

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Ministers here are also persons who are looking into it with a host of subordinates who are there for this purpose. I can allow some questions on matters which might have escaped the attention of the Government. But, for hon. Members to supersede the function of the Government as if they have no technical officers and experts to advise them on this matter is not the purpose of the Question Hour. Hon. Members may have their own views on this matter.

**Shri T. B. Vittal Rao** rose—

**Mr. Speaker:** No more questions now. Next question.

#### Indian Engineering Goods

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\*804. { **Shri V. P. Nayar:**  
**Shri Vasudevan Nair:**

Will the Minister of Transport and Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that foreign shipping companies charge higher freight rates on Indian Engineering goods as compared to Engineering goods of Japanese origin; and

(b) if so, the steps, if any, taken by Government to protect the Indian Engineering goods from such discrimination?

**The Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur):** (a) Yes. The question was raised at the last meeting of the Committee of Overseas Shipping interests and the shipowners have agreed to convey Government's views to their Principals and have also promised co-operation in the matter.

(b) Complaints of high freight rates are received from time to time. These are investigated and where there is a good case for reduction, the matter is taken up with the Shipping Conference concerned and discussed by the Consultative Committee of Overseas Shipping interests. In this way, reductions have been secured in a few cases.

**Shri V. P. Nayar:** What is the average additional freight charge on Indian engineering goods as compared to the Japanese goods by these steamships?

**Shri Raj Bahadur:** That is a very difficult question. I can only say that there is a difference in the rates. But to say how much is the total difference and what is our total payment in regard to that is difficult because for that I have got to go into the question and ascertain the entire volume of goods exported to all the countries.

**Shri V. P. Nayar:** I want to know whether representatives of engineering industry in India have represented this matter to Government and for how long Government were considering this matter before they thought it worth while to ask the shipping companies to take it over.

**Shri Raj Bahadur:** As I said, these matters of discriminating freight rates are brought to the notice of the Government from time to time. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry go into them. As far back as 1955, a special officer, Shri C. A. Booch, was appointed to go into this whole question. He submitted a report and I would only state three of his broad conclusions. He said that there was no direct evidence that these rates were deliberately discriminatory. Secondly, he advised the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to set up a research institute to investigate complaints. Thirdly, it was his experience that many complaints made by the exporters were not justified, although it does not mean that he repudiated all these complaints.

**Shri Kasliwal:** May I know why Japanese goods are given preference over Indian goods and since how long Government are aware of this position?

**Shri Raj Bahadur:** We have no control on foreign shipping companies who carry these goods and naturally in order to boost up their exports, they might devise rates favourable to their own goods and products.

**Shrimad Hs Palohoudhuri:** Has this question been taken up by our representative in the International Marine Conference and has a uniform rate been pressed for?

**Shri Raj Bahadur:** I cannot exactly say whether this question has been specifically taken up; but the fact remains that the Consultative Committee of Overseas shipping interests specifically met for this purpose and the representatives of those shipping interests who attended the last meeting have promised that they will take our views and press them with their principals.

**Shri Achar:** May I know which are these companies which charge higher rates? Are they British companies?

**Mr. Speaker:** What nationality?

**Shri Raj Bahadur:** I think they are of all nationalities because any ship that calls on our port can carry such goods.

**Shri Ramanathan Chettiar:** In view of the importance of the export of engineering goods, being earner of foreign exchange, what steps will the Government take to expedite the examination of this matter to see that shipping companies do not charge higher freight rates?

**Shri Raj Bahadur:** I have already indicated that we take up this question through the Overseas Shipping Interests Consultative Committee. But, the position basically is that we have no statutory power to compel the foreign shipping interests to agree to our point of view in all cases. Secondly, we cannot alter the rate of tariff also. But, in spite of that, we carry on negotiation and as I have already indicated in my reply to the main question, we have succeeded in quite a few cases in getting a reduction in regard to freight rates.

**Shri Tyagi:** Is there any system of registering or licensing foreign shipping companies for the purpose of their taking cargo from India?

**Shri Raj Bahadur:** This is a question of engineering goods taken from Yokohama in Japan to other places and engineering goods from India, as we also are now in a position to export a few from India to other places. The question is what freight should be charged on shipments from Yokohama and what freight should be charged on shipments from India. There is discrimination against our product.

**Shri Tyagi:** I am afraid, my point has not been understood. What I wanted to know was....

**Mr. Speaker:** What the hon. Minister is indirectly saying is that this does not arise out of the question.

**Shri Tyagi:** May I submit, my only question is whether there is any Government control on the foreign shipping companies in taking loads from here, whether there is any licence or any ship can at any time come to any port. Can we have any such control over foreign ships that they can't take cargo unless they are permitted by the Government?

**Mr. Speaker:** Merely because there is shipping mentioned here, everything relating to ships does not come in. The hon. Minister said that we have no control over foreign ships and it is open to them to fix their own rates. They are not our companies. The hon. Member wants to suggest that when they come to, our ports for halt, we may insist upon their revising the rate or we do not give them licence.

**Shri Tyagi:** That is the point.

**Mr. Speaker:** These are all suggestions for action. The hon. Minister will take them into consideration.

**Shri Raj Bahadur:** Lest another question is put on that aspect, I may clear the position that if we compel or bring any pressure of that type on other ships coming to our ports, our ships will be also discriminated against in other ports

**Shri Tyagi:** They cannot. It is only when they make discriminatory charges.

**Mr. Speaker:** I shall allow some time for discussion if the hon Members gets together all cases of discrimination all over the world.

**Shri V. P. Nayar:** The hon Minister said that he is not in a position to give us an idea of the average rate of enhancement of freight for engineering goods. He also said that the Committee has gone into the whole matter. I want to know whether the Government have any precise information about the average losses to the Indian engineering industry on this account after the report was made.

**Shri Raj Bahadur:** If I understood the hon Member correctly, I thought that he wanted me to give the total loss. I thought that that was what he wanted. I have got specific rates for the various types of goods. I can either place the statement on the Table of the House—in fact .

**Mr. Speaker:** They are not calculated that way. Next question.

**Shri V. P. Nayar:** I ask specifically about engineering goods.

**Mr. Speaker:** There are arithmetical questions. Some kinds of solution are available. The hon Member according to his own capacity puts a problem and suddenly wants an answer from the hon Minister. He is not ready. I can see, he can see. What is the good of saying, we want here and now? The hon Minister can give all the data and ask him to work it out.

**Shri V. P. Nayar:** This arises out of this question.

**Mr. Speaker:** Everything arises. It is not a question for examination in arithmetic.

**Shri V. P. Nayar:** That was not my intention.

**Mr. Speaker:** I know the hon Member's intention is absolutely perfect. But the result of it is different. Next question.

### Deforestation

\*805. **Shri S. M. Banerjee:** Will the Minister of Transport and Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether deforestation has resulted in some change in country's climate, and

(b) if so, in what way?

**The Deputy Minister of Civil Aviation (Shri Mohiuddin):** (a) and (b) The climate of the country has not changed due to deforestation. Deforestation may sometimes affect the temperature and humidity of the immediate locality.

**Shri S. M. Banerjee:** If deforestation had no effect on our country's climate, what is the fun in having afforestation?

**Mr. Speaker:** In some of these cases I find it difficult. I tried to reverse the procedure in the matter of allowing questions. I was in this House before Independence, before this Government came in, before 1947. Then, the rule was general that unless we satisfied them that this question was relevant, every question was thrown out. I tried to adopt a different policy now that we have attained freedom. I allow almost every question until I am thoroughly satisfied that the question is useless. Sometimes, with all the prudence and care, such questions come in. The whole of India from Cape Comorin to the Himalayas, from 13 degrees above the equator right up to 30 degrees above the equator, how does deforestation affect the climate of India as a whole. God alone can give the answer. Very well, all of us are at fault, the hon Member who put the question, the hon Minister who wanted to reply and myself also. Next question.

**Shri Tangamani:** One question, Sir.

**Mr. Speaker:** It is no good. The hon Member will look into the weather chart every day.

**Shri Tangamani:** This is about a specific locality.