

RAJYA SABHA

Friday, the 17th September, 1965/
the 26th Bhadra, 1887 (Saka)

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

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

*665. [The questioner (Shri Abdul Ghani) was absent. For answer, vide col. 4444 infra.]

*666. [For answer, vide col. 4443 infra.]

*667. [For answer, vide cols. 4443-44 infra.]

KEROSENE AND DIESEL OIL REQUIREMENTS

*668. SHRI ARJUN ARORA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state the steps taken by Government to cover the gap between the indigenous refineries' production of diesel oil and kerosene and the current demand for these in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI O. V. AL AGESAN): The gap between the indigenous refinery production of Diesel Oil and Kerosene and the current demand for these products is being met by imports mainly from the USSR.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: Sir, the reply read out by the hon. Minister merely states a fact which is well known in the Country. The question if the Minister will be pleased to read it a bit more carefully, relates to the steps taken by the Government to cover the gap between indigenous production of diesel oil and kerosene and the current demand for them in the country. Does the Government want to say that the only steps that it has taken are imports and exports?

SHRI HUMAYUN KABIR: I made a policy statement only a few days ago in which I described the various

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measures taken for increasing the indigenous production. I thought the hon. Member's question was with respect to the measures taken to cover the immediate emergency. Obviously, production cannot increase overnight.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: The question was not about the steps taken last night. Last night we know the Minister imposed certain restrictions on the consumption of kerosene. The question was regarding the steps taken to increase their production. May I know how much production of kerosene and diesel he expects from the new refineries which the Government are building or contemplating to erect?

SHRI HUMAYUN KABIR: I have already informed the House that so far as diesel is concerned, we shall be almost self-sufficient before the end of the current financial year and so far as kerosene is concerned, it will take another four or five years and even then we shall not be completely self-supporting.

SHRIMATI TARA RAMCHANDRAN: When it is a fact that the total production of kerosene is less, why is the Government not allowing the private sector oil companies like the Assam Oil Company to produce more, when they are quite capable of producing more, rather than importing from other countries?

SHRI HUMAYUN KABIR: My hon. friend seems to have more information than I have. According to my information, the A.O.C. is producing to capacity.

SHRI DEOKTANANDAN NARAYAN: As there is shortage of kerosene in the country, what steps are being taken so that the rates may not go up because in the retail market now the rates are going up like anything?

SHRI HUMAYUN KABIR: As I have stated before in this House, so far as supplies in the country are concerned, there is no shortage. There is also no shortage area-wise. We

have taken steps to see that every area is getting adequate supplies. The difficulties arise because of distribution and for that we have asked the Chief Ministers to look into the matter personally. I have written to them personal letter. In addition we have taken some other measure, which was referred to just now by my friend, Mr. Arjun Arora. We have issued an order by which use of kerosene for adulteration has been made a criminal offence.

SHRI SANTOKH SINGH: What percentage of crude oil, 'of the demand of the country is met with from Iran?

SHRI HUMAYUN KABIR: I will not be able to give the figures about particular sources of supply, because that is prohibited under the Defence of India Rules.

SHRI A. D. MANI: Sir, in view of the present emergency, may I ask the Minister whether, as far as superior kerosene is concerned, there is no shortage and whether we are in a position to get superior kerosene from our indigenous crude?

SHRI HUMAYUN KABIR: Sir, I have given one assurance to the other House, I shall repeat it here also. So far as defence requirements are concerned, we shall meet them to the fullest extent. So far as civilian consumption is concerned, we shall continuously survey the position and try to meet the demand as far as possible. I do not see any reason for any shortage at the moment but it all depends on the developments that take place. Defence requirements will take precedence over everything else.

SHRI P. K. KUMARAN: The hon. Minister just now stated that there is no shortage of kerosene at present. May I know, if there is no shortage, whether any steps have, been taken to see that the prices for retail users do not go up?

SHRI HUMAYUN KABIR: As I stated earlier, we have asked the

Chief Minister of every State to look into it personally. There is the Kerosene Price Control Order and that is administered by the State Governments. They have been requested to use it wherever necessary. I may add that in one or two States prices have been kept under control. We are giving the same order of supplies to every State. In fact in certain cases we gave 5 per cent more supply than the anticipated demand in the months of July and August. The fact that the prices have not gone up in certain States shows that if other States take similar measures, the prices could be kept under control.

SHRI M. M. DHARIA: The hon. Minister rightly stated that the difficulty lies in distribution. May I know whether the Government has considered the desirability of distributing kerosene or diesel through fair price shops which have now been established in all the corners of the country?

SHRI HUMAYUN KABIR: This also is a measure which is for the State Governments to take. We have indicated the possibility. We have taken one other measure. We are asking all the oil companies themselves to supply kerosene at their installations and pumps.

SHRI K. S. CHAVDA: May I know to what extent rural electrification will help in reducing the consumption of kerosene?

SHRI HUMAYUN KABIR: Obviously it will be useful.

SHRI B. K. P. SINHA: Sir, in view of the fact that kerosene oil of a refined quality is highly essential for defence requirements, may I know if the Government are taking steps to conserve the highly refined kerosene oil and do the Government realise that if they take that essential step, naturally the proportion for civilian use will be less and naturally the prices will rise? I do not know why the Government fights shy of making the position clear.

SHRI HUMAYUN KABIR: As I have stated before, Sir, defence requirements will take precedence over everything else but we shall try to maintain, as far as possible, supplies for civilians also and since at the moment there is no shortage, the prices should not go up.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: Sir, the notice of the question was given in June but it does have relevance in the present context. The Minister has said that he has written letters to the Chief Ministers regarding distribution of kerosene and the results have not been uniformly responsive. May I know if in the Union Territories, particularly in the Union Territory of Delhi, the Minister himself will see to it that some model distribution is set up?

SHRI HUMAYUN KABIR: Sir, my hon. friend must have seen the statement of the Chief Commissioner of Delhi in which he has said that he has adequate supplies and he cannot understand why the prices have gone up. The Central Government cannot go into the retail trade. That is the responsibility of the local Administration but we are asking the local Administration to control prices as far as possible.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: The Chief Commissioner may have adequate supplies but the retailers do not have, at least the consumers do not get it.

SHRI HUMAYUN KABIR: I am very sorry for that, but does he expect that the Central Government should deal with seven or eight hundred thousand retailers for distribution? It is just not possible and it would only create confusion.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: I am afraid he has not understood it; he is misleading the House.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will give you a chance again, please.

SHRI MULKA GOVINDA REDDY: Has it come to the notice of the Minister that not a bottle of kerosene

is available in South Avenue and other parts of Delhi and what steps do the Government propose to take?

SHRI HUMAYUN KABIR: I have just now learnt from my hon. friend that kerosene is not available in South Avenue. I shall make an enquiry.

SHRI GURUDEV GUPTA: The hon. Minister has just now stated that he is stay that the consumers do not get it. So, may I ask what is the use of depending on such a machinery for distribution when the consumers do not get kerosene and even in North and South Avenues no kerosene is available?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think he has given ample reply to that.

SHRI G. M. MIR: The Minister said that he has personally written to the Chief Minister of the States about proper distribution of kerosene and diesel oil. I would like to know whether any specific instruction has been issued by the Minister to the Chief Ministers and if so, what is the response of the Chief Ministers of the different States?

SHRI HUMAYUN KABIR: The Chief Ministers know their duty. It is not for me to really tell them what to do because it is their responsibility. All that I have done is to point out to them that we will make adequate supplies available. If there is any shortage, they should let me know and I shall see that supplies reach them,

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: The learned Minister apparently has very good ideas but what I suggested was that he should put them into practice somewhere in some territory which he thinks is suitable and I suggest the Union Territory of Delhi where the situation is that though the Minister says correctly that the Chief Minister has ample stocks, Mr. Reddy says that kerosene is not available in South Avenue and my wife says that it is not available in North Avenue. So he should set up a

model distribution scheme somewhere in Delhi.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is a suggestion for action.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I presume the hon. Minister comes from Calcutta. Does he know that kerosene has become scarce in Calcutta and prices are rising and even at prohibitive prices people do not get it? May I know whether he is aware of it? I was there only last week-end.

SHRI HUMAYUN KABIR: I had a certain Communication from the Chief Minister of Bengal only yesterday and I have immediately looked into the matter but till I received this telephone from him yesterday, the supplies in Bengal were according to the estimated demand of that area.

SHRI M. M. MEHTA: Almost all over India the price of kerosene has gone up so high. When the price of kerosene still goes on rising, what steps the Central Government propose to take to Control the price?

SHRI HUMAYUN KABIR: There are certain constitutional limitations. What else can we do? The Central Government cannot do anything so long as the State Government is functioning. We cannot take over the functions of the State Government.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: You can under the Constitution.

VANASTHALI VIDYAPEETH IN RAJASTHAN

*669. SHRI DEOKINANDAN NARAYAN: Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to declare the Vanasthali Vidyapeeth for women in Rajasthan as a Central University; and

(b) if so, the details of the said proposal?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS IN THE MINISTRY OF

EDUCATION (SHRI R. M. HAJARNAVIS): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

SHRI DEOKINANDAN NARAYAN: In this matter may I know if the Government has received any representation from that institution and the recommendations of the Rajasthan Government about the same?

SHRI R. M. HAJARNAVIS: There is no proposal for declaring the Vanasthali Vidyapeeth as a Central University but there was a proposal that it should be declared to be a deemed University within the meaning of section 3 of the University Grants Commission Act. This was referred to the U.G.C. and having examined it, they came to the conclusion that the institutions which are run by this organisation are more on the school side than on the college side and therefore they said that this would not qualify for being declared as deemed University and the Government have accepted this view of the U.G.C.

SHRI DEOKINANDAN NARAYAN: May I say that the information of my hon. friend is not correct because the education imparted in the Vanasthali Vidyapeeth is from the primary school to the M.A. Class and further may I know from the Minister whether last year when the Education Minister had been there at the time of the anniversary of that Institution, he promised that he would look into the matter and said that he would be glad if the University was taken over by the Central Government? Is it not a fact?

MR. CHAIRMAN: He apparently has looked into it.

SHRI R. M. HAJARNAVIS: The undertaking has been fulfilled to the letter. The matter has been very carefully considered and, after all, in a matter like this the views of the U.G.C. should be ascertained and they ought to prevail.