said, these matters are in the process of being considered. I do not think one should discuss them further here.

STANDARDISATION OF CLOTH PRODUCTS

*381. SHRI RAJENDRA PRATAP SINHA :

SHRI KRISHAN KANT :†

SHRI ARJUN ARORA :

Will the Minister of FOREIGN TRADE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to standardise and drastically reduce the varieties of cloth production meant for domestic market in the textile industry; and

(b) if so, what steps have been taken in this regard?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE (CHOWDHARY RAM SEWAK) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT : May I know whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the Economic Panel Report of the AICC which had suggested that there should be standardisation so that the different qualities should be drastically reduced, that something should be done in that respect? May I know whether their attention has been drawn to this, and if so, have been considered that suggestion or they have only dismissed it summarily?

SHRI B. R. BHAGAT : There is no question of dismissing summarily what is contained in the Economic Panel Report. The point is that our textile industry is constituted in a manner that it is already producing a large variety of cloth. What we have been doing is that we have reserved certain varieties which go into popular consumption, consumption of the common people, like dhotis, sarees, long cloth, etc., which we have reserved, where we control the prices so that the prices do not go up. The others are left open, and it is not possible to standardise

them into a few items when there are hundreds of items.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT : May I know how many varieties of cloth are produced in this country? Secondly, is it not also a fact that because of the large number of varieties being produced the production capacity is reduced for the different varieties, and the production capacity is not also fully utilised? In view of this may I know whether Government will try to reconsider the whole thing so that cheaper quality cloth could be available to the people in plenty, and some varieties may be reserved, say 10 per cent, at a prohibitive price so that those who can spend the money may get that?

SHRI B. R. BHAGAT : Government will always keep a continuous watch on this. The present position at the moment is, as I have already said, there are hundreds of varieties. I do not remember the exact number but the varieties go into hundreds. As I said, at the moment cloth of common consumption, consumption by the common people, we are trying to put in a sector and control its price and distribution so that it is available to the people at a cheaper price. And in the other sectors it is not feasible at the moment to control in the manner which the hon. Member has suggested. But we certainly keep a constant watch over this.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI : May I know whether the Government is aware that this country has got a sizeable capacity to produce diversified varieties in textiles which are mainly required to meet the demand indigenously as well as to export? On that basis the Government should not take a conservative view of controlling and keeping a watch over such things. They should not do it because it is cloth production which is required for export. And even we are not a sectarian society here to be content with only one or two products just like it is in China. Ours is a democratic society; we must have choice and competition, and we must develop our capacity for export. So I demand that the Government should not take this view. Secondly, I want to know from him whether the Government... (*Interruptions by Shri Krishan Kant*).

MR. CHAIRMAN : You do not get disturbed.

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Krishan Kant.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI : How can I, when a colleague of mine, a socialist, disturbs me about something which he does not know at all.

Sir, what I wanted to know was whether the Government is aware that in the present circumstances textiles for exports and for even indigenous consumption are becoming costlier, and what are the positive steps that the Government want to take to remove this imbalance in the production cost of textiles particularly in cotton prices.

SHRI B. R. BHAGAT : Sir, the promise that he has given is correct that for export of textiles and other export-oriented industries the production here must subserve the pattern of world demand and that diversification is necessary. But about the conclusion or advice that he has given to the Government that we should not keep a watch over it, we cannot be blind to any situation. . .

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI : What do you mean by 'watch'? Let the Minister explain what he means by 'watch'. Is it the watchman of the mill or what is it? Or is it a wrist watch.

SHRI B. R. BHAGAT : Certainly, the needs of the community are important; so are the needs of exports. Just as we keep a watch over the other situation, we keep a watch over this also so that these two aspects are there. And I think the hon. Member would not object to that.

As far as the second is concerned as to what we are doing so that our export is competitive and as to what we are doing about cotton prices, that is a very relevant question. So far as the immediate question of cotton is concerned, the hon. Member knows that unlike the earlier estimates, cotton production is expected to be shorter and there is a rise, considerable rise, in prices, and we have arranged for imports of a substantial quantity of cotton, the staple fibre, and therefore we hope that in the coming weeks the situation may be met. But the basic situation is that unless we increase cotton production, we are not going to control the situation and that is the only way in which the question of making our cotton textile production competitive can be tackled.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI : On a point of order, Sir. My submission to

you is this. I have asked a very relevant question as admitted by the hon. Minister himself. He has oversimplified a simple question. . .

AN HON. MEMBER : Is it a point of order?

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI : The point of order is, he should specifically mention what are the positive steps taken by the Government. Import is a very simple thing. It is the oversimplification of the problem. But what is the positive step taken for increasing the growth and the yield of cotton? The Minister has not thrown any light on this. I wanted to know about this from him; we require this information.

SHRI B. R. BHAGAT : He has asked another question about the yield and the growth. About the positive steps, as I said, in the short-term period we have arranged for Rs. 100,000 lakh bales of American cotton and 50,000 bales of global cotton. We are trying to get whatever we may get. We are trying to get another lakh bales of American cotton and over and above that 1,50,000 bales of staple fibre. All these arrangements we have made so that the shortfall is met. On a long-term basis, we have asked for more funds so that mainly cotton is grown in the dry area. Dry farming techniques should be available for that, with the spraying of insecticides and adopting other methods to do it intensively. And more funds and more investments are required for this. We have already moved the Planning Commission and we are in consultation with the Agricultural Ministry to see that more fund is available for the development of cotton.

MR. CHAIRMAN : The answer is complete now.

SHRI M. K. MOHTA : May I ask the hon. Minister whether the Government feels that there is the necessity for a better correlation between the demand in the export markets in terms of the different commodities and the production in the Indian mills to meet that demand and whether Government proposes to set up any market research organisation under the Textile Commissioner's Office so that the trends of demands in the export markets may be better studied and the production may be arranged in such a way that we are better able to compete in the international market?

SHRI B. R. BHAGAT: All these relevant matters and studies are already being done. The Textile Commissioner's Office and more so, the Textile Export Promotion Council, they are doing it. And we are constantly looking into this question. If there is need for more intensification of this and more research in depth, market research, certainly we will look into this question.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: May I know from the hon. Minister whether he is in a position to tell the House what is the percentage of production of common varieties of cloth into the total production of textiles, whether it is also not a fact that the prices of the common varieties of cloth are still beyond the reach of the common man and whether in view of this he proposes to effect further reduction in the prices of common varieties of cloth?

Secondly, may I know whether it is not a fact that there are regular complaints of the cotton growers that they are not being given legitimate prices for their raw cotton? If that is the general complaint, what steps do the Government propose to take for ensuring a remunerative price to the growers of cotton?

SHRI B. R. BHAGAT: Twentyfive per cent of the mill cloth has been reserved for such varieties as dhoties, sarees, long cloth and others. Then there is the decentralised sector—the handloom sector and the powerloom sector. The handloom sector is entirely reserved for sarees. Whatever is required by the common people, the popular demand, is reserved already.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: What about the remunerative price for the cotton growers?

SHRI B. R. BHAGAT: Well, Sir, we recognise this fact that the cotton growers must get remunerative prices. There is the Agricultural Prices Commission which makes a report every year. This year's report says that the same support price should be available to the growers. It is there. More than that, it is necessary that the growers' capacity should be strengthened through the co-operatives, through every assistance, through supporting finance, so that they should not be compelled to sell when the cotton crops come to the market and the price

is depressed but they are enabled to hold and sell them at the time when they get a more remunerative price. This principle we recognise and we encourage this.

SHRI PHOOL SINGH: Is the Government aware that cotton growing is the least paying amongst the cash crops of the country and that is why the cotton crop is on the reduction and is not enough? The remunerative price should also be comparative with the other crops which can be grown in its place. Secondly, is the Government aware that there is a feeling in the country that we are paying more attention to consumer goods and the diversification of consumer goods as compared to producer goods? Does the Government intend to do something about this?

SHRI B. R. BHAGAT: Part of his question is correct about cotton growing. But, I would not say that the price is not remunerative because all these aspects are gone into and the price is there. That question can always be looked into. What is happening is, cotton is mostly grown in the dry or scantily rain-fed areas. The result is that the production per acre of cotton is not high. It is one of the lowest in the world. And unless the productivity increases, it is not profitable for the farmer. The farmer who has been growing cotton is shifting on to milo or to some other crop. That is why cotton production is not going up. Therefore, improved technique in the dry farming area for more irrigation so as to increase the per acre productivity of cotton is necessary. Unless that is done cotton growing will always be relatively less profitable.

SHRI PHOOL SINGH: My question is not answered. I said the comparative price of cotton is less. Cotton is a rain-fed crop and so is ground nut. But it pays more to grow groundnut than to grow cotton. Why should they grow cotton if we do not pay them proper price?

SHRI B. R. BHAGAT: This question is looked into every year by the Agricultural Prices Commission... (*Interruption*) Let me answer. Precisely for this reason, so that independent technical and economic considerations should prevail in all our agricultural commodities, the Agricultural Prices

Commission has been set up. When they fix the price for cotton they look into the relative cost and price of other commodities including groundnut and food products. Then they recommend the price. I think this is the way to fix the price of all agricultural produce including the relative cost year by year.

SHRI PHOOL SINGH : Is the Government prepared to examine from that angle?

(No reply)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Next question.

AGREEMENT BETWEEN DEPARTMENT OF
ATOMIC ENERGY AND NASA

*382. **DR. SALIG RAM :**

SHRI KRISHAN KANT :†

Will the **PRIME MINISTER** be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the article published in the Fortnightly "The States" dated the 10th January, 1970 referring to the criticism of the agreement between the Department of Atomic Energy and N. A. S. A. about the experimental satellite project; and

(b) if so, what is the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF SUPPLY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI R. K. KHADILKAR) : Yes, Sir.

(b) The DAE-NASA agreement on the Instructional Television Satellite Experiment Project was concluded after careful and detailed consideration of all aspects of the matter. The Government do not consider that the criticism implied in the article is justified.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT : Sir, the points raised in the criticism are four-fold. The first one is that the experimental project will be only for a period of one year and after that we can build up our satellites only in 1978 as at present scheduled. How are you going to accommodate this period? Will it not be that after the experimental period of one year, they will hustle us into an

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Krishan Kant.

agreement, financial and otherwise, which may be harmful to us? How have you covered that? Is it also not a fact that the Defence authorities said that it is a thin end of the wedge, and they were opposed to it? You know, in the V. O. A. deal in 1963 a criticism was made, and the Defence authorities were against it. May I know what reply they have to give about these two criticisms? Then I will ask another thing.

SHRI R. K. KHADILKAR : The first question is what would happen after one year when the agreement expires. Now, it is proposed to have a satellite which could be designed and built jointly by Indian and foreign specialists under a collaboration agreement. So there is no difficulty. After the expiry of a one-year period, preparation will be made for collaboration agreement to build a satellite in collaboration with the N. A. S. A.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT : Which will come off in 1974.

SHRI R. K. KHADILKAR : Regarding Defence authorities, representatives of the Defence Ministry were members of the study group which examined the question of synchronous satellite for T. V. purposes. So the question referring to the past agreement and certain difficulties about it would not arise.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT : Mr. Chairman, Sir, you have heard the reply of the hon'ble Minister. He says preparations will be made after one year. We will use that satellite for one year, and according to the present programme our satellite will be ready in 1978. Five years is the gap period. And what will happen after one year's experimentation? These N. A. S. A. people will try to hustle us into some agreement, financial or otherwise, which may be harmful to us.

The Minister said that preparation will be made for collaboration. Are you satisfied with the answer, Sir? Secondly, Sir, the agreement which has been made does not in any way cover that our Indian scientists and technologists will be associated with the space segment of the agreement, not the ground experiment. This agreement does not cover that. It is also argued, when the agreement was made, that this experiment will prove useful for practical experience. How will it happen when our