

LOK SABHA

Tuesday, May 1, 1962/Vaisakha 11,
1884 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the
Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

MEMBER SWORN

Shri Niranjan Lal (Nominated—
Andaman and Nicobar Islands).

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Wrist Watches

+

†299. { Shri Subodh Hansda:
Shri E. Madhusudan Rao:
Shri Rameshwar Tantia:
Shri S. C. Samanta:

Will the Minister of Steel and Heavy Industries be pleased to state:

(a) when the wrist watches manufactured by H.M.T. at Bangalore will be made available for the general public; and

(b) the cost of these watches in the open market?

The Minister of Steel and Heavy Industries (Shri C. Subramaniam):

(a) and (b). Three varieties of watches priced at Rs. 89, Rs. 94 and Rs. 99 each, exclusive of taxes, assembled by the Hindustan Machine Tools Ltd., are now available to the public.

Shri Subodh Hansda: In view of the present demand for these watches, may I know whether Government propose to increase the annual quota of production?

Shri C. Subramaniam: Just now it is only assembling, which means import of these components. And for that the foreign exchange available

‡20 (Ai) LSD—1.

is limited. That is why only about 30,000 watches have been assembled since August 1961. But when we begin to manufacture the components, the production will go up.

Shri Subodh Hansda: The hon. Minister stated that it is only assembling now. If so, may I know what percentage of indigenous parts are being used in these watches?

Shri C. Subramaniam: At present it is nil. All the components have been imported and they are being assembled. But we have a programme of indigenous manufacture to reach 84 per cent by the fifth year.

Shri S. C. Samanta: May I know what sort of attempts are being made to manufacture these components of the wrist watch?

Shri C. Subramaniam: That is the regular programme. The present assembling programme has been taken up only for giving training to the workmen who will be working in the factories for the manufacture of these components. Therefore, this is only a preliminary programme. The regular programme is the manufacture of the components which will be taken up by January, 1963.

Dr. Govind Das: By what time is it expected that we shall be able to prepare the parts here and it will not be necessary to import them from foreign countries?

Shri C. Subramaniam: The present programme is that in the first year, that is by January, 1963, it would be manufacturing 54 per cent of the components. And then it goes on increasing from year to year—54 per cent in the first year, 60 per cent in the second year, 72 per cent in the third year and 84 per cent in the fourth year. And then we will have

to review the whole thing whether it is worth while to manufacture the other components or we should go on importing.

Shri Basappa: Has all the machinery needed for the manufacture been imported?

Shri C. Subramaniam: Orders have been placed and the machinery has started arriving.

Shri K. R. Gupta: Will the quality of these watches compete well with that of the foreign watches?

Shri C. Subramaniam: I would request the hon. Member to purchase a watch and test it.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: May I know whether the cost of production has now come down and, if so, to what extent?

Shri C. Subramaniam: As I have already stated, all the components are being imported now, and we are selling at a price which gives a margin of profit. But when we manufacture the components, the price would go down further.

Mr. Speaker: Shri D. N. Tiwary: Member is not present. Shri D. C. Sharma; Shri Subodh Hansda.

Shri D. C. Sharma: No. 301. Why did you call two names, while I am here?

Mr. Speaker: Because I made a mistake; he was not noticeable.

People's Car

- +
- *301. { **Shri D. C. Sharma:**
Shri Subodh Hansda:
Shri S. C. Samanta:
Shri Rameshwar Tantia:
Shri Bibhuti Mishra:
Shri S. M. Banerjee:
Shri Vidya Charan Shukla:
Shri M. R. Krishna:
Shri E. Madhusudan Rao:
Shri Harish Chandra Mathur:
Shri Sinhasan Singh:

Will the Minister of Steel and Heavy Industries be pleased to state:

(a) whether a final decision has been taken on the question of manufacture of people's car in the public sector; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

The Minister of Steel and Heavy Industries (Shri C. Subramaniam):
 (a) Not yet, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Shri D. C. Sharma: May I know how long this project has been under consideration? What are the factors that are entering its consideration? Because, I know, on the floor of the House it was said that it will be manufactured very soon.

Shri C. Subramaniam: Yes, Sir. That was the hope. But, hon. Members know that a new Minister has taken charge. He has to go through it and satisfy himself that it is a proper project.

Shri D. C. Sharma: It is very strange that a new Minister should try to write on a clean slate. May I know on what points the new Minister wants assurances or satisfaction that is not available to him already by looking at the files which the old Minister has left?

Shri C. Subramaniam: I know I am not writing on a clean slate. Sometimes that is an advantage; sometimes that is a disadvantage. My problem is with reference to the availability of foreign exchange in the present conditions and what priority should be given to this project.

Shri Nath Pai: This matter has been coming up in this House again and again. His predecessor, on the last occasion, to the last Parliament, had given a categorical assurance to this House that a final decision—not a preliminary decision—would be announced in this House in less than six weeks. May I know what has happened to that assurance?

Shri C. Subramaniam: Now, a new Parliament has been elected and a new Minister has taken charge.