

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That this House do agree with the Fifteenth Report of the Business Advisory Committee presented to the House on the 31st July, 1997."

The motion was adopted

[English]

SHRI BAJU BAN RIYAN (TRIPURA EAST): Mr. Chairman, Sir, one M.L.A. was kidnapped in Tripura.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have not yet started Zero Hour. You may be given permission during Zero Hour. Please take your seat now.

THE ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES
(SPECIAL PROVISIONS) AMENDMENT BILL *

12.27 hrs.

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMERS AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH) : * *Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Essential Commodities (Special Provisions) Act, 1981 and to make special provisions by way of amendment to the Essential Commodities Act, 1955:

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Motion Moved:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Essential Commodities (Special Provisions) Act, 1981 and to make special provisions by way of amendment to the Essential Commodities Act, 1955."

Shri Shyam Behari Mishra. You have given notice, but you have not given the reason for opposing the introduction of this Bill. Anyway, I permit you to make a short statement. Please note 'short', because I give you permission even though you have not fulfilled the condition.

[Translation]

SHRI SHYAM BEHARI MISHRA (BILHAUR): Hon'ble Chairman, Sir, I thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak. The Essential Commodities Act, 1955 is in force in this country. For controlling the traders the Licensing orders, Consumers Protection Act and Prevention of Black Marketing and Maintenance of Essential Commodities Act, 1980 are in force. This Act was enacted only for five years because at that time there were drought conditions in the country. There was shortage of foodgrains and essential commodities. Today foodgrains are in abundance in the country. Foodgrains are being exported from the country. In such a situation the traders are being harassed. This legislation is increasing corruption and the officers are getting money illegally by harassing these traders. If such type of rule prevails

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in the country as is in Bihar, then I can say nothing otherwise this law should be withdrawn. Therefore, moving the motion to extend if further is not at all required. Hence this motion should be withdrawn.(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: No notices have been given. Therefore, I do not allow anybody.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have given one concession to him.

[Translation]

SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the special provisions of the Essential Commodities Act were enforced in 1982 because of shortage of foodgrains in the country and to save consumer from difficulties and injustice. Just to save them from difficulties the Parliament enforced it for five years from 1982 to 1987 at first instance. In 1987 people felt that this law should not be withdrawn, it should remain in force. Then it was extended from 1987 to 1992. In 1992, the Members of Parliament felt that it should remain in force then it was extended for the year 1997. Now, the period of extension has been completed. Again this department.....(Interruptions) kindly listen.

VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI (KOTA): It has been extended again and again....(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Kindly listen to the Minister. It is not proper. Listen to him. Look I have already given concession.

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH: I request the hon. Members kindly to listen.....(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, you please continue. Let them not listen. You please tell us.

SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH: The standing committee of this Department, has also recommended that this should be extended for another five years and it should be continued. We have asked for the assent of all the states. Almost all the states have agreed to extend it. In this situation the feelings of hon. Members is that injustice should not be done to them. Therefore, we have also made a provision for amendment in it. Firstly, the collector can confiscate this. There was a scope for appeal in the State Government. Now the hon. Members have demanded to make it justifiable. We are amending this law to make it justifiable. There is a provision to go to judiciary because the hon. Member has a doubt that corruption could prevail there and to eliminate it a provision should be made in it. Therefore, I request that leave may be granted to introduce this Bill.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Essential Commodities (Special

Provisions) Act, 1981 and to make special provisions by way of amendment to the Essential Commodities Act, 1955."

The Motion was adopted.

[Translation]

SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I introduce * the Bill.

I would also like to draw the attention of the House to the clause 3 of this Bill, under which the expenditure will be incurred from the Consolidated Fund of India. Under Article 117(3) of the Constitution, the President of India has recommended that the Bill may be introduced.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I shall call you. Have you given a notice? If you have given a notice, I shall call you.

[Translation]

SHRI BHAGWAN SHANKAR RAWAT (AGRA): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have given a notice about the Amarnath Yatra..... (Interruptions)

SHRI RAVINDRA KUMAR PANDEY (GIRIDIH): Hon'ble Chairman Sir, through you I would like to draw the attention of the Government to the matter of urgent public importance i.e., pollution in the river Damodar.

Central Coalfields Ltd. is dumping huge quantity of waste into the Damodar river. Rejected coal of the washery is also being dumped into Damodar which is further contaminating the river water. If rejected coal is sold through unemployed persons, it will not only generate employment... (Interruptions) but will also enhance the revenue. At the same time Jughat Power Plant Station will also be benefited by the sale of this coal.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Bajuban Riyan, I will call you though I have not seen any notice here.

[Translation]

SHRI RAVINDRA KUMAR PANDEY: Arrangements should be made to dump waste elsewhere. It should not be dumped into the river. Reply given to the starred question No. 953 dated 29th July by the Minister for Environment and Forest is absolutely incorrect. Therefore, I request the Government to form a high level Committee and we should be invited to cite the evidence.

SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH (VIDISHA): Mr. Chairman Sir, after independence we established the PSUs for ourselves. Our first Prime Minister, Pandit Nehru used to say that PSUs are the shrines of modern times. But today these shrines are becoming worse. After the implementation of Liberalisation Policy, industries which were making large profits during the

* Introduced with the recommendations of the President.

last three years are now suffering heavy losses. The condition is so worst today that the many industries are facing crisis. All major industries of the Public Sector are running under heavy losses. Public sector industries like Heavy Engineering Corporation, Hindustan Machines & Tools, Tyre and Bicycle Corporation of India, Hindustan Cables, Bharat Wagon and Engineering, Nefa Limited, and Bridge and Roof Limited etc. are running under the loss of over Rupees two thousand nine hundred and seventy five crores. Over two lac workmen and government employees are employed in these industries. In our Nefa Ltd. which was founded by Pandit Nehru, employees haven't been paid for the three months. Government doesn't seem to have any intention nor any plan to set things right in Public Sector industries. We MPs from Madhya Pradesh met the Prime Minister yesterday but there was no sign of hope.

Reduction in custom duty as a result of Liberalisation Policy lead to import of foreign goods in the country at lower rates. Foreign companies have entered freely. But no arrangements were made for our Public Sector industries to prepare for the circumstances arising out of it. We have constituted B.I.F.R. for the sick industries, to which their cases are referred but no decision are taken there. At present these industries are on the verge of closure.

I would like to request the Government to announce a policy to ensure payment to workers & employees of the PSU's to whom salaries have not been paid for the last three or four months, their children are on the verge of starvation. Hence to take the House into confidence Government should announce some policy for the Public Sector Industries. Till the policy is formulated, the Government should at least grant interim relief to those industries so that they can pay salaries to their employees; and Government should come out with a statement about the condition of Public sector industries.. (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Again I am saying that I am going by the List.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (BANKURA): This is very important. The public sector undertaking has fallen sick. The workers are not getting their salaries.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I am going by the List.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: I know. But this is very important.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is noted that you have supported it. Shri Vishambar Prasad Nishad will now speak.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: The hon. Minister of State for Finance is here. He should assure the House. The workers of public sector undertaking are not getting their statutory dues.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Minister has taken note of it.