

SHRI JAG PAL SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, discussion on atrocities on Harijans should not be taken up so late. It should be taken seriously. (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I am taking it seriously. There is not a single person in this House how does not take seriously the matters concerning backward classes, Harijans, Women and Muslims. I am telling you again and again, please sit down.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI JAG PAL SINGH: I would also like to request Malik Saheb that adequate time should be given for this discussion. People are being killed all over the country. People are being burnt alive. (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Jag Palji, please sit down. It is a very important matter and that is why it has been slated for discussion. I have already heard you, please take your seat. Yes, Mr. Minister.

(*Interruptions*)

11.05 hrs.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[*English*]

Hike In Price of Edible Oils

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*21. SHRI MANORANJHAN
BHAKATA:
SHRI JANARDAN TIWARI:

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been steep rise in prices of edible oils including vanaspati since last one year and prices are likely to be increased further during the coming festival months;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be

taken to curb the price rise?

[*Translation*]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI RAM PUJAN PATEL): (a) and (b). The wholesale price index for edible oils and vanaspati has increased by around 24% and 16% respectively over last year. The Govt. is taking measures to curb the rising trend in prices.

(c) With a view to curbing the rising trend in edible oil prices, following steps have been taken;

- (i) The supplies of imported oil through PDS have been stepped up in recent months.
- (ii) Stock limits with the wholesalers/retailers as well as manufacturers of edible oils and vanaspati have been reduced.
- (iii) Stock limits of edible oil seeds restored to lower levels.
- (iv) Increase in minimum margin for bank advances ordered by RBI.
- (v) Central Govt. is in constant touch with the State Governments to take up dehoarding operations and maintain price line of essential commodities.
- (vi) Permission to blend refined non-conventional oils with conventional oils to augment the availability of oils has been given.
- (vii) Exemption of excise duty on refined rapeseed/mustard oil has been given.
- (viii) Withdrawal of usage of Expeller Mustard oil to the extent of 20% in vanaspati has been ordered to check the prices of mustard oil.

[English]

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKATA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am really sorry that the hon. Minister while replying to the question has not spoken the truth because the Price Index about the increase of edible oil, whatever he has mentioned, is much more in the market. Not only that, when you go to purchase it, the price varies from State to State and even inside the State, place to place. I come from the Island territory, where the price of edible oil has been increased by one hundred per cent. So, the Price Index which has been mentioned by the hon. Minister is not accurate.

Then, the second thing is that...

MR. SPEAKER: You have two questions to put. Now come to the first question.

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKATA: I am coming to the question. This is a very important question.

MR. SPEAKER: I am reminding you that you can put two questions.

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKATA: The Minister has mentioned about a number of measures that he has taken. If you have got enough money, you can buy any quantity of oil in the market. Then, the question of shortage seems to be illogical. If it is so, I would like to know from him whether the Government has undertaken any study about the actual shortage in the country and also the requirement of edible oil. The Minister has said that though public distribution system the imported oil will be distributed. Where is the imported oil? I would like to know from him the quantity of oil they have imported to meet the requirements all over the country. So, I would like to know from the Minister whether he has undertaken any study in this regard, the requirement of edible oil; the quantity of oil they have imported; and the quantity of edible oil likely to be imported in future to meet the demand, particularly during the festival months.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM PUJAN PATEL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to tell the hon. Member that this year the total consumption of edible oils is estimated to be 57.72 lakh metric tonnes in the country and we have imported 3.38 lakh metric tonnes. The hon. Member desires to know as to how the Government will meet the situation in view of tight financial position. The economic condition of the country is not good. We can import oil against payment in foreign exchange and we do try to meet the requirement. For this the hon. Finance Minister said that we would export large quantities of milk powder to earn foreign exchange to meet our import bill of edible oils. At the same time, though it is not possible to import the quantity of oil to meet the entire requirement but efforts will be made to cover up the shortage and it will also be ensured that people experience no difficulties in this connection. It has been a regular feature that prices go up during the months of July, August and September. Even then the Government is vigilant and would ensure that prices do not rise. I would like to seek your co-operation in this regard so that the problem is solved.

[English]

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKATA: The hon. Minister has stated in his reply that Central Government is in constant touch with the State Governments to take up de-hoarding operations and maintain the price line of essential commodities. I would like to know from him how many de-hoarding raids have been conducted all over the country and which are the States? What is the quantity of edible oil that has been found out in de-hoarding operations? In order to meet the regular requirement of edible oil, will the Government like to consider to increase the area of palm plantation cultivation particularly in Andamans and Nicobar Islands where it is providing quite successful?

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: He is asking about de-

hoarding operations and the number of raids conducted in this connection.

SHRI RAM PUJAN PATEL: So far 43,363 raids have been conducted and a number of items have been seized. Action is being taken against a number of persons. It is the responsibility of the Government and we are looking into it. Action will be taken against the hoarders. (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Please take your seat.

SHRI JANARDAN TIWARI: During the last six months, the prices have gone up. The price of dalda has gone up from Rs. 25 to Rs. 37 per kilogram. Similarly, the price of other edible oils has gone up from Rs. 25 to Rs. 35 a kilogram. The price of mustard oil has registered a rise from Rs. 25 to Rs. 33, coconut oil from Rs. 28 to Rs. 40 a kilogram and cement from Rs. 78 to Rs. 108 per bg. I would like to know from the Government as to why the prices were allowed to go up? Is it a fact that the prices were allowed to go up in collusion with the Oil Producers Association of India, the All India Sugar Manufacturers Association, the All India Cement Manufacturers Association? While on the one hand, the Government raises the prices after procuring the commodities from these traders, on the other hand, it holds talks with us for bringing down the prices. As such, I would like to know as to whether it is doing a right thing by committing this misdeed in collusion with these associations? Because this results in high rise in prices.

SHRI RAM PUJAN PATEL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, with regard to the points made by Shri Tiwari, I would like to say that no Government would allow the price rise. But it has been clearly stated that due to fall in production of oilseeds this year, there has been some rise in the prices of edible oils and the country will have to take recourse to import in order to meet the shortage. With the import of edible oils the debt burden on the country will increase. In view of this, we will have to exercise restraint and make efforts to see that prices do not rise. At the

same time, it would also be seen that there is no shortage as has been the case in the past. As such, I would like to request the hon. Member to study the whole thing. The suggestion, he would give in this connection, will be considered and taken into account for a solution... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Tewari, now you may please take your seat. You have no right to go on putting questions. Please sit down.

SHRI RAM NAIK: Mr. Speaker, Sir, Maharashtra, Tamilnadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh are the States where oil consumption is on the highside. At the same time there are large number of oil Kings there, especially in Bombay. I would like to know as to whether any action was taken against these oil Kings, if so, does the Central Government have any information in this regard? If not, what does the Government want to do in this connection?

SHRI RAM PUJAN PATEL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member has made mention of oil kings. If he can give us the names, we will order an enquiry into it. If they are found guilty, action will be taken against them... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down. There is no point of order in it, Shri Balgopal Mishra...

[*English*]

SHRI BALGOPAL MISHRA: In his reply the hon. Minister has stated that the supply of edible oil has been going on through Public Distribution System. This reply has been probably drafted by the same man who had been doing it for the last Government. Is the hon. Minister aware that this public Distribution System only exists in pen and paper so far as rural areas are concerned? The urban population is conscious so that they get their quota. Rural quota never reaches. I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to what steps the Government is taking to ensure that all essential commodities including edible oil will reach the rural people?

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAM NAIK: The Government knows who are the oil kings.

MR. SPEAKER: You know them and the Government also knows them.

SHRI RAM NAIK: Then why the Government is not taking any action against them?

MR. SPEAKER: What can I do? Shri Ram Naik, now please take your seat.

[*English*]

SHRI BALGOPAL MISHRA: Whether this non-distribution will be treated as an offence under Section 7 of E.C. Act?

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAM PUJAN PATEL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, as the hon. Member knows that there is a Public Distribution System in our country. It is possible that there may be some problems or difficulties at some places in management of Public Distribution System. Action is being taken in consultation with State Governments. If the hon. Member is aware of any difficulties or problems, he may let us know. As far as oil is concerned, as much as 35,200 metric tonnes of oil has been released in March, 1990 in the country...(*Interruptions*)

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: It hardly reaches the villages.

SHRI RAM PUJAN PATEL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, if it does not reach the villages, it is the responsibility of all of us to see to it and ensure its proper distribution...(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

SHRI A.K. ROY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have got a vegetarian suggestion, which I am putting in the form of question. The first suggestion is that...(*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Roy, you put the question, there is no need to offer any suggestion.

[*English*]

SHRI A.K. ROY: In the form of question I am putting my vegetarian suggestion. Firstly, one of the reasons for the edible oils scarcity is the less production of oilseeds in the country. I would like to know whether the Minister will consult the Agriculture Ministry and explore the possibility of growing more oilseeds like groundnut in the entire Eastern region of Chhota Nagpur and the Purulia portions of West Bengal. That can help in augmenting the production. The second suggestion is that, as you know, Sir, this Government has explored many creative ways of tackling the things. For example, on Sundays it has closed all the petrol pumps to tide over the difficulty of petroleum. Similarly, I would like to know whether this Government will come out with a suggestion of declaring Sundays as cooking without oil days to tide over the difficulty.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAM PUJAN PATEL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, as regards, the suggestion given by the hon. Member, I would like to submit that it is very necessary to produce good quality seeds in the country and supply it to the farmers so that they are able to increase the production of oil-seeds and its shortage is removed. It will also help in improving the economic condition of the farmers. The Government is fully conscious of the matter and have taken steps on war-footing. The Government is also considering to grow oil palm trees in the country so that its production could be increased and our country becomes self-sufficient in the matter. It is not so that the Government is adopting any lackadaisical attitude in this matter. We know that if we have to become self-sufficient, we have to increase the production of all commodities which we import from other countries. Our country will not grow strong if

we continue to depend on foreign countries.

[*English*]

SHRI V.N. GADGIL: Sir, the Minister has talked about many steps being taken. I would like to ask three things. The c.l.f. import price of palm oil is Rs. six and the STC is allowed to sell it at Rs. thirty. Why? NDDB purchase groundnut oil at Rs. twenty, it is allowed to be sold at Rs. thirty. Why? The Gujarat Government has put a ban on export of groundnut to outside States. Why? If you are taking steps, what is your explanation about these three things?

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAM PUJAN PATEL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, with reference to the point raised by hon. Member regarding palmoline, I would like to submit that Mr. Gadgil is a veteran Member of the Parliament so I do not want to say anything about him. The Government have considered this matter earlier also and all of us know that due to some problems some articles have to be sold at higher rates.

[*English*]

SHRI V.N. GADGIL: Sir, I am not talking about trader, I am talking about STC...(*Interruptions*)

SHRISANTOSH MOHAN DEV: Sir, the Commerce Minister can reply... (*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

MR. SPEAKER: Santosh Mohan Devji, please listen to me first.

SHRI RAM PUJAN PATEL: I am telling the same thing...(*Interruptions*)..Mr. Speaker, Sir, imported palmoline oil is sold to us by the S.T.C. at the rate of Rs. 13,150 per tonne. Then it is refined by us and sold at about Rs. 19/- a Kg. As regards the allegation that the N.D.D.B. is purchasing palmoline at a price of Rs. 20 a Kg. and selling it at a price of Rs.

30/- a Kg., I would like to submit that if any irregularity is detected in it, we will certainly take action. The Government have set up this Institution to make proper arrangement of marketing and not to harass the public and indulge in profiteering. We will see to it and appropriate action will be taken in the matter in the public interest. I would like to appreciate the suggestion made by Shri V.N. Gadgil...(*interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Next Question, Shri R.L.P. Verma...

(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I know, but I am also helpless. Shri R.L.P. Verma.

Industries Classified as Food Processing Industries

822. SHRI R.L.P. VERMA: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the industries classified as food processing industries;

(b) the details of the scheme formulated to set up such industries in rural areas and to educate the farmers in this regard; and

(c) whether Government are likely to set up such industries in each block as models with a view to check the migration of labourers from villages to cities?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES AND MINISTER OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) to (c). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

The Food Processing Industries are indicated as item no. 27 of the 1st Schedule to the Industries (Development and Regulation) Act 1951. These are;

27 (1) — Canned fruit & fruit products.