

Hon. Minister, please tell it?

DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA : The manner in which Hon. Member has expressed his concern.... (Interruptions) Next time we are going to move proposal to keep children away from automobile workshop and garrages, we are going to make provisions regarding it. ... (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : They want a Short Duration Discussion Mr. Minister, do you have any objection?

DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA : No, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER : He has agreed. Please take your seats. The Minister has agreed to discuss it.

[Translation]

Import of Edible Oils

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*485. SHRI RAVINDRA KUMAR PANDEY :
SHRI RAMCHANDRA BAINDA :

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the names of countries from which edible oils have been imported during each of the last three years alongwith the quantity of oils imported, country-wise;

(b) the total requirement of edible oils in the country during 1998-99;

(c) whether the Government are able to meet the requirement through its domestic production;

(d) if not, whether the Government propose to import edible oils to meet its requirement during the current year;

(e) if so, the details thereof;

(f) whether the import of edible oils has becomes costlier due to imposition of additional custom duty; and

(g) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS
AND MINISTER OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

(SARDAR SURJIT SINGH BARNALA) : (a) to (g) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) The State Trading Corporation (STC) have been importing only RBD Palmolein, of Malaysian and Indonesian origin, on Government Account, exclusively for the Public Distribution System for a number of years. The details of RBD Palmolein imported on Government Account during the last three years are as under:—

Financial Year	Quantity imported from (in lakh MT)		Total import for PDS in lakh MT
	Malaysia	Indonesia	
1995-96	1.66	0.36	2.02
1996-97	1.43	0.06	1.49
1997-98	0.48	0.41	0.89

A statement giving the imports of edible oils, in the last three years, country-wise, both on Government and private account is given in the Annexure.

(b) The requirement of edible oils for the current year is estimated to be 82.00 lakh MTs.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) Government have decided to import 1.5 lakh MTs of RBD Palmolein for distribution through the Public Distribution System during the festival months of August-November, 1998. In addition, since import of edible oils (except Cocount Oil, Palm Kernel Oil, RBD Palm Oil and RBD Stearin), is also allowed under the OGL, substantial quantity of edible oils is being imported by private parties under OGL to meet the shortfall in supply.

(f) to (g) The special additional duty on imports as imposed in the regular Budget of the current year, is not applicable to the imports made for trading purposes. Hence the imported for further sale to consumers, costlier. However, considering the high prices of edible oils in the international market, the government has recently reduced the basic customs duty on edible oils from 20% to 10% so as to facilitate import of edible oils, (the surcharge of 5% remaining unchanged).

Annexure

*Details of the Edible Oils Imported During Each of the Last Three Financial Years (April-March)
Along with the Quantity of Oils Imported and Their Value*

(Quantity in MT)
(Value in Rs. Lakh)

Country	1995-96		1996-97		1997-98 (Provisional)	
	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Argentina	113379	24996.56	234121	45463.9	139577	30242.71
Australia			4001	795.19	4000	908.83
Bahrain						
Belgium	247	62.51			3828	1793.64
Brazil	41238	8972.17	4150	916.56	18910	2092.71
Canada					41	22.12
Chinese Taipei	4454	959.15			85	30.62
China P. Rp.	3618	821.34	3598	862.96		
Denmark						
Egypt	30	8.17				
Finland					25	51.14
France	11	5.03	2033	422.93	442	129.93
Germany F. Rep.	5538	1361.17	7746	1632.25	1523	216.03
Iceland					500	101.3
Indonesia	110841	22334.5	226932	46028.49	223620	52903.11
Iran					2480	392.56

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Israel	500	111.58				
Italy	61	15.02			5027	1035.43
Japan			315	81.04	5	1.48
Korea Rp.	496	104.34				
Malaysia	736641	155326.62	839732	176344.48	666960	166114.22
Mayanmar			2500	355.89	250	58.18
Mexico			1509	454.35		
Nepal	3752	727.72	3432	603.3	2645	460.19
Netherland	10175	2192.47	17996	3745.19	4060	1030.99
Phillipines	2440	523	800	236.78		
Singapore	16406	3781.26	23596	5045.21	18476	4195.08
Spain					3000	666.67
South Africa			1500	322.65		
Sri Lanka	372	110.69	42	18.6		
Sweden			498	193.79		
Thailand			4459	693.22		
Togo					1000	225.67
United Arab Emirate			18	3.61	4400	903.61
U.K.	1	3.6	9947	2074.38	1	2.02
U.S.A.	11788	3776.02	27865	6624.52	29087	9705.87
Total	1061988	226192.91	1416794	292919.32	1129942	273284.65
	10.6 lakh		14.2 lakh		11.3 lakh	

SHRI RAVINDRA KUMAR PANDEY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you I want to know from the hon. Minister what steps the Government have taken in the current year to bring about balance between demand and supply of edible oils. What are the statewise details at present to increase the production of edible oils and where the raw material is easily available at present ... (*Interruptions*), what steps the Government have taken for increasing the number of units of edible oils there?

Sir, I just visited my area. There the cost of edible oils has increased by two hundred rupees a tin approximately. I want to know from the Minister why the cost of edible oils has increased much, what arrangements he is making for this that the public may get the edible oil at low rate ... (*Interruptions*)

SARDAR SURJIT SINGH BARNALA : I accept that the cost of edible oils is increasing. But an effort is being made to make these prices low. It has been coming to the notice since last week that these prices are falling down. There has been fall of about 150-200 rupees per quintal in the cost of oil last week. Hon'ble Members are talking about their areas. They must enquire in their areas, there too the prices must have fallen down.

SHRI RAVINDRA KUMAR PANDEY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you I want to know from the hon'ble Minister as to what steps the Government have taken so far to reduce the cost of edible oils?

SARDAR SURJIT SINGH BARNALA : 25% import duty was imposed on the palmolein oil coming from outside. Having reduced that 10% we have made its import easy so that the import may increase. The prices of edible oils in the international market have risen much. Therefore, we have lessened the import duty. Secondly, S.T.C. has been ordered to import one and half a lakh tonnes of palmolein oil. Due to festival season the states had demanded that it should be imported. Thirdly, this that the quantity of mustard oil used for making vegetable ghee has been reduced by 10% and the effort to reduce the prices of edible oil is being made.

[*English*]

SHRI K.S. RAO : The statement given by the hon. Minister reveals that in the year 1997-98 Rs. 2733 crore was spent on import of edible oil, particularly palmolein oil. About ten years back when we visited Andaman and Nicobar Islands, we found that area was very suitable for raising palm trees. The income per acre of plantation

that can be generated by each farmer comes to between Rs. 50,000 and Rs. 60,000. We wrote a letter to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Agriculture also that although 90 per cent of the land is considered as the reserved forest where not even a tree exists, only 5 per cent of the land is permitted to raise palm trees that can serve the needs of the entire country, and all this Rs. 3000 crore can also be saved.

Similarly, the coastal area of Andhra Pradesh is found to be very suitable for raising these oil-based trees. I wish to know from the hon. Minister that keeping in view the very stringent position of the foreign exchange and also the need to increase the income of the farming community, whether the Government will come out with some more incentives to the farmers who can save the foreign exchange and also raise their own income particularly in Andhra Pradesh and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

SARDAR SURJIT SINGH BARNALA : An effort has been made to grow palm trees in the country. Some plantation in Kerala was introduced over an area of about 500 hectares. There was an intention of doing farming there over an area of about 80,000 hectares. But it could not succeed. I have visited that palm tree plantation also at that time when it was granted. Our effort was to grow more palm trees in the country. It has not succeeded so far.

In Andamans that the hon. Member has referred to, I have examined that also earlier. In Andamans, there is a resistance for cutting the forest for the purpose of growing palm trees. But our effort is to have more palm trees, more palm tree plantations in the country, so that we can get palmolein here also.

12.00 hrs.

SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN : Even though the Government of India is not importing coconut oil under OGL, private parties are importing coconut oil. The coconut growers are therefore affected. Would you take some action against those private parties who import coconut oil, against the policy of the Government of India?

SARDAR SURJIT SINGH BARNALA : Import of coconut oil is not under OGL and so they are not allowed to import it under OGL. We will keep a watch and if there are specific complaints, we will look into them.