

lay on the Table a copy of the Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Department of Environment for 1984-85.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT-8132/84].

12.10 hrs.

COMMITTEE ON PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Seventy-fourth Report

SHRI G. LAKSHMANAN (Madras North) : I beg to present the Seventy-fourth Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions.

COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS

Sixteenth Report

SHRI K.P. TEWARI (Alahabad) : I beg to present the Sixteenth Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Committee on Petitions.

12.11 hrs.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Hundred and Eightieth Reports

SHRI SUNIL MAITRA (Calcutta North East) : I beg to present the Hundred and Eightieth Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Public Accounts Committee on Paragraph 2.08 of the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year 1980-81—Union Government (Civil)—Revenue Receipts Vol. I, Indirect Taxes, relating to exemption of goods falling under Tariff Item 68.

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

Seventy-eighth Report and Minutes and Sixty-Second Report on Action Taken

SHRI BANSI LAL (Bhiwani) : I beg to present the following reports and Minutes (Hindi and English versions) of the Estimates Committees :—

- (i) Seventy eighth Report on Ministry of Railways—Movement of coal by Railways, and Minutes of the sittings of the Committee relating thereto.
- (ii) Sixty-second Report on Action Taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the Forty-seventh Report of the Committee on the Ministry of Defence—Cantonments

12 12 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Reported sharp fall in prices of tobacco leaf in Andhra Pradesh and other States leading to agitation and Resentment among tobacco growers

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL (Jaipur) : Sir, I call the attention of the Minister of Commerce to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may please make a statement thereon :

“The reported sharp fall in the prices of tobacco leaf in Andhra Pradesh and other States due to non-purchase of tobacco leaf by Government at the price fixed by them leading to agitation and resentment amongst the tobacco growers and the action taken by the Government in that regard.”

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SUPPLY (SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH) : Mr. Speaker Sir,

Government have been seized of the problems relating to marketing of virginia tobacco in A. P. during 1984 season.

2. Due to a large crop of about 150 million kgs in A P in 1983, a marketing problem developed and STC had to intervene and purchase large quantities of exportable and low grades of FCV tobacco. STC purchased about 18,000 tonnes valued at Rs. 21 40 crores. Due to sluggish international market conditions STC has not been able to dispose the bulk of the stocks.

3. Steps were taken to regulate production and marketing to ensure that a fair balance between demand and supply obtains in the year 1984. The area under tobacco cultivation in A.P. was reduced to 1.10 lakh hectares for 1984 crop from the previous extent of 1.70 lakh hectares for 1983 crop. The actual production of VFC tobacco in 1984, as a result, has been brought down to around 93 million kgs. However, even this year the market has not rallied. Till about 7th April 1984, 70 million kgs. have been marketed leaving a balance of 23 million kgs. These are mostly low and medium grades which are mainly intended for domestic consumption. The prices have ranged between Rs. 7 and Rs. 12 per kg for the exportable grades depending on quality. This is against the price range of Rs. 8 to Rs. 11 per kg. last year. The average price accruing to farmers exportable varieties ranges from Rs. 9.50 to Rs. 10.50 per kg.

As regards purchase of low grade tobacco, about 5 million kgs. have been purchased so far of which cigarettes manufacturers have purchased about 1.5 million kgs. and the balance 3.5 million kgs have been purchased by small dealers. The purchases of tobacco by cigarette manufacturers directly from the

growers has been very slow. The price range for low grade tobacco is Rs. 1.75 to Rs. 2.50 per kg. as against Rs. 2.50 to Rs. 3/- per kg. obtained by growers last year.

Government have considered the matter and have taken the following measures for disposal of low grades tobacco :—

- (i) Government is arranging a ways and means advance to the A.P. Government to the tune of Rs. 10 crores for purchase of tobacco by its own Government agencies or by A.P. State Trading Corporation. This ways and means advance will be given to State Government specifically for the purpose of purchase of tobacco by the agency nominated by them. This intervention will give a healthy trend to the prevailing prices.
- (ii) A meeting was held in the Ministry with the major cigarette manufacturers on 4th April 1984 and they have been requested to step up their purchases direct from growers.
- (iii) It has been decided to remove the minimum Export Price for low grades tobacco for 1984, 1983 and 1982 crops. This will induce exporter-dealers to take more of low grade tobacco.
- (iv) Nationalised Banks advancing credit to tobacco have been persuaded to advance additional credit to the trade for purchase of low grade tobaccos without insisting on margin money.

I would like to assure the Hon. Members that the situation is being closely monitored in consultation with the Tobacco Board.

12.15 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have gone through

[Shri Satish Agarwal]

the statement of the hon. Minister regarding the steps being taken to save the tobacco growers in Andhra Pradesh from distress sales. I must confess that the statement is highly unsatisfactory.

Sir, this issue was raised last year also and this was discussed through Call Attention motion moved by Shri Indrajit Gupta on 17th March, 1983 where during the discussion Professor Ranga also intervened and drew the attention of the House to the agitation of the tobacco growers in that particular area and as a sequel to that agitation government and the hon. Minister gave certain assurances on the Floor of the House that some effective measures will be taken to save the tobacco growers from the distress sales.

Sir, I am sorry to observe that now and then this House is discussing problems with regard to the various sectors of our agricultural economy. A few days back this House discussed the question of distress sale of potatoes by the potato growers and earlier there was a discussion on the plight of the onion growers.

Now, Sir, during all these years unfortunately I do not know why the agriculture sector, the poor farmers and the cultivators of this country have been getting a very raw deal at the hands of the government. Agriculture has contributed 58 percent to the GDP some 2-3 decades ago which is now 40 percent only. It means proper attention is not being paid to the agriculture sector and its contribution has gone down from 58 percent to 40 percent as on date. This shows the plight of the rural sector and naturally in an agrarian economy of ours where 70 percent of the population lives in rural areas and where the major contributory factor to our national economy is agriculture, agriculture has been neglected and, as such, Government has to have some comprehensive policy with regard to the development of the agriculture sector and in that connection some sort of package measures have to be thought by the government with regard to the remunerative prices being made available to our rural farmers and cultivators.

Now probably tomorrow the hon. Minister is going to announce the policy with regard to imports and exports. I think he will take care of all these things in that announcement.

In this particular connection I would like to make a mention that last year when this issue was debated the hon. Minister made various suggestions and gave assurance to the House that proper care will be taken about the tobacco growers in Andhra Pradesh. Andhra Pradesh is the one State where tobacco is grown in a large proportion than in any other part of country. I am not a tobacco grower and I am not also a tobacco exporter or tobacco importer. I am a tobacco chewer. So far as the plight of the tobacco chewer is concerned the hon. Minister will kindly appreciate that the prices of the chewing tobacco.....

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : It is very harmful. Please stop it.

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL : I know, Sir. Why is harmful? It is because the variety made available for chewing tobacco is of the lowest grade. Only that is made available for domestic consumption. The Minister has admitted in his statement that lowest and worst quality of tobacco is made available for domestic consumption. This is one good reason. I agree with you.....

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE (Rajapur) : Tobacco affects the speech; so during the Zero Hour it should be made available to Members.

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL : I am in perfect agreement with you; I am also conscious of the fact that chewing tobacco is very harmful. That is why I have reduced my quantity and quantum of it to a large extent. From the Minister's statement it is clear that the lowest grade of tobacco is made available for domestic consumption. Now you are going to do away with that restriction with regard to export of tobacco of the last grade quality. You have fixed up

minimum export price for the export of tobacco. If the price of tobacco to be exported is less than what has been fixed by commerce Ministry then that tobacco is not exported. In your statement you have cleared that position, that is, to relax that particular minimum export price ceiling that you already fixed. I think, Sir, if the lowest grade and variety of tobacco is to be utilised then let it go to the foreign countries, let them chew it, let them suffer from cancer, at least save the nation from chewing the lowest variety of tobacco. So, I would like to know what steps you have taken in this regard. With whatever steps you take, I am with you.

Sir, the Cigarette manufacturers are playing havoc in this country. Their margin of profit is sometimes 400 percent; they are earning huge profits; the Cigarette manufacturing industry is contributing more than a thousand crore of rupees by way of excise duty. But they are exploiting the consumers, they are dogging public exchequer; they make enormous profits and despite all this, Government has not been able to force them to resort to making immediate on the spot purchases so far as tobacco is concerned. This is the position.

Now, as far back as on 4th March, 1984 you had called a meeting for this purpose and you have stated in your statement that the cigarette manufacturers have agreed to purchase roundabout 1500 tonnes of tobacco. This is nothing. Despite your meeting, what has your Ministry done? The total production so far as this particular sector is concerned is round about 93,000 tonnes and out of that more than 23,000 tonnes will be the balance. What do we do with it? Out of 23,000 tonnes cigarette manufacturers have agreed to purchase only 1500 tonnes. Is that the consumption of cigarette manufacturers? What is the requirement? I would like to know from the Minister about the total requirement of export. What is the total requirement of cigarette manufacturers? What is required for domestic consumption? These are the three areas. Tobacco is consumed

either by way of export; or by cigarette manufacturers or given for domestic consumption, including chewing tobacco, etc. These are the three areas. According to his own statement 23,000 tonnes of tobacco is in balance. What to do with it? You have simply given account of 5,000 tonnes. What about the rest 18,000 tonnes? Out of 5,000 tonnes, 15000 tonnes have to be purchased by cigarette manufacturers. 3500 tonnes will be put for domestic consumption etc. What about the rest of 18,000 tonnes? What is the remedy? What did you do last years? Prof. Ranga you please hear this. They reduced the crop area from 175,000 to round about 110,000. Now, from 175,000 tonnes, it has come down to 110,000 tonnes. The production last time was 140,000 tonnes and it has come down to 18000 tonnes. If you want to save yourself from this problem, then you make the area zero and the production will be zero. This is no solution of the problem. You have very drastically cut the crop area and the production has also been brought down very drastically to 18,000 tonnes from round about more than 175,000 tonnes. This is no solution of the problem. After all, tobacco is one item which gives you foreign exchange, tremendous foreign exchange, which gives you excise duty from the cigarette manufacturers and which is consumed throughout the country, right from the small village to the biggest towns. All over the country, people either chew tobacco or use tobacco in the 'hukka' and so on. So, this particular item needs serious attention. Do not create conditions whereby people have to resort to agitations thereby people are killed, as it had happened last time, when Prof. Ranga drew the attention of the Government. I am making mention of the name of Prof. Ranga again and again.

How, Sir, in this particular position, the STC came to the rescue of the tobacco growers last year. An assurance was given by the hon. Minister of Commerce on the floor of the House that the STC will immediately enter into the market and make purchases. Now, how much purchases were made by the STC?

[Shri Satish Agarwal]

It was just 18,000 tonnes, worth about Rs. 22 crores. This is no solution of the problem. Something else has to be done. Price has to be stabilised. Last year, the tobacco growers were getting round about Rs. 3 per kg. But then it has been brought down to Rs. 2 per kg. this year. It is clear from the Statement. So, they are getting less price in comparison to what they were getting last year, despite the fact that the cost of production has gone up. prices have also gone up. So far as the day-to-day living is concerned, prices of common consumable commodities have gone up. Prices of cigarettes are going up and the prices of cigarettes are raised without any sort of price control by the Government or any discretion of the Government. Whenever the cigarette manufacturers likes they raise the prices of cigarettes, say by 10 paise or 20 paise per cigarette packet. The prices are fixed by the industry in consultation with the Government. But we find in the market—I am not a cigarette smoker, but there are so many friends of mine you will find people telling that if you go to the market and make the purchase the cigarettes, you will have to pay more. The dealers and the cigarette sellers have been complaining to me that they have to sell cigarettes at black-market price, otherwise at the price fixed by the manufacturers they were not getting the supply. So, black-marketing is also going on in cigarette industry and they are charging heavy price by way of black-market price. By this way, they are also evading tax and they are evading corporate taxes and excise duty. Unless something serious is done, with regard to the solution of this problem, I think now and then we will be discussing these problems, with regard to the cultivators—whether they are tobacco growers, whether they are potatoe growers or any other growers, the problem will not be solved. The SIC has to come in a big way, Tobacco Board has to come in a big way and Government has to set-up some sort of a permanent mechanism for making spot purchases, as we have the mechanism of the Food corporation of India with regard to the purchases of rice and wheat, similarly, some sort of governmental mechanism will have to be set up

for immediately coming to the rescue of tobacco growers and make spot purchases. If the prices fall from a specified limits, some sort of mechanism has to be evolved to save the growers and I would request the hon. Minister for Commerce to enter into a dialogue with the tobacco growers. The Action Committee, Hyderabad who had also submitted a Memorandum to the hon. Prime Minister when she visited Guntur, have also sent a Memorandum to the Minister for Commerce requesting him for a discussion and also evolving some sort of permanent mechanism in order to solve the plight of these tobacco growers so that this problem does not arise hereafter. Some sort of a permanent solution guaranteeing some fixed price to the tobacco growers which should be something more than the cost that they are incurring on the production of tobacco should be there. Reduction in the area of cultivation or bringing down the production will not help either the country or the tobacco growers. The tobacco growers are poor farmers, small famers or middle farmers having half hectare, on hectare or two hectares of land, where they are growing this crop. This is, more or less, a cash crop and the livelihood of these small farmers is dependent on the growth of tobacco, and they should not be made to reduce their crop area, thereby bringing down this harvest from 140 thousand tonnes to eighty thousand tonnes. Something has to be done on a permanent basis. I am not interested on an *ad hoc* solution of the problem. I would, therefore, request the Minister to indicate some permanent measures in this behalf and enter into a dialogue with the Chairman and the organisation of the Tobacco Growers Action Committee, Hyderabad and find out some permanent solution of the problem.

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I share the concern and anxiety of Shri Satish Agarwal, and I also express my thanks to him that he has decided to reduce his chewing of tobacco. That will at least be his contribution to the quantum of export of tobacco.

I share the view of the hon. Member that agricultural sector is a very important sector and maximum attention should be paid to it, and even in the import-export policy, those ideas should be incorporated which would help this sector in exports as also its growth.

About reduction in the minimum export price, he has well appreciated that we have done away with the MEP for low grade tobacco, so that the exporters would buy low grade tobacco more, where there is a problem today.

About the steps being taken, an anxiety has been expressed that conditions should not be created that there should be agitations, and that the Government should take positive action. The Central Government is very much concerned, and it has shown its concern last year, and it bought 18,000 tonnes of tobacco worth Rs. 22 crores. It was not a small amount. About this year, I want to give a little background of the situation. This year, there was a crop of 93 million tonnes against a 150 million tonnes crop last year. This year, we did not anticipate or expect any problem. We thought it to be a short crop situation. Prof. Ranga is there and I thought, I would meet him with cheers and greet him about the prices, because we did not anticipate this problem. The season starts from the first week of March, and we were expecting the USSR team to visit us by the 18th March. We thought that as soon as these purchases would start from the USSR, the prices would go up. The trade and the cigarette manufactures may be trying to depress it, but being a short crop, with these purchases, the prices would go up. This team left on the 7th April, but the expectancy of the prices going up did not materialise. I am not comparing it to the APC prices; I am not giving you technical answers, because I did not think, it will satisfy you or me. I would not like to say that it was above APC prices, but as I said, it did not go up as expected. And we were very much concerned with it. The team left on the 6th or 7th April—I do not

remember the exact date—and I immediately wrote to the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh that the Central Government is willing to give Rs Ten crores as a ways and means advance for purchase of tobacco in Andhra Pradesh either through their State Trading Corporation, or any other agency that they might nominate.

PROF. N G. RANGA (Guntur) :
Without charging any interest ?

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH : It is the lowest rate of interest, about 6 per cent. And you know the commercial rate of interest is 18%. The other rates of interest are also much higher. But this is the lowest rate of interest. We also had a dialogue with the USSR team. But for the present, their indication was that they bought about 21,000 tonnes, as against 35,000 to 40,000 tonnes on the trade plan; and they would be coming again later in the year.
(Interruptions)

As far China I shall come to it presently.

I have spoken about MEP prices. About cigarette manufacturers not playing the game, I agree with the hon. Member because last year, they brought about 29,000 tonnes. Before that year, they bought about 44,000 tonnes; the year before 32,000 tonnes, and this year their buying so far has been 1.5 million tonnes, which is very very low.

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL : It is not 1.5 million tonnes, but 1.5 million Kgs.

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH : I am sorry; I stand corrected. It is 1.5 million Kgs., i.e. 1500 tonnes. That is the amount they have bought. Certainly, they have shifted their tactics this year. Instead of buying from growers, they have started buying mostly from dealers, and the dealers may buy from growers; and the prices may get depressed. They are playing this sort of

[Shri Vishwanath Pratap Singh]

game. Of course, we did have a meeting. We do not have a law to direct them, but the best method is to use market forces, to operate through market forces. With the injection of this Rs. 10 crores with the Andhra Pradesh Government, and their entry into the market, along with the short crop and the need they have for tobacco, I am sure they will also be compelled, and much more forcibly compelled, to come to the market. I hope these measures will bring buoyancy to the market, and the tobacco growers would be saved.

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL : Are these cigarette manufacturers allowed to import any variety of tobacco from outside any variety, any kind ?

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH : No; I am just saying this from records; but according to the fair knowledge that I have, tobacco is not allowed to import.

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL : Please tell me one more thing: how than do you allow these middlemen because the cigarette manufacturers who were purchasing 30,000 or 35,000 or 40,000 tonnes are purchasing only 15,000 tonnes this year? So, they have inducted these middlemen; they are exploiting the whole of tobacco growers through these middlemen. So, you have to evolve some mechanism to save the tobacco growers, and force the cigarette manufacturers to resort the certain purchases from the growers.

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH : This market operation by the Andhra Pradesh Government will itself force them. Second, they have a little staying power because of stocks of last year. So, I think this pressure will be built, because the crop is short.

श्री मनी राम बागड़ी (हिसार) :
उपाध्यक्ष जी, तम्बाकू भारत में एक ऐसी

चीज हैं, जिसका इस देश के सभी संत महात्माओं, ऋषियों और अच्छे आदमियों ने इसका विरोध किया। परन्तु इस देश के गरीब और अतिसर्वहारा आदमी को सिर्फ इस तम्बाकू के और कोई अपनी ऐश व आराम की चीज नजर नहीं आती। वह इसका आदी बन गया है। न तो शासन में इतनी शक्ति है और न समाज में इतनी ताकत और जागृति है कि सारे देश से तम्बाकू खत्म कर दिया जाए।

PROF. N. G. RANGA : But that is not chewing tobacco, that is virginia tobacco.

श्री मनी राम बागड़ी : क्योंकि सबसे पहले दुनिया में वर्जिनिया में तम्बाकू पैदा हुई थी, इसलिए इसका नाम वर्जिनिया हो गया और बिगड़ते-बिगड़ते तम्बाकू की नसलें और किस्में और बन गईं। रंगा साहब को इसका ज्ञान हो जाना चाहिए था।

अमल में कोई भी चीज का पहला हिस्सा अति उत्तम और अतिशुद्ध माना जाता है। वह उच्च श्रेणी के आदमी को मिलती है। जब उसकी श्रेणी घटती जाती है, तब उसी के मुताबिक जिस आदमी का समाज में स्तर घटता है या कम होता है, वह उसी के लिए बन जाती है। यह वर्जिनिया तम्बाकू ब्रिटिश कंपनी के माध्यम से भारत में आया और वह ब्रिटिश कंपनी देश के किसानों का शोषण करती रही। अब कुछ भारत वासी भी उस कंपनी के हिस्सेदार बन चुके हैं। आप इस को न उद्योग कह सकते हैं न कृषि कह सकते हैं, क्योंकि यह खुराक नहीं है, बल्कि एक आदत है जो सारे संसार में है और उसमें भारत भी संसार का एक अंग है।

इस को पैदा कौन करता है ? पैदा किसान करता है । इन का शोषण कौन करता है ? शोषण वह करता है जिस के पास सब से ज्यादा शक्ति है, चाहे वह हिन्दुस्तान का सरकारिया-सेठ है या विदेशों का सरकारिया सेठ है, जिन के इशारे पर भारत का सरकारिया सेठ नाचता है, वे उन का शोषण करते हैं । आपके तम्बाकू का सबसे ज्यादा व्यापार भारत के सरकारिया सेठ के पास है और आप उस सेठ के मुनीम हैं । इन्दिरा सेठ की एजेन्सी उसको करती है और भारत सरकार के व्यापार का लेनदेन उसके माध्यम से दूसरे मुल्कों से होता है । इस लिए आप उनके मुनीम हैं और आप यह व्यापार रूम और चीन से चलाते हैं । चीन ने आज से दो साल पहले आप के तम्बाकू को वापस कर दिया था, इसलिए कि वह रद्दी तम्बाकू था । अब रूम ने कितना वायदा किया था ? आपसे कहा था कि 45 लेंगे, लेकिन कितना लिया—25, जैसे बंधुआ मजदूर की हालत है, वही आप की हालत है । आपके साथ जो सौदा है उसको किसी क्षण भी इन्कार किया जा सकता है । इसके दो कारण हो सकते हैं—एक तो यह कि आपका माल जिस तरह का अच्छा बनना चाहिये था, आप उस तरह का नहीं दे पा रहे हो और दूसरे यह कि आप को मुनाफा न देकर, आप के सरकारी अफसर भ्रष्ट हैं, व्यापारी लोग बेइमान हैं, विदेशी ताकतें शक्तिशाली हैं और आप का व्यापार महकमा नातजुर्बेकार है जिसके कारण हिन्दुस्तान में जो कल-कारखाने चल रहे हैं वे उनका शोषण कर रहे हैं ।

मैं अखबारों के एक-दो आंकड़े आप के सामने रखता हूँ—यह 1981 से शुरू हुआ—कितने किसानों को गोली मारी गई ? 9 मरे

और 600 घायल हुए । यह अप्रैल, 1981 की हिन्दुस्तान अखबार की खबर है—यह घटना बँगलोर में हुई । उसके बाद “नव-भारत टाइम्स” के 7 अप्रैल, 1981 के अंक की खबर है—किसानों पर गोली चली, जिसमें 9 मरे । उसके बाद यह सिलसिला 1982, 1983, 1984 में भी चला । 1984 में भी गोली चली, किसान जख्मी हुए । यहां पर कालिंग-एटेंशन आया । रंगा जी ने सवाल उठाया कि 3 आदमी मरे । तब डिप्टी स्पीकर ने कहा—कालिंग एटेंशन तम्बाकू का है, मरने वालों का नहीं है । वे मरे तम्बाकू के भाव के लिए थे, उन को तम्बाकू की पैदावार का पूरा भाव नहीं मिल रहा था, इसलिये मरे थे ।

आप एक बात और देखो—40 लाख व्यक्ति तम्बाकू निर्माण क्षेत्र में लगे हुए हैं । इस का मतलब है कि हिन्दुस्तान की आबादी के 100 आदमियों में से एक या पौना आदमी तम्बाकू के काम में लगा है । हिन्दुस्तान की 70 करोड़ की आबादी है, उसके 40 लाख व्यक्ति तम्बाकू के काम में लगे हुए हैं । अब इस को आप काट नहीं सकते । तम्बाकू को बिल्कुल खत्म नहीं कर सकते । आज देश में 3994 तम्बाकू की फैक्टरियां हैं और जितनी कुल फैक्टरियों की तादाद इस देश में है, उसकी 8 फीसदी तम्बाकू फैक्टरियां हैं । 781 फैक्टरियां तम्बाकू को शुद्ध करने के काम में लगी हुई हैं, 5974 बीड़ी की फैक्टरियां हैं, सिगरेट, सिगार, चूरट की 72 फैक्टरियां, जरदे की 135 फैक्टरियां और तम्बाकू उत्पादन की 42 फैक्टरियां काम कर रही हैं, जिन में 1,12,161, 1,94,226, 16,540, 6,615 एवं 1796 कर्मचारी काम करते हैं । यदि उत्पादकों को सरकार की तरफ से प्रोत्साहन दिया जाए,

[श्री मनी राम बागड़ी]

तो तम्बाकू का उत्पादन देश के लिए काफी लाभदायक सिद्ध हो सकता है। यह अखबार की बात मैंने बताई है।

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, इस तम्बाकू को किस तरीके से लाभदायक बना सकते हैं। दो ही रास्ते हैं। या तो तम्बाकू को बिल्कुल खत्म कर दो और तम्बाकू बो ही नहीं ताकि तम्बाकू का उत्पादन करने वाले जो है, उन को कोई दूसरा काम धंधा मिल सके लेकिन यह मेरी समझ में नामुमकिन है, असंभव है क्योंकि भारत के अन्दर पहले से ही बहुत ज्यादा बेकारी है और कृषि का काम सबसे ज्यादा घाटे का काम है। यह आप नहीं कर सकते। दूसरा यह है कि तम्बाकू आप देश के लोगों को भी दो और व्यापार के अन्दर यूरोप और एशिया के मुल्कों को तम्बाकू दो। इस के लिए आप को व्यापार में कम्पीटीशन में आना पड़ेगा लेकिन अभी तक आप कम्पीटीशन में बुरी तरह फेल हुए हैं और व्यापार में आप की कोई साख नहीं है। जिस तरह से कोई मकरूज होता है, जिसके जिम्मे कर्जा होता है, वैसे ही हालत आपकी है। किसान जो मकरूज होता है, उसका सारा अनाज सेठ कर्जे में ले जाता है। इसी तरह की बात हिन्दुस्तान के व्यापार में हो रही है और हिन्दुस्तान एक कालोनी रह गया है रूस की। इस से ज्यादा वह कुछ नहीं है और कोई आप के तम्बाकू को पूछता नहीं है। कोई उस को खरीदता नहीं है। चीन में आप ने तम्बाकू भेजा, उसका क्या हुआ। यहां के अधिकारियों को पूरा मुआवजा नहीं मिला, इसलिए वहां रहीं तम्बाकू भेज दिया और वह तम्बाकू वापस आ गया। अधिका-रियों को बगैर घूस दिये हुए कोई सौदा नहीं

बन सकता। व्यापार मंत्रालय के अफसरों की वजह से कोई सौदा विदेशों से नहीं होता। जब तक वे अपना परसेंटेज नहीं ले लेते, कोई सौदा नहीं होता। उसमें कौन अफसर है, कौन सन्तरी है, कौन मंत्री है और कौन नेता है, मुझे इस का पता नहीं। कौन कितना खाता है, यह पता नहीं है लेकिन चाहे मामला चावल का मामला हो, चाहे टेलो का मामला हो और चाहे तम्बाकू का मामला हो, सब जगह सौदागिरी चलती है।

इसमें मैं तीन बातें आप से जानना चाहूंगा। पहली बात तो यह है कि चीन से जो तम्बाकू वापस आई, उसके कारणों की क्या आप ने जांच की या नहीं की और अगर जांच की गई, तो उन सरकारी कर्मचारियों, एस० टी० सी० के अफसरों और जो जिम्मेवार लोग थे, उन के खिलाफ क्या एक्शन लिया गया।

(Interruptions)**

रंगा साहब ठीक कहते हैं, सत्य कहते हैं कि ट्रेडर्स बेईमान हैं लेकिन वे अफसर कोई मेजिस्ट्रेट नहीं हैं, वे अफसर ट्रेडर हैं, मुनीम हैं और इन्दिरा गांधी की सरकार व्यापार करती है।

SHRI VISHVANATH PRATAP SINGH: This is very serious. This discussion is about tobacco prices and he is levelling allegations.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I will go through the record.

श्री मनी राम बागड़ी: मैं समझ नहीं पाया, आप हिन्दुस्तानी में बता दें।

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : If any allegation of corrupt practice has to be made, it has to be made under the rules and not like this. I will go through the records.

(Interruptions)**

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER ; These exchanges will not go on record also.

श्री मनी राम बागड़ी : व्यापार मंत्रालय, इस व्यापार मंत्रालय के जितने अफसर हैं, वे एक व्यापारी की तरह हैं। जैसे मुनीम भी एक व्यापारी होता है। जैसे बिड़ला भी विदेश से व्यापार करते हैं, टाटा भी करते हैं, सरकार भी व्यापार करती है। इसी तरह से यह कार्पोरेशन भी व्यापार करता है। इसमें क्या अंतर हो गया। अगर किसी का मुनीम व्यापारी, भ्रष्टाचारी हो तो उसको भ्रष्टाचारी कहने में क्या गलत है। मैं किसी व्यक्ति को नहीं कहा है, न ही आपके खिलाफ आरोप लगाया है। ये कहने वाले और लोग हैं, उनको आप जबाब देना। रंगा साहब ने ठीक ही कहा कि ट्रेडर जो है वह व्यापार करता है और ट्रेडर चाहे सरकारी ट्रेडर हो या गैर सरकारी ट्रेडर हो, वे उत्पादक का शोषण कर रहे हैं, लूट रहे हैं।

क्या मंत्री जी मेरी तीन बातों का जबाब देंगे। पहली बात यह कि लगातार तीन साल से संघर्ष चल रहा है किसानों का। क्या आप कोई कमीशन या कोई कमेटी मुकर्रर करके किसानों की मुश्किल को हल करने की कोशिश करेंगे।

दूसरी बात यह है कि आधुनिक ढंग की जो वर्जीनिया तंबाकू है, क्यूबा में जिस तरह से सारी तंबाकू को वर्जीनिया बना दिया

गया है और वह दुनिया की पहले नम्बर की है, क्या इस तरह से कोई योजना हमारे यहां बनाने जा रहे हैं जिससे किसानों का हित हो। सिवाए वेतम और भत्तों के किसानों के हित को समझने के लिए तम्बाकू की उन्नति करने के लिए कोई मार्ग आप किसानों को दे सकते हैं या नहीं।

तीसरी बात यह है कि वर्जीनिया किस्म की तंबाकू का आप विदेश से व्यापार करते हैं लेकिन जो वर्जीनिया के अलावा अपने देश में घटिया किस्म की तंबाकू, जो दरिद्र आदमी के इस्तेमाल के लिए है, उनको आप क्या कोई रियायत दे सकते हैं? (व्यवधान)

क्या तंबाकू से बनी हुई सब चीजों पर पाबंदी है, अगर नहीं है तो तंबाकू की बनी हर चीज जो बाहर से आए, उस पर पाबंदी लगाएं और जो छोटे बीड़ी के कारखानों में काम करने वाले जो बेकार होते जा रहे हैं तंबाकू की कीमतों की वजह से, जो तंबाकू का उत्पादन करने वाले हैं, इन दोनों की जीविका चलती रहे, इसके लिए क्या आप उपाय कर रहे हैं।

श्री विश्वनाथ प्रताप सिंह : सबसे पहले तो आदत की बात कही गई है। आरोप की भी आदत पड़ जाती है, जल्दी से छूटती नहीं है।

... (व्यवधान)

डा० सुब्रह्मण्यम स्वामी (बम्बई उत्तर पूर्व) : जवाब की आदत डालिए।

श्री विश्वनाथ प्रताप सिंह : जवाब की आदत अच्छी है। आपको याद होगा जब बीफ टेलो पर डिबेट हुई थी।

[श्री विश्वनाथ प्रताप सिंह]

यह कहना कि देश, रूस का बंधुआ है, बिल्कुल अनुचित है। देश, किसी भी देश का बंधुआ नहीं है। रूस, हमारा मित्र है। अगर दोनों देशों को व्यापार बढ़ाने में लाभ होता है तो यह बुरी बात नहीं है। रूस ही नहीं बल्कि इस्टर्न ब्लाक से भारत को व्यापार बढ़ाने में लाभ ही होगा। एस० टी० सी० के अधिकारियों के खिलाफ आरोप लगाना बिल्कुल निराधार है क्योंकि चीन में एस० टी० सी० के माध्यम से नहीं भेजा गया था।

श्री मनी राम बागड़ी (हिसार) : अगर किसी प्राइवेट कंपनी का भेजा हुआ माल वापिस आ जाए तो उससे देश को नुकसान होता है या नहीं? (व्यवधान)

श्री विश्वनाथ प्रताप सिंह : चीन का जो मसला था, वह एक्सपोर्ट्स और चीन के बीच हल हो गया है। दोनों की संतुष्टि के आधार पर वह हल हुआ है। आपने कहा था कि किसान तीन साल से संघर्ष करता रहा है, सरकार उस संबंध में क्या करती है? रेड्डी जी मौजूद हैं। यह जानते हैं कि 1982 में किसानों को वहां अच्छे भाव मिले। 1983-84 में समस्या आई है।

श्री मनी राम बागड़ी : 1981-82 में तो एजीटेशन चला है।..... (व्यवधान)

श्री विश्वनाथ प्रताप सिंह : तथ्य न होते हुए भी एजीटेशन चलता रहे तो उसका उत्तर मेरे पास नहीं है। इससे इंकार नहीं किया जा सकता कि किसानों को अच्छे भाव मिले। इस साल भी क्राप कम है इसलिए तुरन्त ही आंध्र प्रदेश सरकार को दस करोड़ रुपए उपलब्ध कराने का निर्णय किया।

..... (व्यवधान)

कुल मिलाकर दो तिहाई परचेज यू० एस० एस० आर० और यू० के० द्वारा होती है। आंध्र प्रदेश की क्राप मार्च के पहले सप्ताह से शुरू होती है। यू० एस० एस० आर० की टीम 18 तारीख को आनी थी और आशा थी कि भाव उठ जाएंगे। उन्होंने परचेज किया, लेकिन इसका जो वांछित प्रभाव था, वह मार्किट में नहीं पड़ा।

..... (व्यवधान)

इसमें दस दिन का डिले हुआ है। छह-सात करोड़ का आफर आंध्र प्रदेश को भेजा गया। जहां तक तम्बाकू की क्वालिटी सुधारने का सवाल है। यह टूबेका बोर्ड के आबजेक्टिव में है। कर्नाटक में इस बार आक्शन प्लेटफार्म आगे बढ़ाने की पूरी योजना है।... (व्यवधान) और आंध्र में भी आएगी।

13.00 hrs.

PROF. N. G. RANGA : Why not in Andhra now ?

श्री विश्वनाथ प्रताप सिंह : टेस्ट परचेजेज शुरू हैं आंध्र में।

जहां तक रही बात यह कि वर्जीनिया टबैको अच्छी वाली बाहर जाती है और घटिया यहां रह जाती है, उसके लिये भी कुछ किया जाय। तो यह जो यह बची है 23 मिलियन किलोग्राम, यह घटिया किस्म ही है, और 10 करोड़ जो दिया गया है आंध्र प्रदेश को यह घटिया किस्म के लिए दिया गया है। तो उसके लिए भी कार्यवाही की गई है।

अब रही बात पाबंदी की, बीड़ी और कृषि करने वालों की स्थिति में सुधार हो, इसमें कोई दो रायें नहीं हैं।

श्री मनी राम बागड़ी : पाबन्दी तम्बाकू या तम्बाकू से बनी हुई चीज पर लगी हुई है कि नहीं ? यदि नहीं, तो लगाने के लिये आप तैयार हैं कि नहीं ?

श्री विश्वनाथ प्रताप सिंह : किस प्रकार की पाबन्दी ?

श्री मनी राम बागड़ी : विदेश से कोई तम्बाकू या तम्बाकू से बनाई हुई चीज देश में न मंगाई जाय ।

श्री विश्वनाथ प्रताप सिंह : तंबाकू बाहर से नहीं आती, सिगरेट भी नहीं आती । बल्क में नहीं आती है । कुछ होटल वगैरह के लिए आती है । सिगार आता है ।

श्री मनी राम बागड़ी : बंद कर दो ।

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY : Sir, I too am not a smoker, but I am concerned with the plight of the farmers, particularly Andhra Pradesh farmers, a state with which I have a great deal of affinity.

SHRI M. RAM GOPAL REDDY : Thank You.

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY : So, I must have been an Andhrite in my last birth. Anyway, in my village in Madurai, 99 per cent people speak Telugu. So, I know some Telugu.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Your mother tongue is also Telugu ?

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY : No, Sir. If you like, I can make it. The whole thing which we are discussing today was discussed in the form of a Calling Attention last year. It is not a new phenomenon. It requires some kind of suitable planning. I would like to know from the Minister whether the Government have set up any Working Group

to work out the long term demand and supply situation, because every year we go on saying "this should be done" or "that should be done". On the other hand, we have to consider for the next ten years what is likely to be the demand and supply and what is likely to be the export commitment. Long term plans have to be worked out so that this kind of market, which is so much dependent on the prices, could be stabilised. There should be some scientific planning for which a Working Group should be established. If it is already there, I would like to know its recommendations.

I would also like to know from the Minister the profitability question. I have been hearing how the farmers are paid at the most Rs. 14 per kg., which is the maximum. I do not know what is the current price, may be Rs. 10. But, ultimately when it gets transferred to the consumer, I am told that the gap is 400 per cent, according to Shri Satish Agarwal, somebody says it is 250 per cent, I do not know the exact percentage. So, Government have to look into this question as to how the price paid by the consumer gets actually translated in the price paid to the farmer.

The second question that worries me a great deal is the question of whose baby it is, I am talking of tobacco and I will tell you why. When the Action Committee met, the Chief Minister said : I have really nothing much to do in this because the infrastructure is with the Government of India and the exports are done by them, even though 90 per cent of the crop is in Andhra Pradesh. So, he said he will take up the matter with the Central Government. The Agriculture Minister of Andhra Pradesh came here and met Shri V. P. Singh. No doubt Shri V. P. Singh gave Rs. 10 crores, but he washed off his hands by saying "last year STC made a loss, how can I ask the STC to go on buying".

We have public sectors and they can play this kind of a role. They can make profit at some place and deliberately make loss at other place and absorb it. The

[Dr. Subramaniam Swamy]

whole concept of the social planning and the concept of the public sector organisation is that they do not go purely on one particular trade and see whether they make profit or loss, but overall they manage it in such a way that the loss in one area is compensated by profit in another area.

(Interruptions)

Yes, this is not every year, but for the first time last year when the STC entered into the picture. So, in a sense the Central Government also washed off its hands. Though I am against its consumption, but the fact that Tobacco product fetches Rs. 1,000 crores of excise revenue every year and Rs. 100 crores nearly in exports, the question is how is this Tobacco planning done? You need coal for the curing process. But the coal prices are raised from Rs. 154 to something like Rs. 175. Now there is no relationship between the input prices and the tobacco output prices. The coal price is determined by one agency, purchase price by another agency, export price by yet another agency. Now with this confusion the poor farmer is getting squeezed. Therefore, I would like to know the Hon. Minister's reaction to the suggestion that the Tobacco Board Act should be amended and that it should be given power to make this kind of studies plus coordinating the input and output prices and see that the gap between the consumer price and the price paid to the farmer is not very much and also to enter into negotiations for exports of tobacco. So, the first thing I will say, in addition to what I have said earlier, is that the Tobacco Board itself can make purchases.

(Interruptions)

And I have the support of an eminent Parliamentarian and the senior leader of the Congress (I), Prof. N. G. Ranga that they may be allowed to do that. They should also have the recommendory powers to these nationalised banks to suggest the extension of credit here or there. For example the Hon. Minister has gone on record to say that he will see credit

is provided to companies which purchase low priced tobacco. Well, I think instead of the Minister doing that the Tobacco Board should have that recommendatory power. Then the same Tobacco Board should be able to explore export avenues. Here he has mentioned USSR. Much of the crisis has been caused due to the fact that USSR had agreed to purchase 40,000 tonnes of tobacco, but they actually purchased only 21,000 tonnes. And despite the charismatic presence of Shri V. P. Singh in Moscow no impact was made on them and ultimately they went back on their earlier commitment and purchased half of it. And now what is the use of friendship with the Soviet Union and sending our people with them in the satellite unless you become one yourself, if they are not able to persuade the Soviet Union to go on increasing its purchases.

PROF. N. G. RANGA : Why not eliminate private trade.

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY : Well, that would be very necessary. He has said that private trade should be eliminated. But the fact is that the Government paid compensation to China. Is that a fact or not? I do not want to take the name because you will quote Rule 53 etc. But the fact is that a very influential politician from Andhra, whom Prof. Ranga knows and Shri V. P. Singh also must know, promised to supply one quality to China and supplied a lower quality. The net result of it was that the Chinese, who had just begun importing ten per cent of our tobacco exports, got upset. And ultimately the Government had to intervene and pay compensation to China in order to continue the contracts. Now, there should be some policing agency.

AN. HON. MEMBER : A number of them, not one.

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY : There are only two, not a number of them. He will confirm it. They are only two. So, this is another area in regard to quality control. So, the Government should at least monitor quality

control. If you have made commitment, you should supply that quality. Otherwise there should be penal provisions by which these people should be punished. They are bringing down the name of the country.

In respect of exploitation and export avenue, the International Institute of Foreign Trade had been to Gulf recently and come back and said that there is a big export potential for Gulf countries. I do not know whether it is true, but I would like to know from the Minister whether the Gulf market has been properly explored or not because so far, as he said, the USSR and the UK are the main importers.

Finally, the area under crop has been reduced. That is fine. I think in fact, we can even reduce it further because when I have looked at the yield per hectare, I have found that in the United States one hectare yields two-and-a-half tonnes of tobacco, in China one hectare of land yields 2.2 tonnes of tobacco, whereas in India one hectare of land yields only 0.8 tonnes of tobacco and this Rs. 1,000 crores of excise revenue that they get out of tobacco should be used for doing research on better varieties and to increase the yield so that the acreage can be brought down further and that acreage could be made available for growing food crops and other crops. This is another thing that they ought to do. Thank you.

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH : Sir, about the task force or the Committee going into it, the Government had appointed a Task Force and some of the recommendations are ..

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY : Can you give me a copy ?

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH : Well, it is under examination. I will just say that some of the things which the hon. Member has mentioned are very relevant and these are the areas also on which the Task Force has given its recommendations. The recommenda-

tions are on macro balance of supply and demand, on improved market intelligence, introduction of auction system in the entire tobacco growing belt including the traditional belt and empowering the Tobacco Board to introduce and encourage commercial grading system and etc. There is a long recommendation that the Tobacco Board should act as a stabilising agency. So, these are some of the recommendations of the Task Force, they are under examination and I agree with the hon. Member's general remarks regarding this.

About the profitability to the farmers and the point he has raised, the APC does recommend minimum support prices going into the cost and everything and the prices being available, the average prices have been above the APC prices so far.

DR. SMBRAMANIAM SWAMY : I have said that there is a gap between the price paid for cigarettes by the consumer and the price received by the farmer. It is not enough that they should be paid to cover the cost, but they should share the profits enjoyed by the cigarette companies.

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH : That sort of exercise is not done, but certainly the inputs costs and the profitability and the cost of the person who is employed in it and what wages would work out—all these costs are taken into consideration. Then the minimum support price is arrived at. This is an issue that is not only on the tobacco side, but on the textile side also, the price of cloth to cotton, and many exercises have been attempted, but till now satisfactory solutions have not come up.

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY : But do you do it for this ?

SHRI VISWANATH PRATAP SINGH : I would not assure about this on the floor of the House, but certainly what I can assure is that the farmers should get the remunerative prices. That I can assure.

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY :
And sharing in the profit ?

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH : Whose baby is it ? (*Interruptions*). The hon. Member said that the Central Government has washed its hands off the States and the States said that the Centre has washed off its hands. When we commit Rs. 10 crores, it is not washing off our hands ; we have taken the responsibility and we hope that if there is maximum cooperation of the State Governments with this money and to the relief of the growers, then it is a joint Action and not, ...

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : You have done it before the State Government has asked for it I think.

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY :
No.

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH : Sir, they have heard about this problem, Prof. Ranga was speaking to me, Mr. Reddy was speaking to me, then there was a delegation also from Andhra Pradesh and it was not such a specific thing that this amount or that amount should be given, but we are concerned *suo motto* also.

As soon as we saw that now buying and market were not picking, we offered this.

About Noscov and cosmetics, the hon. Member has said so. It is not cosmetics. There have been real gains after doing to Moscow and response from Moscow has been positive on the trade side. Even in the trade plan the export commitment from USSR is Rs. 2,000 crores which is quite a mark up from a previous level.

About China I may say that mutual agreement has been reached between the buyer and the supplier. The matter is over. So far as further purchases by China is concerned, I may inform that China has got a very good crop this year. It is not very keen to come.

Need of gulf countries is certainly there. We are exploring these markets and the point is very well taken.

About area and its yields, productivity point has been made. If productivity goes up, certainly with the lesser area we can make the same exports. The point is very well taken.

One point was made by Satish Agarwal earlier as to why area has been reduced. He said that this was not a sort of solution. When major part of it is export dependent and export is not growing, there are problems. I think we should be more realistic to have production which will match. I think, I have covered.

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY :
What about Tobacco Board Act Amendment ?

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH : That is there. We are examining the matter to make an amendment to give more Powers to Tobacco Board and give more powers in auction. That is under consideration. It is under inter-Ministerial consideration.

SHRI M. RAM GOPAL REDDY (Nizamabad) : Just now, Mr Agarwal said that he has reduced consumption of tobacco. I think that is the reason why we are having glut. I want to know from the Minister whether he is going to take the help of Mr. Agarwal so that he may consume all the extra tobacco. If he consumes more, our glut may be over.

Just now it has been said by Shri Mani Ram Bagri our country is bonded. We have got very good bonds with the Soviet Russia.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : No. I do not know whether it has gone on record. Do not reply.

SHRI M. RAM GOPAL REDDY :
Now we have got very good bonds with Russia. They are helping us in making

purchases, not only tobacco but other commodities. That the hon. Member should not forget. Every time he should not repeat the same thing again and again.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : He did not mean it also seriously.

SHRI M. RAM GOPAL REDDY : When you are in the Chair, every serious matter becomes very light.

I want an assurance from the hon. Minister, whatever production we have achieved this year, it must not go down. What are the carry over stocks of last year? Will it be enough for future years to come?

As it has happened in sugar, it has come down to 65 lakh tonnes from 85 lakh tonnes. The Minister is going to lose a lot of revenue from excise and also foreign exchange. That is why we must keep a balance. It should not go below that.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : How clever you are ! Very carefully you are introducing sugar in tobacco.

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL : If tobacco is sugar coated, I would not chew it.

PROF. N.G. RANGA : Both are important for the peasants.

SHRI M. RAM GOPAL REDDY : Sir, I congratulate the Minister on having *suo-motu* sanctioned Rs. 10 crores and it will go a long way in relieving the pains of the tobacco growers in Andhra Pradesh. The Government of Andhra Pradesh should take advantage of it. The Andhra Pradesh Government, now I am informed, is saying that they have got no infrastructure to purchase tobacco. If they have got no infrastructure, then they are the people who are on the spot and they have got one STC also. They have got small packers in several places

like Guntur etc.. Those people can be trusted and with this money which the Government of India has sanctioned, they must utilise to purchase all the surplus tobacco from the growers. These packers are there and they will maintain good quality. They have got the capacity to grade it. I want to know from the Minister, whether he is going to advise the State Government not to plead its inability but to purchase tobacco. They should employ the services of packers who are well-trained and well versed in the job. If that is done, I think, most of the tobacco will be purchased by them.

Sir, tobacco is a perishable commodity and if the purchase is delayed further, it will lose its flavour, quality and also the colour. Prof. Ranga is very much interested in the welfare of Kisans, as we all know. His service to the Kisans is there for the last more than six decades, i.e. even before the birth of Shri N.T. Ramarao, our Chief Minister. When he was there, he advised the Kisans who were on hunger strike to break the strike and follow peaceful methods. He also assured them that something would be done to their advantage. When Prof. Ranga was in Hyderabad, all the *Shamians* put up where the strike took place were smashed and disturbed. All those people who were fasting were removed to Osmania Hospital. The next day morning when Prof. Ranga wanted to see them, he was stopped. With great difficulty, he chased them out and saw the Kisans. It is not only that. Over 100 Kisans have been arrested also. These are all unnecessary and futile attempts. I know, the Kisans of Andhra Pradesh are very hard-working people and peace loving people. Unnecessarily the Government of Andhra Pradesh is provoking them. That should not be done.

Is the Minister in his capacity as the Union Minister who is having overall responsibility of tobacco and tobacco growers, going to advise the Chief Minister not to resort to such sort of methods which may provoke the people

[Shri M. Ram Gopal Reddy]

to take the law into their hands and become violent? Last year, STC has purchased tobacco worth of over Rs. 22 crores. I want to know from the Minister, what is he going to do and how is he going to utilise it? I also want to know how many cigarette manufacturing companies are there and what is the capacity of these companies to consume tobacco and what is the quantity they are already having? Are they purposely suppressing the prices so that there can be distress sale from the tobacco growers? If that is the method, I want to know from the Minister whether he has got any other remedy to deal with these people—either in the form of stopping export or manufacturing or other things? Again; I am mentioning about sugar. Sometimes the sugar industry people do not behave properly. At that time, the Ministry here stops the release. Then, they will behave properly.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : It is sugar industry people excluding Shri Ram Gopal Reddy.

SHRI M. RAM GOPAL REDDY : I am only a cooperator.

Now, I want to know what sort of method the Minister is going to adopt so that the cigarette manufacturers may not exploit the tobacco growers. If that is stopped. I think, most of the trouble will be relieved. As against 30 to 35,000 tonnes, they have purchased only 1,500 tonnes. This is only too small a thing. Why have they not purchased? Has it been done purposely? Is it that their agents have entered the field of purchasing tobacco at a low rate and that, later on, they will supply them? They may be employing this method also so that their agents may purchase tobacco, keep with them and, later on, they will purchase tobacco from their agents. This is the method which is usually adopted by the monopoly houses and big factories. I want to know whether the hon. Minister is going to talk to the Chief Minister

and the Minister concerned that they should immediately go to the rescue of the people. Supposing the Andhra Pradesh Government adopts the same attitude and they do not go to the help of tobacco growers, I want to know from the hon. Minister what alternative method is going to be adopted by the Government of India so that the difficulties of the people are removed. Otherwise, what will happen next year would be that tobacco growers may boycott the planting of tobacco itself and there may be scarcity of tobacco and the time may come when we will be forced to import tobacco as was the case with sugar some-time back. So, whatever steps are being taken by the Government, I want the hon. Minister to take the steps immediately before it is too late.

Already, the kisans have lost their patience. Prof. Ranga's advice to them to remain peaceful has gone a long way and they have remained very peaceful. The patience of tobacco growers must be appreciated. In our agricultural country, as Mr. Satish Agarwal has said, the contribution from the village sector to the GNP has gone down from 58 to 40 per cent. About 70 cent of the population of our country are enjoying only 40 per cent of the GNP and, on the other side, very few people in the cities and industrial sector are enjoying 60 per cent of the GNP. This is the disparity. If that disparity widens still further, then there will be a lot of agitation against the city people and there will be a lot of disturbances in the country. This point also must be taken note of by the hon. Minister.

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH : About maintaining a balance of production, certainly a balance has to be maintained according to the need of export and also domestic production. There should not be over production or less production.

Regarding overstocks, how much has been carried forward from last year, I

may inform the hon. Member that it is about 15 million kgs. of tobacco as far as STC is concerned.

Then, the hon. Member said that Andhra Pradesh is not having any infrastructure of buying. That is not true. There is infrastructure in Andhra Pradesh.

About agitation and that firing should not take place and the need of giving an advice to the Chief Minister, none of us wants that and, I am sure, the State Government also does not want any firing. But certainly the law and order situation is the concern of the State Government and it is their decision on this issue.

PROF. N.G. RANGA : More than hundred of them were arrested only day before yesterday.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : It is the State subject ; we cannot discuss it here.

SHRI M. RAM GOPAL REDDY : We are disclosing facts

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH : He has asked what we are going to do with the STC stocks worth Rs. 22 crores that have been purchased. If the hon. Member remembers, precisely that is what I was asking him 3000 tonnes of stock have been contracted for to be sold out of 18,000 tonnes and we are trying to see that the remaining balance is also disposed of.

As regards cigarette manufacturers depressing prices through their agents or through traders, I suppose, there is much substance in what the hon. Member has said. One way of meeting that is to go into the market and that is why we have sanctioned is 10 crores for Andhra Pradesh Government.

Now about my asking the Chief Minister to come to the help of the tobacco

growers, in my letter, when I gave this, I made this request that the State Government should come forwards, to help the growers.

With these words, the main points are covered.

I have one note from Hon. Member Shrimati Suseela Gopalan about the constitution of a working group and establishment of a Tobacco Board. I have responded to this and we are looking into how the Tobacco Board can be strengthened.

SHRI HARIKESH BAHADUR (Gorakhpur) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Most of questions have already been asked.

Though Hon. Member Shri Satish Agarwal had very eloquently put up the whole matter, though the Hon. Minister has replied...

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Now you also 'ran'.

SHRI HARIKESH BAHADUR :...that he is trying his level best to solve the problem. I do not know how far we will succeed in this matter.

India is one of the largest producers of tobacco. But we always observe that there is a great problem before the farmers every year. Though I am not a tobacco chewer like Shri Satish Agarwal nor a smoker nor a tobacco grower nor a trader I am very much concerned because of the distress of the farmers, of the chewer and of the smoker and everybody.

Therefore, I would like to say that Government must take this problem very seriously and try to solve it effectively.

Every year we have been discussing this problem and all the time we have been getting reply also from the Government that Government has been trying its level

[Shri Harikesh Bahadur]

best to solve this problem. For several years, we have observed that many people had been killed in firing and only when previous Government was functioning in Karnataka, 20 people were killed in firing at Nipanji as Hon. Member Shri Mani Ram Bagri has said. Similarly, this killing is going on.

But my point is that the interests of the farmers must be protected.

Government should try to provide some financial assistance to Andhra Pradesh Government to purchase this tobacco directly from the tobacco growers. There may be some problems. The Hon. Minister may inform the House of those problems. But it is my request that the Hon. Minister must try to provide some financial assistance.

There had been some expert opinion that this tobacco trade should be given a credit of Rs. 100 crores minimum, so that this tobacco may be purchased from the farmers directly. The Hon. Minister had already provided Rs. 10 crores to the State Government. But I would like that this amount must be increased.

Either the Government should decide that the State Trading Corporation must purchase the entire tobacco or if STC cannot purchase it, then State Government should purchase it and for that, State Government must be provided some financial assistance by the Centre and increased support price must be given to farmers.

State Government may be allowed for export also if Government considers because this is a very delicate issue. This is already there before Sarkaria Commission. Therefore, I do not want to go into details of that. But Government should consider this also. Some of the State Governments were producing crops like jute and tobacco. They may be given permission to export it. But I do not want to go into details of that. But this

is my suggestion to be considered by the Hon. Minister.

So far as the Tobacco Board is concerned, this Tobacco Board may be given full powers to control the entire tobacco trade and this should be given financial assistance also for that purpose so that they may be able to provide remunerative price to farmers.

About Tobacco Board Act, as it is suggested by the Hon. Member, there should be some suitable amendment also so that this control may be given to Tobacco Board. This should also be considered by the Hon. Minister.

I would like to suggest that Government must fix a definite quota for different cigarette manufacturers to purchase this tobacco from the farmers. They must purchase the quota of tobacco fixed by the Government itself. If they do not do it, Government should try to cancel their licences. Is the Government going to do it? This is the main question I would like to ask from the Minister—whether he is going to fix a definite quota which each cigarette manufacturer should purchase directly from the farmers at a rate fixed by the Government and if they do not do it, whether their licences will be cancelled?

So far as the export of tobacco is concerned, definitely it should be encouraged. But for that purpose it is essential that we must try to improve the quality of tobacco. Here in the Commerce Ministry itself though I did not point it out earlier to the Hon. Minister but I was thinking to point out and this is good time to say that. I feel and I must say that there is one export inspection agency in the Commerce Ministry and they have to see to the quality of the item which is being exported. We have been listening a lot about it. We have been reading in several magazines, etc. that there has been a lot of bungling and all that. I would like to request the Hon. Minister to look into the functioning of

that particular organisation so that the functioning of that organisation must be streamlined and only then we can improve the quality of our goods we are exporting and only then our export market may expand.

These are certain suggestions of mine and I would request the Hon. Minister to give reply to these questions which I have raised about cigarette manufacturers, etc.

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH : The Hon. Member has said that he is neither a smoker nor a chewer nor a trader of tobacco. In that we both are in the same category. ...

SHRI RAMAVATAR SHASTRI (Patna) : We are against cigarette smoking.

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH : About this government every year saying that action will be taken and still the problem remains—it is not merely saying, but action is really taken. Rs. 22 crores of tobacco were bought last year and this year the commitment is Rs. 10 crores. So it is not mere saying. Sir, when any crop is dependent on international market, there will be problems, but we have made our responses. Categorically, I have said, responses have been made with substantial amounts.

About the interest of farmers being ensured by seeing that the purchases are made from the growers, ways and means that have been advanced are for purchases directly from the farmers. So that has been ensured. About financial assistance to the trade, we have been able to persuade the nationalised banks that they give advance credit for purchases of low grade tobacco without insisting on margin money. So this is one step in the direction which the Hon. Member has suggested.

About the support prices being given, so far technically the minimum support

prices have been suggested and market prices are ruling round about that. So those Prices are available to the farmers.

About the State Government being allowed to export tobacco, certainly I would clear the decks for the State Government to export and there will be no problem on that, if they wish to.

About the Tobacco Board having more control, the auction system is on thing by which the more it is expanded the more control it will exercise on the marketing of tobacco and therefore on the trade. So there is a very definite strategy on that account in that direction.

About suitable amendments in the Act I have already said that they are under consideration.

About quota being fixed for the cigarette manufacturers and if they do not fulfil their quotas their licences should be cancelled, I do not think we can agree on this because there are workers, in the cigarette industries and if we cancel the licences, they will be thrown out of employment and it will only be shifting the problem from one area to another. ...

SHRI HARIKESH BAHADUR : They are exploiting the farmers very much.

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH : By more efficient marketing and by the introduction of the auction system certainly that exploitation can be brought under control.

About the quality control of tobacco, certainly, there is an Inspection Agency. They keep the quality control in check and, by and large, they have been working. But, wherever there are complaints we do take action—we take a very severe action.

If there is anything which the Hon. Member needs, certainly, we will look into that.