

[Shri M. M. Lawrence]

the main obstacles to further progress in construction stabilisation are not technical but rather related to the low priority given to this objective in national policy decisions. Thus many of the conclusions on stabilisation adopted at prior sessions of the committee retain their validity. What must be done now is to convince all those concerned of the necessity to implement them.

Why I am quoting this here is, we claim that our country is coming forward, or going forward, and it is number seven or number ten in industrial development, but in implementing this kind of enactment and ameliorating the conditions of the down-trodden people we are failing, and we are lagging behind. We are working half-heartedly.

I once again welcome all the members who have supported my Resolution and I also thank the Minister who has taken a positive and prompt attitude towards the contents of my Resolution. I thank you all.

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD: Just one moment. I want to say that the figure of 24,500 which I have given is the all India figure which includes Delhi also.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Mr. Daga, are you withdrawing your amendment?

SHRI MOOL CHAND DAGA: Yes.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the amendment moved by Shri Mool Chand Daga be withdrawn?

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Yes,

Amendment No. 1 was, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Mr. Lawrence, are you withdrawing your Resolution?

SHRI M. M. LAWRENCE: Yes.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the Resolu-

tion moved by Shri M. M. Lawrence be withdrawn?

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

The Resolution was, by leave, withdrawn.

17.48 hrs.

RESOLUTION RE: REVISION OF IMPORT POLICY

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now we take up the next item. Mr. Ramanna Rai.

SHRI M. RAMANNA RAI (Kasargod): I beg to move—

“Keeping in view the need to conserve foreign exchange, in the interest of the nation, this House is of the opinion that the import policy of the Government be suitably revised and further restrictions placed on the issue of licences.”

Now, in this regard I may be permitted to quote a few lines from the latest *Economic Survey* for 1981-82 of the Government, from Chapter 3:

“The external trade and payments situation has been under severe strain since 1979-80. The full impact of the doubling of oil prices when total imports reached Rs. 12,465 crores. Exports remained sluggish reflecting domestic production constraints and unfavourable world market conditions. The trade deficit more than doubled to reach Rs. 5,756 crores in 1980-81. The situation remains difficult in the current year although the trade deficit in 1981-82 may be somewhat lower than in 1980-81. Nevertheless, the trade gap will be very large amounting to about Rs. 5,500-5,600 crores and although net invisible earnings (including remittances) and other inflows will help to cover a large part of the deficit, the balance-of-payments situation will remain extremely difficult.”

This is the observation made in the *Economic Survey* for 1980-81. This is a serious situation, because in 1980-81 the deficit claimed by the Government is more than Rs. 5000 crores. In the *Economic Survey* itself, there is a schedule given—Table 8. where you will see that the total import is to the tune of Rs. 12,434.6 crores. That is the import bill. If you see Table 8.4 the export earning for 1980-81 is Rs. 6708.8 crores. For 1981, for the period April-September it is Rs. 3326.4 crores. So, this trade gap is becoming wider and wider with the result that the country has to face serious consequences. Already the Government is constrained to borrow from IMF a loan to the tune of more than Rs. 5000 crores. Foreign exchange drain is taking place and the trade gap is widening year after year because of the wrong and improper policy of the Government, because the declared policy is one but the actual practice is another. That is why the trade gap becomes wider. That is why there is foreign exchange drain year after year and the Government is constrained to borrow from IMF to the detriment of the nation's interests. Unless the Government seriously reconsider this matter, the situation will move from bad to worse.

I invite the attention of the House to Table 8.3. There are about 17 items mentioned. For 1979-80 the import figures are cereals 105.8 crores, synthetic and regenerated fibres Rs. 108.2 crores, petroleum products and related materials Rs. 3267.1 crores, edible oils Rs. 429.8 crores, organic and inorganic chemicals Rs. 314.8 crores, chemical materials Rs. 61.8 crores,

medicinal and pharmaceutical products Rs. 74 crores.

"Fertilizers, crude Rs. 59.7 crores
Fertilisers, finished Rs. 371.2 crores
Paper, paper board and Manufacture thereof—Rs. 155.3 crores, Pearls, precious and semi-precious stones—Rs. 347.4 crores. Non-metallic mineral manufacture excl. pearls—Rs. 94.3 crores. Non-ferrous metals Rs. 336.3 crores. Iron and steel—Rs. 834.2 crores. Capital goods—Rs. 1430.1 crores. Professional, scientific, controlling instruments, etc. Rs. 155.3 crores.
Others—Rs. 876.4 crores."

I want to ask the Minister whether all these items which were imported, were absolutely necessary. According to me, import of Item No. 1—Cereals and cereal preparations to the tune of Rs. 105.8 crores or at least a major portion of it was not necessary. Similar is the case with Item No. 4—edible oils worth Rs. 429.8 crores. I want to ask the Minister: Was import of edible oil absolutely necessary? Considering the drain on foreign exchange, import of at least a major portion of edible oil should have been restricted. This is for the consideration of the Minister. Likewise, import of Item No. 11—Pearls, precious and semi-precious stones or at least a major portion of this item could have been avoided. This is an unwanted and unnecessary item. According to me, import of all these items was effected because of the wrong policy of the Government. For example, there are other items also import of which could have been avoided. Even though import of co-

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conut, rubber and cocoa was vehemently opposed by the opposition Members in this House, by all the hon. Members of Parliament from Kerala irrespective of party affiliations and by the Kerala Government not once but several times, still this Government issued licences for the import of these items. It has affected the cultivators of Kerala. We know that Kerala is a State in which the main crops on which the people depend, are coconut and rubber and nowadays cocoa also. As if to punish the people of Kerala, the cultivators of Kerala and to ruin the economy of the Kerala State this Govern-

ment issued licences to private parties also for the import of coconut, copra, coconut oil, cocoa and rubber. Now, if we seriously consider this aspect, it will be seen that in Kerala the economy of the State, the economy of the people of Kerala, mainly depends on coconut cultivation.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: He may continue his speech next time. The House stands adjourned till 11 a.m. tomorrow.

18.01 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Saturday, February 27, 1982/Phalguna 8, 1903 (Saka).