

Shri S. M. Banerjee: My question has not been answered.

Shri Manubhai Shah: What has not been answered? I have said that we are taking all measures.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: I want to know whether we are trying to increase our trade with the socialist countries and whether any steps have been taken in that regard.

Shri Manubhai Shah: Precisely so.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member wanted to put a question, but I disallowed, but the hon. Minister has got up and answered it.

Shri Manubhai Shah: I am sorry. I did not know.

Free Trade Ports

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- *323. { **Shri Subodh Hansda:**
Shri S. C. Samanta:
Shri B. K. Das:
Shri Maheswar Naik:

Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to state:

(a) whether the proposal for free trade ports has been dropped;

(b) if not, the ports proposed for this purpose; and

(c) the commodities that are proposed to pass through these ports?

The Minister of International Trade in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (Shri Manubhai Shah): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c). The proposal for the establishment of Free Trade Zone at Kandla is under active consideration. The commodities and industries will be finalised after a decision is arrived at.

Shri Subodh Hansda: On the last occasion also, the hon. Minister had stated that the matter was still under consideration. May I know how long it will take for Government to arrive at a final decision?

Shri Manubhai Shah: Now, it should not take much time.

Shri Subodh Hansda: Since Government are going to create a free trade zone there, may I know what special facilities are going to be provided there for the exporters and importers?

Shri Manubhai Shah: Normally, as is internationally known, free trade zone means that in the bonded places whatever may be the entry of goods they will be allowed without tariff and without customs duty.

Shri S. C. Samanta: May I know whether the opinion of the Ministry of Transport and Communications has been ascertained about this Kandla free trade zone; also why so much delay has taken place in finalising this?

Shri Manubhai Shah: They are the sponsoring Ministry. It is with the joint co-operation of the two Ministries that the entire subject is being considered.

Shri Tyagi: What will be the advantage of a free trade port? Will things like gold etc. be imported into it?

Shri Manubhai Shah: Gold is quite different. It is not included in the items.

Shri Tyagi: Are there any restrictions?

Shri Manubhai Shah: Yes.

Shri Tyagi: What are they?

Shri Manubhai Shah: I have already stated that in the answer. The items will be selected on the basis of their export promotion.

Public Undertakings

*324. **Dr. L. M. Singhvi:** Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to state:

(a) the measures of economy and austerity, if any, introduced or are proposed to be introduced in various public undertakings; and

(b) whether a statement would be laid on the Table giving the required details?

The Minister of International Trade in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (Shri Manubhai Shah): (a) and (b). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

I would invite the attention of the Honourable Member to the reply given and the statement laid on the Table of the House by my colleague the Honourable Finance Minister on the 24th January, 1963 in reply to Question No. 462. The Public Sector Undertakings have been advised that only the most essential activity should continue to be undertaken with minimum expenditure and that all activities which do not directly assist the defence effort, howsoever, desirable otherwise might for the time be deferred.

Other economy and austerity measures adopted or followed by the various Ministries are also being brought to the notice of the Government Undertakings, from time to time, with a view to their taking similar steps to the extent possible.

Dr. L. M. Singhvi: The statement refers to another statement laid on the Table of the House on the 24th January, 1963, wherein it was stated that Ministries had been advised to undertake a purposeful re-examination of the position and that a high-level committee.....

Mr. Speaker: What was told by the Minister to Members is known to him best. It need not be repeated.

Dr. L. M. Singhvi: I suppose so. Unless I remind him, he would not be able to answer.

Mr. Speaker: Supplementaries should be brief and precise.

Dr. L. M. Singhvi: I would like to know whether the inter-departmental committee appointed for effecting

economy has already submitted its report? If so, whether the report applies to public undertakings also? If so, whether those measures.....

Mr. Speaker: So many 'if soes' cannot be there.

Dr. L. M. Singhvi: ... have already been implemented.

Mr. Speaker: So many 'if soes' have been included. Only one might be answered.

Dr. L. M. Singhvi: It is all part of a single question.

Mr. Speaker: No.

Dr. L. M. Singhvi: I can put the whole thing in one sweep if you like.

Mr. Speaker: What has been put we have followed.

Shri Manubhai Shah: The committee under the chairmanship of the Home Secretary has been constantly at work. Public sector undertakings are included in their orbit of authority. Their recommendations will be of a continuing order. As soon as a sizeable thing comes, the House will be taken into confidence.

Dr. L. M. Singhvi: We were told in the statement referred to in the statement laid on the Table that measures particularly for saving of electricity have been taken and that officers have been asked to see very strictly that no electricity is wasted. Would the Minister be able to tell us what is the total quantum of electricity and other things used by officers in public undertakings, and whether any strict measures have been taken in respect of enforcing those recommendations, and whether an example is being set by Ministers also in this respect?

Mr. Speaker: Here there are so many 'whethers'. In the previous question we had so many 'if soes'. Only one question can be asked.

Shri Manubhai Shah: As I said, as soon as we arrive at certain concrete conclusions and implement decisions,

we shall certainly lay the information on the Table of the House and take the House into confidence as to what are the economies effected, not only in the case of electricity but in the consumption of stores, importation of capital, construction cost of buildings etc. The economy measures are going to be widespread and in many directions.

Dr. L. M. Singhvi: When is it expected?

(No answer was given).

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath: The statement laid on the Table says that 'other economy and austerity measures adopted or followed by the various Ministries are also being brought to the notice of the Government undertakings.....'

Mr. Speaker: I might tell hon. Members that there is no need to read what has been already given in the statement. Only a brief reference might be made to that.

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath: The House should know what has been said in the statement. Only the Members who have tabled the question and a few others are given copies of the statement. So the House should know what we are asking.

Mr. Speaker: The Minister knows that.

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath: But the other Members do not know.

Shri Priya Gupta: We are not given copies.

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath: Kindly ask the Ministry to distribute 500 copies among Members.

Mr. Speaker: As many as are required are given.

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath: Sometimes they are exhausted.

Shri Daji: We are never given copies. Only Members who table the question are given such copies.

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath: The statement says that 'other economy and austerity measures adopted or followed by the various Ministries are also being brought to the notice of the Government undertakings'. Is the House to understand that among these economy and austerity measures is the recent measure or the step taken by the Works, Housing and Rehabilitation Ministry, with regard to the consumption of water, power and furniture in the Ministers' residences, with such conspicuous failure?

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur: Is it a public undertaking?

Shri Manubhai Shah: What am I to say about it?

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath: He has not followed the question.

Mr. Speaker: He has followed.

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath: May I repeat it?

Mr. Speaker: If the Minister has not followed I am prepared to ask the Member to repeat. If he has followed it, he need not.

Shri Manubhai Shah: I may mention that this is a specific question on public undertakings. If the hon. Member wants to enlarge it.....

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath: Here is a specific statement by the Minister.

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. He has answered it.

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath: You may call me to order, but I must point out that the Ministry's measures are referred to in the statement. If he cannot answer, what is the use?

Mr. Speaker: I do not know why he should get so much upset.

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath: I am not upset.

Mr. Speaker: Shri Kamath must know that that question relates to, as he has himself said, the Ministry of Supplies and Housing. So far as that

economy is concerned, it does not relate to this Minister. He is only taking up public undertakings and the economy that is to be effected in them. Therefore, he cannot answer it just at present. He can have another opportunity some other time to ask that question.

श्री कछवाय : मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या मंत्रीगण के खर्चों में भी कोई कटौती करने का विचार है।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : वह पब्लिक ग्रैंड-टेकिंग नहीं है।

Shri S. M. Banerjee: In the statement it is mentioned that all activities which do not directly assist the defence efforts, however desirable otherwise, will be deferred for the time being. I want to know whether there are certain expenditures which are inevitable but not connected with defence, and whether they are also going to be affected.

Shri Manubhai Shah: All essential Plan development programmes which are conducive to the growth of the economy, which is as essential to defence as the economy itself, will continue. It is only where extraneous expenditure, particularly on construction of houses is concerned, that we are going to be very rigid.

Mr. Speaker: Shrimati Savitri Nigam. Shri D. C. Sharma. She is rising now.

Shri D. C. Sharma: Is the Organisation and Methods Division reviewing the working of the public sector undertakings; if so, which of these have been reviewed by this Division?

Shri Manubhai Shah: Public undertakings have their own committees of economy, and the Organisation and Methods Division is mostly for administrative matters, but that does not bar the O. & M. from taking up project by project. Presently, we have our own economy measures for these public undertakings. We have

a co-ordinating committee and that looks into all this.

Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad: May I know whether there has been any specific recommendation or suggestion by the Government to have a definite cut like 10 per cent as is supposed to have been the advice of the Finance Minister to the different departments of Government?

Shri Manubhai Shah: That is true. The Finance Minister has urged on every Ministry and written personal letters to his colleagues that there should be a further cut if possible in avoidable expenditure or expenditure which can wait for some time.

Shri Daji: In view of the urgency and immediate requirements, has this matter been given immediate attention and have immediate recommendations been made or not?

Shri Manubhai Shah: Yes, Sir. That is this Home Secretary's Committee to take summary decisions without waiting for all the calculations and evaluations, and we expect some results from that committee.

Mr. Speaker: Shri Bibhuti Mishra. Shrimati Savitri Nigam rose—

Mr. Speaker: I called her, she did not stand up. Now she cannot have the chance.

Shrimati Savitri Nigam: No, Sir.

श्री विभूति मिश्र : क्या यह सही है कि पब्लिक ग्रैंडटेकिंग्स में खर्च की कमी इस चिये नहीं होती है कि उस में जो अफसर हैं उन के मन में बनियापन की भावना नहीं है। यदि हाँ, तो फिर सरकार क्या करना उचित समझती है ताकि खर्च में कटौती हो ?

श्री मनुभाई शाह : मैं कह सकता हूँ कि पब्लिक ग्रैंडटेकिंग्स में जितने सिविल सर्वेंट्स और टेकनिकल आफिसर्स हैं उन्होंने अपना काम इतना अच्छा दिखलाया है प्रोजेक्ट्स में कि मैं उन के काम को इस सदन के सामने

रख सकता हूँ। कहीं पर थोड़ी बहुत लैप्सेज हो सकती है।

By far and large they have acquitted themselves very graciously and effectively to put all these public projects and bring them into production and the best possible use.

Shri Tyagi: Has any assessment been made of the total effect of the economies proposed on behalf of these public sector undertakings? How many crores are expected to be saved?

Shri Manubhai Shah: After the study by this committee, their recommendations will be looked into. Every public sector project will show an estimate of what they want to save, and the House will be taken into confidence as soon as the assessment is ready.

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur: May I know if the personnel of the committee consist of only the three Secretaries, or others also who know something about public undertakings and their working?

Shri Manubhai Shah: Yes, their General Managers and the Chairmen of the Corporations are part of this committee.

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur: The Committee, I think, consists only of the three Secretaries.

Shri Manubhai Shah: The three Secretaries constitute the standing committee with the association and co-operation of the main officers concerned.

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy: What happened to the suggestion of having a parliamentary committee on public undertakings?

Shri Manubhai Shah: The House is equally aware of that and the matter is being tried to be resolved. There has been acute difference of opinion between the two Houses.

Shri Narendra Singh Mahida: Why are public undertakings not making profits?

Shri Manubhai Shah: Sir, I do not accept that view at all. I have had several occasions to show that public undertakings are to be divided into three parts. There are those which are on steam and if you examine their balance sheets, you will have every reason to be proud of them. There is a second category which is still under gestation period, they are heavy corporations and they take their own time. Even in the private sector, they take about 3—5 years. There is then the third category which are still under construction and they cannot show profits because they have not yet reached the production stage.

Shri Ranga: There are some committees—the Public Accounts Committee, the Estimates Committee and also the consultative committee of Parliament for the Ministry. Have Government consulted these committees or their heads while making plans for achieving economy?

Shri Manubhai Shah: But this is a question of emergency and we want to do things quickly apart from any large measures or long term measures. This committee will take a quick view and give its recommendations... (Interruptions).

Mr. Speaker: Next question.

Shri Ranga: But this committee consists only of officers. I am asking why they are not taking advantage of the other committees which are already there.

Shri Manubhai Shah: That is not necessary.

Industrial Development of Assam

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*325. { **Shri Subodh Hansda:**
Shri P. C. Borooah:
Shri Basappa:

Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a special programme to aid the Industrial development of Assam in view of the strategic importance of the