

बात को ध्यान में रखते हुए क्या कपड़े की कीमतें भी घटाई जाएगी। आप इस बात को जानते हैं कि आजकल हमारे देश में मनुफैक्चर्ड क्लॉथ की कीमतें आसमान को छू रही हैं जब कि काटन की कीमतें काफी नीचे आ चुकी है।

PROF. D. P. CHATTOPADHYAYA: Sir, it is true that cotton price has come down and in many cases also the cloth price has come down. Whether there is a point to point similarity in the coming down trend of the cotton price and the cloth price, I am not quite sure but that is one of the matters that the Marathe Committee will look into.

SHRI SAWAISINGH SISODIA: I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to how many metres of standard cloth were produced by the private sector according to the specifications issued by the Government and how much of the cloth produced was utilised by the needy consumers.

PROF. D. P. CHATTOPADHYAYA: As I have said, we keep the figures of the total production but not private sector-wise or public sector-wise. As I have already said, the total accumulation was of the order of 85,000 bales. It has come down now to approximately 75,000 bales.

Sick tea gardens

*4. SHRIMATI LEELA DAMODARA MENON : SHRI SARDAR AMJAD ALI: SHRI HARSH DEO MALAVIYA: DR. V. B. SINGH: SHRI ROSHAN LAL:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any decision about the sick and the closed tea gardens in the country;

The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shrimati Leela Damodara Menon.

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which that decision is likely to be implemented?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH): (a) to (c) Measures including take over of management to rehabilitate the gardens which can be revived back to normalcy have been settled by Government and the proposals for introducing legislation to amend the Tea Act 1953 to provide for taking over management of such gardens have been finalised.

SHRIMATI LEELA DAMODARA MENON: Sir, considering the need for tea export and the demand for Indian tea in foreign markets, how quickly would the Government take necessary steps to make amendment to the Tea Act? Also, Sir, considering the high rate of banking loan, does the Industrial Reconstruction Corporation intend to take over the responsibility of managing the sick gardens and which organisation of the Government intends to see that the sick units are taken over?

SHRI V. P. SINGH: Sir, as for the introduction of legislation, the legislation has been almost finalised and it depends on the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs perhaps, so that we may bring it as soon as possible. As for the mode of management of the gardens, well, the State Corporation or the TICI or any other body, suitable body, could take over the management and we have a flexible approach on the problem.

SHRIMATI LEELA DAMODARA MENON: Sir, with regard to the taking over of the management, I did not mean exactly the management of the tea gardens, but the financial institutions that would be assisting because from the report of the Government, it is found that most of the sick gardens are beyond redemption and to spend money on those sick]

gardens without proper organisation and financial responsibility, I think Sir, would be a bad investment.

SHRI V. P. SINGH: Sir, the hon. Member has raised a pertinent point. One of the reasons for these gardens becoming sick is that they lost their credibility with the financial institutions. So we propose to set up such organisation that will have the confidence of the financial institutions and we will see to it that the necessary credit facilities are forthcoming by providing, if necessary margin money.

SHRI SARDAR AMJAD ALI: Sir, in some of the earlier sessions the learned Commerce Minister said here on the floor of the House that certain outside agency might be created or might come up to take over the management of the sick and closed tea gardens. He also stated that in case any State Government comes for-ward to take over any closer gardens then the Centre would consider giving them financial assistance also for the management. In this perspective, may I know from the hon. Commerce Minister, when a proposal for legislation is going on, whether those two considerations which the Minister stated earlier, have been taken into account while proposing this legislation?

SHRI V. P. SINGH: Yes, those considerations stand . . .

(Interruptions)

SHRI HARSH DEO MALAVIYA: Sir, I would like to know how many of the sick tea gardens are under foreign ownership and how many are under Indian ownership? Also, what are the criteria for calling a tea garden a sick garden? Are there any criteria?

SHRI V. P. SINGH: Yes, Sir. No known sick tea garden is under foreign management: all are under Indian Management.

About the criteria for declaring a garden sick, one is, if losses during three years of the past five years are being incurred, then it could be declared a sick tea garden. Another criterion is that if the yield in three years of the past five years is less than, 25 per cent of the average yield of the local area, then it can be declared sick. The third criterion is that if a tea garden is defaulting in its statutory obligations, it can be declared sick.

SHRI HARSH DEO MALAVIYA: What about the workers? Are they . . .

SHRI V. P. SINGH: That is why there is the criterion of default in statutory obligations. This has been taken into account.

DR. V. B. SINGH: My submission is that by collecting all the partients from different hospitals of India an army can be constituted. Similarly, taking over sick mills and wanting absolute and relative growth of public sector is a misconception, Sir. . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Put your question.

DR. V. B. SINGH: With these preliminary remarks, I would like to put my question. For every sickness there is a separate remedy. The same remedy or same cause is not common to all the diseases. But the Government is thinking of only one remedy, namely, legislation not realising the varying causes of sickness. My question is, what are the specific, identifiable causes of sick mills or the different tea gardens? In case there is legislation, is it under contemplation that it will be based on the principle of joint sector in which workers of the gardens will also participate in production and management?

SHRI V. P. SINGH: Sir, I welcome the wish of health for all the sick tea gardens. About the reasons for the sickness, one, of course has been the lack of proper management. Secondly, in the tea industry, the

prices prevailing have not been at economic levels till 1974.

SHRI KALYAN ROY: It is there.

SHRI V. P. SINGH: Only recently. This sickness is not recent. It is many years old. The average yield of the Darjeeling area is about 628 kgs per hectare, whereas the average yield of India is about 1311 kgs per hectare. So, these are the reasons. As far as the remedies are concerned, as I have already mentioned, by the take-over we intend to provide proper management, by which confidence could be created. The tea Board is taking action for financing. We have also proposed a research centre in Darjeeling.

श्री रोशनलाल : मैं मिनिस्टर साहब से यह दरिपात करना चाहता हूँ कि क्या यह हकीकत है कि साले गुजिस्ता में एक क्वेश्चन हुआ था इस हाउस में जिसमें बताया गया था कि दो करोड़ 50 लाख रुपया उन चाय के बागात के लिये मखसूस किया गया है जो खस्ता हालत में हैं ? मैं यह भी जानना चाहता हूँ कि साले गुजिस्ता में क्या कोई पया किसी बागात के लिये दिया गया और या यह रुपया उन्हें बारसुख पोजेपति बागान गानिकों को दिया गया या छोटे छोटे बागान को भी दिया गया है ?

श्री बी० पी० सिंह : मान्यवर जितनी खस्ता हालत समझते हैं उतनी खस्ता हालत नहीं है। हमने जो रुपया दिया है उसके आंकड़े इस प्रकार हैं। 73-74 में टी प्लान्टेशन फाइनेंस स्कीम में 17.23 लाख रुपये दिये गये टी मशीनरी और हायर परचेज स्कीम में 153.71 लाख रुपये दिये गये और रिप्लान्टेशन सक्सडी स्कीम में 25.54 लाख रुपये दिये गये।

SHRI NABIN CHANDRA BURAGOHAIN: May I know how many tea gardens in Assam are categorised as sick gardens and how many labourers are involved in the running of these gardens?

SHRI V. P. SINGH: The information so far available with the Tea Board is that about 38 gardens are totally closed in Assam any about 14 of them are sick gardens. In response to a circular issued by the Tea Board, 125 gardens have reported that they are in economic difficulties, but we behave that much of it has been prompter due to some hope of getting assistance from the Government and not because as many gardens are really sick. We are applying the criteria mentioned in sorting out genuinely sick gardens.

SHRI U. K. LAKSHMANA GOWDA: The Minister, in his reply, while identifying the causes for the gardens becoming sick, has come out with the statement that it is not only the management problem but also the fiscal policy and the price structure prevailing both for the tea for export and in the internal market in the last few years which has been responsible for it. In view of that, waiting for the gardens to become sick and then taking them over is one thing. In order to see that such gardens do not become sick, particularly gardens which are in the marginal production areas, where certain fiscal policies in certain States have come in the way of development, have been identified. What action does the Ministry propose to take to see that such estates and in marginally producing areas and marginal estates do not fall sick, so that the Government may not have the problem of having to take them over later?

SHRI V. P. SINGH: In this respect we ensure, through the Tea Board, better replication and availability of inputs improved marketing facilities, replanting loans and finance for pruning and infilling finances for these purposes. We expect that the State Governments will take up anti-soil erosion and soil enrichment schemes.

*5. [Transferred to the 16th January, 1976.]