

श्री भोगेन्द्र झा : मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि ड्यूटी कम करने से धोती सस्ता होगा या नहीं ? मिल-प्रोवर्स तो इसमें गेन करेंगे लेकिन कंज्यूमर्स को भी कुछ लाभ होगा या नहीं ?

PROF. D. P. CHATTOPADHYAYA: The excise duty we are formally abolishing today was actually abolished long before. The price at which it is now available is reflective of the abolition of excise duty. But the price of cloth does not depend only on excise duty. It depends upon price of cotton, conversion costs, fuel costs, marketing costs, distribution costs, etc.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That the Bill to repeal the Dhoties (Additional Excise Duty) Act, 1953, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We take up clause by clause consideration of the Bill. There are no amendments. The question is:

"That Clause 2, Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Title stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clause 2, Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Title were added to the Bill.

PROF. D. P. CHATTOPADHYAYA: I beg to move:

"That the Bill be passed."

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That the Bill be passed."

The motion was adopted.

17.49 hrs.

RE. BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

THE MINISTER OF WORKS AND HOUSING AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI K. RAGHU RAMAIAH: Sir, I want to make a submission. The Essential Commodities Bill may be taken up now, but it will not be put down as the first item tomorrow. There is a Bill-Labour Provident Fund Laws (Amendment) Bill—which has to be passed by this House and then it has to go to Rajya Sabha. We want to give priority to the Bills which have to go to Rajya Sabha. Therefore, tomorrow the Labour Provident Fund Laws (Amendment) Bill will be put down first and after it is passed, we will resume discussion on the Essential Commodities Bill. This is the slight re-adjustment which I am requesting the House to make.

MR CHAIRMAN: He is praying for the leave of the House to give priority to the Labour Provident Fund Laws (Amendment) Bill. It will be done.

17.50 hrs.

ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL—Contd.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, we take up further consideration of the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill.

SHRI BHOGENDRA JHA (Jainagar): Sir, we were expecting that this Bill which is before us and which has been passed by Rajya Sabha, would deal with some of the vital issues that are agitating the minds of the people and their living conditions also. But, unfortunately, it does not do so. The reality is that in the original Act of 1955, we have about 13 categories of essential commodities including cattle fodder, coal, automobile parts, cotton, wool, textiles, raw cotton, raw jute, drugs,

[Shri Bhogendra Jha]

foodgrains, iron-ore petroleum and petroleum products, sugar and sugar cane, but this Bill touches only a few things. Here, the vital aspects are not even touched upon. There is no Statement of Objects and Reasons appended with the Bill so that we can grasp the meaning of this. As far as this Bill is concerned it deals with some formalities and technical matters only.

When we touch upon this subject we know that there are three aspects which are important—production, distribution and price. With regard to production the whole country knows that there has been a bumper crop of foodgrains and we are patting ourselves on the back for that. Besides that there have been huge imports. With regard to groundnut also, the Minister Shri George has been declaring that there has been a bumper crop of 70 lakh tonnes and it comes to about 30 per cent more than the last year's production. Here we have just now heard that the National Textile Corporation is playing its part in stepping up production and making the sick and deserted units viable ones. In such a situation when there is production on such a huge scale what is the factor that is hindering the proper distribution and checking the price rise in our country?

With regard to production we have heard the Industries Minister who has suggested something to watch on the industrial production. Here when we deal with industrial production Shri Pai has enumerated certain things. He has appointed a panel which will be headed by Shri S M Ghosh, Secretary to the Department. This Panel will deal with comparison of production data and production projects, deciphering and identifying trends of significance, organising pre-emptive action either in the sphere of infrastructure or input or marketing in order to sustain upward trend in production, advising the Government in time in case of felt need for any policy input and organising such coordination as will be

necessary from the stage of raw material to marketing in order to ensure steady availability of material and steady outflow of the end product.

So, this is where the production policy of the government ends at present. I would like to ask, in view of the fact that the production in the public sector is growing during the Emergency—even the NTC with six mills, most of them dead mills, is growing as to what the role of the private sector is—even in the matter of textiles. We have been hearing that the private sector is resorting to lockouts and even retrenchment. Is the Government of India aware of the fact that the monopolists in our country are resorting to a policy of increasing profits by raising prices, after reducing production? So their policy is antinational. They reduce production and increase profit by raising the prices. It seems that the Government does not take into cognisance even the existence of this aspect of the policy pursued by the industrialists of the country. I am talking of big industrialists.

In regard to production, we fear that we may again be in a mess. We have not been able to control lockouts etc. And in regard to the production of groundnuts, cotton and jute, there is a glut. The jute mills are groaning and crying that their products have not been taken up. In such a situation this would hamper production next year. When the real producers are not getting impetus—whether they produce foodgrains, edible oils, jute, cane, cotton or oilseeds—the danger is that they will not get adequate encouragement and the production may not go on steadily, increasing as it did this year. As such one would expect that the Government would consider the fact that the jute mills are not doing justice to jute production, its growers or even to its marketing. They are depending entirely upon the Government. They are not reducing the price of jute goods. When the price of jute has gone down naturally we expect that

the prices of jute goods will be less. But they are not cheaper. There is a crisis in the jute market; but the prices of finished goods are where they were. They are also slightly costlier, in some respects. In such a situation, the production-policy of the private sector is not helping the cause of the industry itself, much less to talk of that of the producers or of consumers. And the same thing applies to sugar mills and to cotton mills in private hands. One would feel that the time has come when the Government should take up courage to nationalize at least jute, cotton and sugar mills, in order to be in a stronger position and to have a strong hand over production and to have a steady increase in production, in order to have proper distribution and reasonable prices.

Then comes the question of distribution. With regard to this, our government feels very helpless. I am quoting from "Business Standard". I am quoting the Minister, Mr. George himself. The Minister has indicated at Bombay:

"that the traders were reconciled to the Emergency and were waiting on their wings to exploit the situation when the opportunity arose. The opportunity was the delay in onset of the monsoon, by three weeks which led them to hoarding and black-marketing."

He is saying, in a helpless manner, that some delay in the onset of the monsoon allowed them to resort to hoarding and black marketing.

18.00 hrs.

So, they are committing these crimes at a time when there is a national emergency, when the Government has more than adequate powers to control them. Yet, the Minister is groaning and complaining about it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He may continue his speech the next day. We will now take up the Half-an-Hour Discussion.

18.01 hrs.

HALF-AN-HOUR DISCUSSION

PAYMENT OF FIRST INSTALMENT OF IM- FOUNDED D. A.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Alipore): Mr. Chairman, this Half-an-Hour Discussion raised by me concerns a matter which is of vital importance to many millions of salary earners and wage earners in this country. The Compulsory Deposit Scheme was introduced by the Government in the name of fighting inflation. Now it is regrettable to find at the end of two years, or rather we are being told, that large amounts, so far unspecified—I do not know whether we will be able to get more precise information today—large amounts of these moneys, which were to be deducted by the employers from the emoluments of the employees and to be deposited with certain authorities, we are told that these people have defaulted in many cases, and sums of money running into crores of rupees are not available for repayment, rather refund. Sir, I think you will agree that it is an extremely serious matter.

The hon. Minister is reported to have said in the other House only yesterday in reply to a question that not only the private sector employers—they are, of course, as usual the worst offenders—but there are cases of even public sector undertakings, who are involved in this kind of default. He has specifically referred to the fact that an amount of Rs. 4.1 crores is yet to be remitted by the Coal India Limited and its subsidiaries, particularly the Bharat Coking Coal, towards the additional dearness allowance deposit account.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM): I suppose you have seen the latter part of my speech. A part of it has already been deposited.