

RAJYA SABHA

Monday, the 25th November, 1968/rte
\th Agrahayana, 1890 [Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock, MR.
CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

CLOSURE OF JUTE MILLS

*15i. SHRI CHITTA BASU : t

SHRI SITARAM JAIPURIA :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be
pleased to state :

(a) whether the Indian Jute Mills Association has recently approached Government for permission to resort to block closures of jute mills; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Government in the matter ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI DINESH SINGH) : (a) The Association had proposed a block closure of all jute mills for one week in October, 1968.

(b) Government did not agree to the proposal.

SHRI CHITTA BASU : Sir, the production of jute for the current year is more or less satisfactory—74 lakhs of bales. In addition to that, there is a carry-over of 19 lakhs of bales. Also, the Government has allowed them to import jute from Thailand and Pakistan. In view of this the question of shortage of raw jute raised by the IJMA is nothing but to justify the retrenchment of a large number of workers and deprive the growers of jute of a legitimate and remunerative price. Is it so?

SHRI DINESH SINGH: I sincerely wish that the situation was such as the Member had mentioned. But we are going to be— I am afraid—rather short of jute this year. The statement that the hon. Member has made is not borne out by the facts at all because if there was enough jute in the country, the prices would not have gone up as high as they have gone up. Prices are

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Chitta Basu.

1—49 R. S./68

very high. We are going to be short of jute. But we shall do our best to try to meet this shortfall as much as we can from import.

SHRI CHITTA BASU : In view of the fact that there is large-scale speculation in the raw jute market and all the attempts of the Government to fight it have already failed, may I know whether the Government considers it desirable to introduce complete State trading in order to curb the speculation and also in order to ensure a fair price to the grower ?

SHRI DINESH SINGH : Sir, the grower is getting very much higher prices than it would be possible to give in any other manner. And we are not contemplating any State trading at this stage.

SHRI N. SRI RAMA REDDY : r
The supply of raw jute to the mills has been going up and down year after year. It was only two years when there was enough of jute; even surplus jute was said to be available in the market, where as this year we seem to have fallen very short of it. If that is so, there must be something very radically wrong with our planning for production of jute. Now, it may not be the problem of the Commerce Minister. AU the same, I would like to know what is the shortage of jute expected during this year and from where it is going to be imported ?

SHRI DINESH SINGH : Sir, there is a world shortage of jute this year. Conditions beyond human control have made this world shortage. There is nothing wrong in our planning as such.

SHRI BANKA BEHARY DAS : I think the Minister is not stating the correct position because last year there was a surplus of jute and the Government fixed Rs. 40 as the Calcutta price.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA : This year is not last year.

SHRI BANKA BEHARY DAS : I am stating the fact because it was the Calcutta price. I know, the jute-growers in our State which is the second State as regards jute production got only Rs. 25 and as a result of this this year there is a tendency not to grow more of jute. Secondly, there is also the competition from

high yielding paddy. So, may I know from the hon. Minister whether this proposal of one week's closure by the Jute Mills Association is only to lower the price in the market by having less of demand? May I also know whether to curb that he is going to ensure that in no circumstances will the jute mills be allowed to be closed down for even one week and that the agriculturists will be given a fair price at their farm, not at Calcutta?

SHRI DINESH SINGH : So far as the closure of the jute mills is concerned, I mentioned in the body of the answer that the Government had not agreed to the block closure. But I am afraid the mill activity will have to be restricted because of the shortage of jute. When there is no jute, they cannot run the factory without the raw material for it. So far as the price to the cultivator is concerned, the hon. Member knows very well that the cultivator is already getting very high prices.

SHRI B. K. P. SINHA : I fail to understand one thing. The hon. Minister has repudiated all the facts given by the hon. Member there, Mr. Chitta Basu. He has also admitted that there is a shortage of jute, shortage in the sense that the production or the supply available in the country is not enough to meet the full production needs of the jute factories. In the circumstances, if he prevents the jute factories from working for a shorter period, would that not involve the factories in a loss? How does the Government propose to deal with this sort of problem? There is a shortage but the mills are not allowed to close down. Government does not make up the shortage; it does not make up the loss of the mill.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA : Closure is not the only method.

SHRI B. K. P. SINHA : What is the method that the Government has in mind? What is the economic rationale of this?

SHRI DINESH SINGH : I mentioned this just now. It is obvious that if there is not enough raw material, the mills will not work. What we were thinking was an orderly closure which would have been regulated from the point of view of production and labour and everything. Now, they will restrict working according to the availability of the raw material.

SHRI CHITTA BASU : They have already started closing. You see that a large number of mills have retrenched people.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Chitta Basu please stick to the procedure laid down Mr. Kulkarni.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI : About the statement made by the Government as regards remunerative prices to the jute-grower, are they borne out by facts because it has been particularly pointed out that the prices of jute to the farmer are to be considered in the present context of other crops? In this connection, may I remind him of his statement about a bumper crop of jute when he said that the jute growers will be given greater incentives? I am one with the Members on that side that the Government has no policy about jute growing in this country which would sustain.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Ask, "Has the Government any policy?" Do not say, "It does not have a policy."

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI : In this connection, may I know from the Government whether in the larger interests of the jute-grower they will link the cooperatives of jute-growers with the manufacturing activity in jute cloth manufacturing?

SHRI DINESH SINGH : Yes, Sir. We would welcome that very much. I hope the hon. Member would be able to extend some of the good work, he is doing in Maharashtra, to Bengal where we can have this co-operative functioning.

श्री प्रेम मनोहर : क्या सरकार को इस बात की जानकारी है कि अपना भारतीय जूट नेपाल के द्वारा चीन को जा रहा है और अगर ऐसा है तो उसको रोकने के लिये सरकार क्या प्रबन्ध कर रही है ?

श्री दिनेश सिंह : सम्पत्ति महोदय, ऐसी हम को सूचना मिली है कि कुछ जूट भारत से नेपाल चला जाता है और वहां से उसका निर्यात होता है। इसके सम्बन्ध में अभी जो हमारा मिशन नेपाल गया था उन्होंने नेपाल सरकार से वार्ता की है और हम आशा करते हैं कि जो जूट वहां से नेपाल द्वारा बाहर जाता था उसमें रूकावट आयेगी।

SHRI G. R. PATIL : In view of the fact that there is a shortage of jute, may I know from the hon. Minister what steps the Government have taken to see that adequate quantities of jute is grown in this country and also what incentives have been proposed by the Government to be given to the growers?

SHRI DINESH SINGH : It is a large question that the hon. Member has asked. We have discussed it on several occasions in the House about the incentives that have been given to cultivators to produce jute. But this year with all the incentives, they could not produce because of natural conditions.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA : May I know, Sir, whether the hon. Commerce Minister and the Government of India would remain only a silent spectator to the closing down of these mills, or would they try to find out some method of allowing the mill-owners to sustain production? Would they even go to the extent of allowing imports for this year only because there is no indigenous production of jute in the country so that no mill is closed and there is no labour unemployment situation and the mills will not be affected at least out of the Rupee account countries? I hope, Sir, the Minister will give some concrete reply to the question. During the ten minutes that we have taken on this question he has not given any concrete steps that the Government propose to take so that the mills are allowed to continue and sustain production in the country?

SHRI DINESH SINGH : Sir, we have allowed authorised imports of jute worth Rs 8.65 crores from foreign countries. As I mentioned, there is world shortage of jute. I wish the hon. Member could produce some more jute from anywhere he could get it.

रेलवे द्वारा पारवहन में खराब हुए माल का मुआवजा दिया जाना

*152. श्री राम सहाय : क्या रेल मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) जनवरी से अक्टूबर, 1968 की अवधि में प्रत्येक जोनल रेलवे ने पारवहन के दौरान खराब हुए रेलवे को जिम्मेदारी पर

बुक किये गये माल अथवा बीमा शुद्ध माल के लिए कितना कितना मुआवजा दिया ;

(ख) क्या सभी मामलों में नुकसान की जिम्मेदारी निश्चित की जा सकी थी ; और

(ग) यदि हाँ, तो इस सम्बन्ध में व्योरा क्या है ?

[COMPENSATION PAID BY RAILWAYS ON GOODS DAMAGED IN TRANSIT

*152. SHRI RAM SAHAI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the details of compensation paid on each of the Zonal Railways from the period from January to October, 1968, for damage to goods booked on railway risk or for the insured goods in transit; and

(b) whether responsibility for the damages could be fixed in all cases; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?]

रेल मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री परिमल घोष) : (क) रेलवे जोखिम पर बुक किये गये माल अथवा बीमाशुद्ध माल के सम्बन्ध में दी गयी क्षतिपूर्ति की रकम के अलग आँकड़े नहीं रखे जाते।

भीगने, टूट जाने और परिवहन में देर होजाने से माल के क्षतिग्रस्त होने के कारण जनवरी से अक्टूबर, 1968 तक के दस महीनों में क्षतिपूर्ति के रूप में जो कुल रकम दी गयी, उसका रेलवे-वार व्योरा स 1-पटल पर रखे गये विवरण में दिया गया है (नीचे देखिये)। यह उल्लेखनीय है कि मध्य, पूर्व और दक्षिण रेलों के अक्टूबर, 1968 के आँकड़े अभी उपलब्ध नहीं हैं ; उनका संकलन किया जा रहा है।

(ख) और (ग) चूंकि परिवहन के दौरान माल को कई स्थानों पर यार्डों में, माल गोदामों में और यानान्तरण तथा दुबारा पैक करने के शोडों में उतारना-चढ़ाना होता है और अनेक आदमी इस काम में लगते हैं, इसलिए क्षति कहां हुई, इसका पता लगाना और व्यक्तिगत जिम्मेदारी ठहराना हमेशा सम्भव नहीं होता।

t [] English translation.