

I request the Government to do this.

SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR: The Government have declared coconut as an oilseed of tree origin. There is some misunderstanding in certain quarters that coconut is not getting the benefit because of this declaration and it is not getting advantages of being named oilseed. But the facts are otherwise. Coconut is the only oilseed crop which is also categorised under horticulture. Horticulture is an area which being given the maximum thrust by the Agriculture Ministry. Rs. 1000 crores has been allocated for horticulture in the Eighth Plan. By virtue of being only designated as a tree based oilseed, it is also brought under horticulture and a very substantial quantum of assistance is being given to coconut through the Horticulture Section of this Ministry.

Therefore, coconut is getting the advantages of both oilseeds as well as horticulture. If it is designated merely as oilseed, it will lose advantages which come under horticulture. Coconut is the only horticulture crop or oilseed which has a separate Development Board, called Coconut Development Board and a separate budget for that.

All these things put together, coconut is getting twice or thrice the amount of assistance that is available to any other oilseed.

SHRI G.M.C. BALAYOGI: Andhra Pradesh is also an important State exporting coconuts. But the Central Government is concentrating only on the State of Kerala with regard to development coconut corp. In this background, I want to know from the hon. Minister, apart from the root wilt disease, there are also leave diseases for the coconut trees in Andhra Pradesh.

MR. SPEAKER: No. This is only on root wilt disease.

I have given enough time on this question.

SHRI G.M.C. BALAYOGI: Is the Government going to adopt any chemical or biological method to control the disease. With regard to Andhra Pradesh, there is no allocation for development of coconut trees. Is the Government going to give assistance for Andhra Pradesh coconut growers ?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: It is the same for Andhra Pradesh coconut also.

DR. K.V.R. CHOWDARY: In A.P. also root wilt disease is very prevalent. But not even a single rupee has been given to Andhra Pradesh. Is there no request from the State Government for this? (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: The question is disallowed.

SHRIMATI SUSEELA GOPALAN: Half-an-hour discussion should be allowed on this.

(ends)

Soft Drinks

*628. SHRI SANT RAM SINGLA: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Steering Committee for foreign investment promotion has taken a decision on the rationalisation of the bottle sizes of aerated soft drinks;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) its likely impact on the consumers;

(d) whether the consumers' organisations have demanded rationalisation in the large number of pack and bottle sizes;

(e) if so, the details in this regard; and

(f) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (f). A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

(a) The Steering Committee on Economic Reforms recommended rationalisation of the bottle sizes of aerated soft drinks.

(b) and (c). It was felt that the minimum size could be of 100 ml, and thereafter sizes of 150ml, 200ml, 250ml, 300ml, 330ml, (in cans only), 500ml, 750ml, 1 lr, 1.5 lr, 2 lr, thereafter in multiples of 1 lr upto 5 lr.

Different sizes of bottles would encourage more competition which would be in the interest of the consumer.

(d) to (f). Consumer organisations demand from time to time rationalisation of a large number of pack and bottle sizes. A Standing Committee is constituted in the Ministry representing all interests including consumer organisations to consider these suggestions keeping in view the fast changing techno-economic scenario and the consequent need to bring about relevant changes in the Standards of Weights and Mea-

asures (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 1977.

SHRI SANT RAM SINGLA: Sir, I would like to tell the hon. Minister that the Standing Committee constituted by the Ministry representing all interest including consumer organisations had on three different occasions recommended the rationalisation of pack sizes of 250 ml, 500 ml, 750 ml. and one litre to avoid confusion and deception by the manufacturers. If so, why the considered recommendations of the Committee have been over-ruled?

SHRI A.K. ANTONY: The hon. Member is correct in saying that the Standing Committee on two occasions had recommended the bottle sizes. But then the Government was to finalise the Standing Committee's decision. A large number of representations started coming. A large number of Members of Parliament, irrespective of this side or that side, also gave representations in writing about draft notifications and we got representations from various other quarters also. Since the matter concerns foreign investment also gave representations in writing about draft notifications and we got representations from various other quarters also. Since the matter concerns foreign investment also, ultimately the Department thought that it is better to seek the opinion of the Steering Committee on Economic Reforms also. After going through the various details, the Steering Committee on Economic Reforms recommended certain changes and ultimately the Ministry accepted their recommendations.

SHRI SANT RAM SINGLA: Normally the recommendations of the Standing Committee are accepted. Why for the first time departure has been made and its recommendations ignored? Instead the matter has been referred to the Steering Committee with this decision taken in the name of

competition the interest of the consumer is bound to suffer. Will the hon. Minister please assure the House that the interest of the consumer will be fully protected ?

SHRI A.K. ANTONY: I would like to inform the House that after the final decision has been taken by the Government, there is no complaint from any of the consumers or from Members of Parliament. We got only one letter from the Pepsi. No consumer organisation complained against the final decision of the Government.

[*Translation*]

SHRI DAU DAYAL JOSHI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, World Food Organisation and World Health Organisation have stated in a joint report that the use of BVO i.e. Bromite Vegetable Oil in soft drinks sold in India should be banned which is mainly mixed in Limca, Campa, Orange and Rasna etc. The Central Government had imposed a ban on 15 Oct., 1990 on the use of BVO in soft drinks. I would like to know whether that order is still being followed or not. These companies get it printed on their bottles that these do not contain BVO. The companies had got a stay also for a period of two years and had been given a stay to find a substitute of BVO. Have these companies found a substitute of BVO? The World Health Organisation has stated that intake of BVO mixed soft drinks can cause serious diseases like cancer. In view of this, is our Government taking it seriously and is the ban-order issued by our Government in this regard being properly implemented or not?

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: The question is disallowed. It does not come out of the original question.

SHRI HARI KISHORE SINGH: May I know from the hon. Minister whether before taking a final view about the size of the bottle, he will get it analysed from the Health Ministry that it is not a health hazard ?

SHRI A.K. ANTONY: In the Standing Committee, there is always a representative of the Health Ministry also.

Palace on Wheels

*629. DR. RAMESH CHAND TOMAR:

SHRI BHERU LAL MEENA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to introduce "Palace on Wheels" type tourist train services and "Palace on Wheel Restaurant" to attract foreign tourists;

(b) if so, the precise details in this regard; and

(c) the time by which the proposal is to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF): (a) to (c). A Statement is laid on the table of the Sabha.

STATEMENT

(a) to (c). Indian Railways have identified the following tourist circuits for introduction of 'Palace on Wheels' type tourist train services:

BROAD GAUGE

1. Delhi-Jaipur-Jodhpur-Jaisalmer-Sawai Madhopur-Bharatpur-Agra-Delhi;