

The farmers are afraid that, if this continues and the large scale industries do not purchase their oil, they will have to bear heavy loss. This problem, they have referred to the Prime Minister, the Finance Minister and the Industries Minister and various other Ministers in U.P.

The large scale industries have informed the farmers that they will not purchase menthol oil as it is uneconomical for them to compete with small scale industries with their unfair tactics.

If no immediate relief is given in the excise duty, the ultimate sufferers will be the farmers.

Bhavana Chemicals Ltd. and Hindustan Richardson, the two large manufacturers of menthol in U.P. have set up oil distillation units for farmers in backward areas of U.P. The farmers approached the Mentha distilling units and requested them not to close down as Mentha is the backbone of their economy. It is high time that Government should take a lenient view of the situation and remove 15 per cent excise duty on finished product Menthol. If not done, the large units of Menthol manufacturers will close down altogether their activities in UP and the sufferer will be the marginal farmers.

The small scale industries are cheating the government by avoiding excise duty, sales tax, purchase tax, etc. If 15 per cent excise duty is not removed, the small scale industries will monopolise Menthol, ruining the economy of marginal farmers.

Small scale industries claim that they are distilling on behalf of farmers 350 tons of oil. The figures are correct, but the small scale industries are showing incorrect official figures, merely 200 tons officially are shown in the books and the balance is unaccounted. You can imagine how much loss the country suffers.

I urge upon the Government to take urgent steps to remedy this situation and save the small farmers from heavy losses.

(iii) RENEWAL OF LICENCE OF SRI SITHARAMA COOPERATIVE SUGARS LTD.; KOTTAKOTA (VISAKHAPATNAM).

SHRI P. RAJAGOPAL NAIDU (Chittoor): Sri Sitharama Co-operative Sugars Ltd., Kottakota, Narasipatnam Taluk in Visakhapatnam District was registered in April 1974 in pursuance of the grant of licence. The promoters collected Rs. 16.35 lakhs by admitting about 2800 shareholders by 27-2-1979 when the licence expired. The promoters requested the Central Government to renew the licence. It has been renewed after one year 10 months but lapsed only after 2 1/2 months.

The agriculturists of that area are poor when compared to other districts and therefore they were not able to pay the shares. They have accepted to take loans from Co-operative Central Bank, Vijayanagaram and from the Agricultural Development Banks in that area. They have actually submitted loan applications amounting to Rs. 12 lakhs and they wanted to raise the loans upto Rs. 40 lakhs which was the target. They would have completed collection of shares long back if the licence was renewed in time. Even now they are in a position to fulfil their obligation of collecting the shares before 31-12-79. Narasipatnam Taluk is completely a sugarcane growing area and they have to depend upon that crop for their livelihood. It is not possible to change the crop also as sugarcane is best suited to that area.

About 2800 agriculturists have already become shareholders by paying about Rs. 16 lakhs already. The poor peasants are losing heavily as they have to pay interest on the money borrowed towards shares. If the renewal of licence is delayed they will be put to a great loss and

[Sshri P. Rajagopal Naidu]

other farmers also will be very much disappointed. The loan applications sent to the District Co-operative Central Bank and Agricultural Development Banks will become infructuous and it would be very difficult to prepare the loan applications again.

I have represented this to the State Minister of Agriculture also.

I request the Government once again to see that the licence extended soon.

(IV) PROPOSED STRIKE BY COAL WORKERS FROM 18TH MAY, 1979.

SHRI ROBIN SEN (Asansol): Representatives of the various central trade unions jointly formulated a charter of demands for the coal workers and submitted the demands to the Energy Ministry/Coal authority about a year back.

These charter of demands were submitted after the expiry of the last three years' agreement. The Joint Charter of demands submitted to the management on behalf of the participating workers' group include need-based minimum wage on the basis of recommendations made by the 15th Labour Conference, 100 per cent neutralisation in the cost of living, safety allowance and better fringe benefit and also scrapping of Baveja Committee's recommendations etc. This is most unfortunate that the representatives of the management in the coal industry had been adopting a negative and dilatory tactics towards the most pressing demands of the workers in wage bi-partite negotiation committee. Even the concept of need-based minimum wage is unacceptable to them. Negotiations have become more difficult because of the interference by the Bureau of Public Enterprises. In view of this, representatives of all the central trade Unions gave a call for one days token strike and 6 lakhs workers of

coal industry observed one day token strike on 5th February 1979. Even after this, situation has not improved and a deadlock has been created due to anti-working class attitude of the management and the Government.

Under the circumstances, all the central trade unions decided that the demands of the coal workers should be settled immediately failing which, 6 lakhs workers of coal industry will be left with no other alternative but to go on an indefinite strike with effect from 18th May, 1979. If the bi-partite wage negotiation on coal which is scheduled to be resumed on the 14th and 15th May at Delhi fails and workers are forced to go on an indefinite strike with effect from 18th May, an overall serious crisis will grip all over the country.

I urge upon the Government to avert this confrontation by changing arbitrary and anti-working class attitude of the government and management of Coal India and meet the just demands of the coal workers without any further delay.

(V) NEED FOR FIXING THE PRICE OF CORRIANDER IN ORDER TO PROTECT THE INTERESTS OF CORRIANDER GROWERS OF RAYALASEEMA, TELANGANA, KARNATAKA AND RAJASTHAN.

SHRI DARUR PULLAIYAH (Anantapur): Corriander crop is grown extensively in the backward regions of Rayalaseema, Telangana, Karnataka and Rajasthan in our country. This crop being of short duration requiring less rainfall is most suitable in the arid regions of the country. Since corriander being the only commercial crop that could be grown in these regions, the whole economy of the farmers, particularly, the small and marginal, depends upon the price of corriander, it is most distressing, Sir, the price of this commodity is so fluctuating that the farmers are in great dolldrums.