

Title: Moved the motion for consideration of the Cotton Ginning and Pressing Factories (Repeal) Bill, 1998. (Not Concluded)

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Bill to repeal the Cotton Ginning and Pressing Factories Act, 1925, be taken into consideration."

The repeal of the Act will, we hope, provide a thrust and incentive to the modernisation efforts in the cotton ginning and pressing sector. This, in turn, will encourage quality processing of cotton. Ginning and Pressing factories will be able to charge appropriate price commensurate with the service provided.

In the present liberalised industrial scenario, many of the restrictions laid down in the Cotton Ginning and Pressing Factories Act, 1925 are not required any longer.

It is felt that the Cotton Control Order of 1986, issued under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 would, after necessary amendments, take care of the provisions considered essential to regulate the working of cotton ginning and pressing factories in future.

As hon. Members are well aware, we are also pursuing other incentives to help the textile industry to become more competitive. For instance, there is a proposal to launch a Technology Mission on Cotton Development, which is in an advanced stage of finalisation. In fact, the hon. Finance Minister in his Budget speech announced allocation of Rs. 60 crore for the Mission. Activities under this proposed Technology Mission would cover both pre-harvest as well as post-harvest operations. While the proposal for the Mission is being piloted by the Ministry of Agriculture, my Ministry will be responsible for two Mini-Missions relating to marketing infrastructure and processing of cotton. Under the proposed Technology Mission, we also propose to provide an incentive to cotton ginning and pressing factories to encourage them to modernise.

Similarly, we are working on another proposal for a Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme for the textile and jute industries. Here again, we are keen to encourage different identified segments of the textile industry to go in for technological upgradation and to modernise in order to be better equipped to meet international competition in the post-MFA era.

The present proposal for repeal of Cotton Ginning and Pressing Factories Act should, therefore, be seen in a wider context. I hope that these measures will lessen some controls. It will also, in its own way, encourage modernisation in cotton ginning and pressing factories. This should help in availability of cleaner and uncontaminated cotton. This should also help farmers on the one hand as well as the units which consume the cotton on the other.

I hope the hon. House will be pleased to approve the repeal of the Cotton Ginning and Pressing Factories Act, 1925.

This Bill was also introduced in the Lok Sabha. The Tenth Lok Sabha passed this Bill unanimously on 13th August, 1997. This Bill was also introduced in the Rajya Sabha. But the Lok Sabha was dissolved. So, I again come here for repeal of this Act. I request all the hon. Members to pass this Bill.

MR. SPEAKER: Motion moved:

"That the Bill to repeal the Cotton Ginning and Pressing Factories Act, 1925, be taken into consideration."

Shri Varkala Radhakrishnan.

SHRI AJAY CHAKRABORTY (BASIRHAT): It was the Eleventh Lok Sabha and not the Tenth Lok Sabha.

SHRI KANSHIRAM RANA: Yes; the Bill was passed by the Eleventh Lok Sabha. It was introduced in the Tenth Lok Sabha also.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN (CHIRAYINKIL): Sir, the logic advanced by the hon. Minister is not convincing. In the first place, this is an offshoot of liberalisation to meet the requirements of market economy. They would then find a solution that the Act itself may be repealed. But there are certain provisions in the original Act, that is, the Act of 1925, which safeguards the interests of the cotton industry as a whole. Now, the hon. Minister would answer that this could be safeguarded by the Cotton Control Order, 1986 which was issued under the provisions of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955. That order was an executive order. That was issued under the provisions of the statute of 1955 and requires certain changes. I hope the hon. Minister will bring forward an amendment to that order retaining the provisions contained in the Act of 1925.

There are certain provisions which are helpful to the workers engaged in the factory and they will be thrown out. You will have to safeguard their interests. I do not stand in the way of modernisation. I think, that modernisation could be achieved even by retaining the Act. The Act itself could be modified to such an extent giving a complete provision for modernisation. Instead of doing that, what you propose to do is that the Act itself may be repealed to suit the changing conditions. That logic is not convincing.

Sir, at any rate, the hon. Minister has agreed to make amendments to the Cotton Control Order of 1986. Will you please come forward with amendments at an early stage giving protection to certain provisions in the Act of 1925, in the Order itself which was issued in 1986 under the provisions of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955? So, I would request you to bring certain amendments which are essential, which are useful to be retained. If you find it difficult to retain the Act of 1925, those provisions can be retained at least in the Cotton Control Order issued under the provisions of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955.

If the Government has taken a decision, I do not stand in the way. But if you are very pertinent, if you insist that the Act itself should go, you make a provision in the Cotton Control Order by suggesting amendments which have to be retained in the original Act.

With these words, I conclude.

१३५२ बजे

श्रीमती भावना कर्दम दवे (सुरेन्द्रनगर): माननीय अध्यक्ष जी, यहां सदन में कपास की ओटाई और दबाई के कारखाने के लिए जो विधेयक रखा गया है, मैं उसके पक्ष में बोलना चाहती हूँ।

... (व्यवधान)

अध्यक्ष जी, आपसे गुजारिश है कि बीच में कोई कमेंट न हो।

अध्यक्ष जी, यह बिल लाने के लिए मैं मंत्री जी और सरकार का आभार प्रदर्शित करती हूँ। इस बिल को यहां रखने से १९२५ वाला पुराना बिल रद्द हो जाएगा और उससे बहुत ही फायदे होंगे। मैंने आभार इसलिए प्रदर्शित किया कि मैं जिस क्षेत्र से आती हूँ, उस जिले में सबसे ज्यादा कपास का उत्पादन होता है। कपास की सबसे ज्यादा जिनिंग और प्रेसिंग फैक्ट्रियां मेरे क्षेत्र में हैं। यह बिल आने से बहुत फायदा होगा क्योंकि जिनिंग और प्रेसिंग फैक्ट्री वालों को अपने स्टॉक के बारे में प्रति सप्ताह लिखकर देना पड़ता था कि कितना स्टॉक है। अब यह झंझट पूरा टल जाएगा और इससे जिनिंग और प्रेसिंग फैक्ट्री वालों का काम बहुत ही सरल बनेगा।

इसके और भी बहुत से फायदे हैं। जैसे अब तक जिनिंग और प्रेसिंग फैक्ट्री को सरकार को फीस देनी पड़ती थी। राज्य सरकार को कलेक्टर के जरिये यह फीस दी जाती थी। यह अधिनियम आने से अब फीस नहीं देनी पड़ेगी और उसके कारण जिनिंग और प्रेसिंग फैक्ट्री का मार्ग वह एकदम खुल जाएगा। इतना ही नहीं, इनकी गुणवत्ता में बढ़ोतरी होगी और अधिकतम मात्रा में कामकाज होगा। जिनिंग और प्रेसिंग फैक्ट्रियां ज्यादा कामकाज करेंगी और इससे हमारे उद्योग को बहुत फायदा होगा। इसके कारण निर्यात भी ज्यादा होगा जिससे हमारे अर्थ तन्त्र को भी फायदा होने की बहुत संभावना इस बिल के कारण दिखाई देती है।

इतना ही नहीं हमारे मंत्री जी ने यहां कहा कि और भी योजनाएं आ रही हैं और इसी कारण हम आधुनिकीकरण करना चाहते हैं। आधुनिकीकरण करने से यहां जिनिंग और प्रेसिंग फैक्ट्रीज को बहुत सरल मार्ग प्राप्त होगा। इस बिल के आने से जो संग्रहखोरी होती है वह कम हो जायेगी, बल्कि उसकी जरूरत ही नहीं पड़ेगी। जब काम सरलता से होता है और उसमें कोई विघ्न नहीं आता, तब काम बहुत ही गति से चलता है और प्रगति ज्यादा होती है। मैं मंत्री जी का बार-बार आभार प्रदर्शित करूंगी क्योंकि उन्होंने यह बिल यहां प्रस्तुत करके एक भारी उपकार किया है। मैं यह भी कहना चाहती हूँ कि अब हमारी कपास में गुणवत्ता भी बढ़ेगी। मुझे मौका मिला है तो मैं एक बात और कहूंगी कि आवश्यक वस्तुओं की जो धारा है, उसमें यदि थोड़ी राहत मिल जाए तो ठीक रहेगा। इस बार मेरे संसदीय क्षेत्र में कपास की बहुत ही अच्छी फसल हुई है, जितनी अच्छी फसल होनी चाहिए थी, उससे भी ज्यादा अच्छी फसल हुई है, सब कुदरत की मेहरबानी है।

अब आप कपास के निर्यात के लिए जल्दी से जल्दी ज्यादा मुक्ति दें तो अच्छा रहेगा। मैं फिर से आपका आभार प्रकट करती हूँ कि आपने इस बिल को यहां रखकर किसानों, व्यापारियों और सभी के लिए बहुत ही अच्छा काम किया है जिसके लिए मैं आपका अभिनंदन करती हूँ और आभार मानती हूँ।

SHRI AJAY CHAKRABORTY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, this Bill has been brought in order to repeal the old Cotton Ginning and Pressing Factories Act, 1925. No doubt it is very much old. This Bill has been brought for repealing the old Act on the basis of so many reasons. As per the hon. Minister's version, this Act is no longer required due to the modernised and liberalised industrial scenario.

There is another Act called Cotton Control Order, 1986 which has come within the purview of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955. As far as the Cotton Control Order, 1986 is concerned, I think, there is no sufficient material to properly regulate the work of the Cotton Ginning and Pressing works. We have no objection to repeal this old Act because a new scenario has come. We are not disagreeing with the ground which has been stated by the hon. Minister. But I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister regarding the pathetic condition of cotton industry as well as the condition of the cotton growers.

The hon. Minister comes from a State which is famous for cotton industry. The cotton industry of the entire country, namely, Gujarat, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, etc., is being ruined day after day. (Interruptions). The entire cotton industry has fallen in a deep crisis and so many cotton mills throughout the country are now closed. Thousands and thousands of cotton workers have been thrown out from their jobs. The Cotton industry is a key and old industry of our country. Cotton is very much popular not only within our country but outside our country also. Just like the jute industry of the West Bengal, the fate of the cotton industry is also the same. The jute industries are being closed down. Thousands and thousands of workers have been driven out from these industries.

I want to just draw the attention of the hon. Prime Minister to the fact that whatever was happening regarding jute packaging, the same thing is happening in the case of the cotton industry also. Cotton industry mills are getting closed and thousands and thousands of workers are being thrown out of their jobs. It is a matter of regret that the Government of has not, up to now, taken any suitable and proper steps or measures to overcome the problem. They should take some steps so that the cotton mill workers can get back their jobs, they can increase the production and the mills could be run smoothly.

The same thing has been mentioned by the hon. lady Member who has spoken just now and who comes from the same area where cotton is growing. The agriculturists are not getting any remunerative prices. The future of the entire industry is now bleak. It is in a pathetic condition.

I urge upon the hon. Minister to take suitable steps to improve the condition of the cotton industry because it is a matter of shame that the cotton growers are suffering all over the country.

MR. SPEAKER: We are not completing the Bill today. We will take it up tomorrow.

SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR : I will just mention one point.

I am not against repealing this order; I am not against this Bill which is for repealing the Act. I only apprehend that the idea behind this should not be like this. Cotton ginning and pressing should be modernised. This has to be coordinated with the new policy that is coming. The old textile policy has to go and a new Textile Policy has to come. This must be coordinated with the New Textile Policy where it must be ensured that raw cotton should not be exported as is being done now.

MR. SPEAKER: Now, statement by Shri L.k. Advani.