

LOK SABHA DEBATES

1

LOK SABHA

Wednesday, May 7, 1969/Valsakha 17, 1891
(Saka)

*The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the
Clock.*

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

OBITUARY REFERENCE

MR. SPEAKER: I have to inform the House of the sad demise of Prof. Krishna Chandra who passed away at Meerut on the 30th April, 1969, at the age of 74.

Prof. Krishna Chandra was a member of the First and Second Lok Sabha during the years 1952-62.

We deeply mourn the loss of this friend and I am sure the House will join me in conveying our condolences to the bereaved family.

The House may stand in silence for a short while to express its sorrow.

*The members then stood in silence for
a short while*

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Export of Tea

*1533. SHRI BEDABRATA BARUA: Will the Minister of FOREIGN TRADE AND SUPPLY be pleased to state:

(a) whether efforts have been made to sell blended and packeted tea to foreign countries in addition to the usual sale of tea;

(b) whether any efforts have been made to enter markets outside the U.K. with

2

tea in Indian packets exported directly by India; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN TRADE AND SUPPLY (SHRI B. R. BHAGAT): (a) and (b). Yes, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

SHRI BEDABRATA BARUA: So far as the tea trade is concerned, the interest of the British auctioneers and others generally is in the generic promotion of tea but not in the promotion of sale of package tea for obvious reasons. These interests control 98 per cent of the trade. Out of the six auctioneers in Calcutta, four control 98 per cent of the entire trade in tea. Even in the Tea Board as constituted, out of 25 non-official members, 8 are Britishers. What is Government's policy in regard to the tea trade? Is there any proposal to Indianise the auctioning agencies, the brokers?

SHRI B. R. BHAGAT: The question relates to the export of package tea. As for the auctions, how much is in Calcutta and how much in London, we have given the information. Now more than 50 per cent of the auctions is done in Calcutta. As to how much is done by British firms, although the sterling companies or firms are owned by the British interests, they function under our regulations here. That is a different matter. I am surprised he said that on the Tea Board, 8 members are British nationals. I do not think that is correct.

SHRI BEDABRATA BARUA: The strong tie of Indian tea with the London market is suicidal to our interests. It has also been admitted that the Britishers show some preference for East African tea now. This may ultimately lead to the end of our tea trade. Why is it not possible to make

it obligatory on these auctioneers to function only in India? Why should not the tea auctions be held only in India and not in London? I think it may be possible to insist on this.

Secondly, is it possible to create in the Tea Board an agency which can look to our interests in this respect so that auctions are held only in India so that we may not lose a lot of trade as we do under the present process?

SHRI B.R. BHAGAT: The hon. member had tabled a question on the export of package tea which is different from tea auctions. If he tables a separate question, I will answer.

SHRI D.N. PATODIA: The hon. Minister has stated that efforts have been made to promote the sale of package tea. What are the results of these efforts in the last three years and how much package tea has been exported? Looking at the experience of James Finlay in the direction of exports a few years back which resulted in loss of crores of rupees, what particular incentive do Government propose to offer to those firms which are prepared to export package tea, and has any such incentive programme been drawn up in collaboration with the Tea Board which is wasting lakhs and lakhs of Indian rupees?

SHRI B.R. BHAGAT: The export of package tea amounted to Rs. 2.81 crores in 1968.

SHRI D.N. PATODIA: What a figure!

SHRI B.R. BHAGAT: In 1967, it was Rs. 2.41 crores. It is true the amount is negligible; he is right in saying that it is a very small amount. But as the hon. member knows, it is difficult for package tea to enter sophisticated markets, particularly the European market. In many places, there is a national monopoly. The whole system of internal taxes and other things is such that it is difficult for any outsider, even if it is not legally banned, to enter with the freight cost and all those things. Wherever possible, with our neighbouring countries, we are trying to do our best. The more

important thing is to develop national packaging. It is true that most of the packaged tea which is sold in the country is done by companies like Brooke Bond and others. I have asked the Ministry to give thought to it and see how far the national market packaged tea should be developed either alone or in co-operation with Ceylon and packaged tea should be exported to whichever country we can. All incentives are given. Even this year, the duty on packaged tea has been completely abolished; that is one incentive; other incentives could be thought of.

SHRI HEM RAJ: Is it a fact that the Japanese delegation which toured India recently has complained that there was no propaganda for Indian tea in Japan and that India tea was liked in Japan. What efforts have been made by the Government to popularise Indian tea in Japan?

SHRI B.R. BHAGAT: Japan grows its own tea and its own special variety. Particularly, we know their consumption of green tea and I think the hon. Member is interested in the export of similar varieties. We are trying to develop our exports.

DR. RANEN SEN: Sometime back there was a talk of India and Ceylon forming a consortium for the combined export of tea. I got the impression from what the hon. Minister says that the talks are still continuing. Are the talks still continuing? Have any active steps been taken to begin export of tea?

SHRI B. R. BHAGAT: Working parties have been formed in both the countries and they have submitted their reports; each is studying the others report and another meeting is expected to take place when these aspects will be considered. I have said that we shall go ahead in co-operation with Ceylon if possible; if not, we shall go ahead ourselves.

अलीगढ़ में परमाणु रिक्टर

*1534. श्री महाराज सिंह भारती : क्या प्रधान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या परमाणु ऊर्जा आयोग ने 500 करोड़ रुपये की लागत से अलीगढ़ में एक