

the State Government employees also.

The hon. Member has said that some kind of policy needs to be evolved. Certainly, we are applying our mind. But still we have not been able to come to any definite conclusion. Certainly, we are at it.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Where there is President's rule, DA will be available directly.

[Translation]

Export Cargo Backlog

*783. **SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA:**
SHRI KAMLA PRASAD SINGH:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of Government has been drawn to the newsitem appearing in the 'The Hindustan Times' dated 4 April, 1989 captioned "Exporters forced to cancel 20 cr. orders" wherein it is stated that over 2000 tones of cargo is lying at the cargo complex uncleared:

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the facts in this regard and the extent of loss likely to be suffered by export trade; and

(d) the corrective measures taken in this regard?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P.R. DAS MUNSI): (a) to (d). A statement is given below.

STATEMENT

(a) Yes Sir. However, no cancellation of export orders have been reported to the Government.

(b) to (d). During the peak season from January to June, due to spurt in export activity, there is pressure on the air cargo export infrastructure and capacity. However, concerted measures have been taken with the assistance of the Ministries and agencies including Director General of Civil Aviation, Customs, International Airports Authority of India and the Airlines to arrange for additional flights and clear the cargo backlog. These measures include the adoption of an open skies policy involving grant of permission to scheduled and non-scheduled freighter operators to provide additional flights with inward loading rights, creation of increased holding capacity in the Goods Terminals at Gateway Airports, permitting tourist charter operators to carry export consignments on their return flights from India, extension of the demurrage free period for export consignments in the IAAI warehouse from 6 days to 11 days and extension of garment quota quota expire date from 17th to 30th April, 1989 etc.

SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA: My Question is that the export orders of worth Rs. 20 crores had been cancelled due to non-lifting of air cargo at Delhi Airport Cargo Complex. The fact is that this is not only for the first time that the order has been cancelled but this has resulted in continued cancellation of export orders. Not only the orders of worth Rs. 20 crores have been cancelled but the cargo of worth Rs. 30 crores is lying in the godowns of private exporters and agents for shipment. It is a very serious situation. The whole country is striving for more and more export earnings. But on the other hand, orders are being cancelled and we fail to have an arrangement for shipment. In the reply, the hon. Minister has stated that no cancellation of export orders have been reported. I stick to my view-point that they were cancelled. The Minister should clarify it and he should not try to put the reply to our side that they were not cancelled.

SHRI P.R. DAS MUNSI: Officially, no reports either by the exporters or by the Export promotion Council called the Apparel

Export Promotion Council had been reported to the Ministry that due to non-availability of cargo, orders had been cancelled. However, we do share the concern of the hon. Member that there is a problem. And this problem, in one way, is being tackled by the Ministry of Civil aviation with the help of the Customs and our Department. If any specific exporter or any specific consignment which is in the knowledge of the hon. Member, is reported to us, we assure him that we will take it up very seriously. But in general, I would like to explain the position that the fact remains that the air cargo operation for export in the country is 35 per cent of the total operation of which Bombay and Delhi Airports contribute mainly. Delhi being the Gateway, from the end of February, that is, from March to June, which is the peak period of export, these kind of backlog do concentrate in the airports and we do handle it from time to time with the concerned agencies. But we are now thinking very seriously, apart from the cargo that is within our hands, whether we can think of a long term strategy for this. Our Ministry is very actively considering this matter and it will be taken up very shortly. From time to time, as a short-term measure we are monitoring it. And because of the daily storing facilities there and because of the backlog there, with the assistance of the International Airports Authority of India, the demurrage charge which was to be counted after six days has been extended to 11 days and the quota of expire period which was supposed to expire on 17th April for readymade garments has been extended to 30th April. These are the measures which we have taken. You will appreciate that we are not keeping silent and we are in touch with them because they are contributing for the country. We are trying to sort out the problem as much as possible.

SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA: The International Airports Authority of India is sending heavy bills of worth lakhs of rupees to the airlines because of the failure to air lift the cargo by the airlines. Now, I am thankful to the hon. Minister that in his reply the hon. Minister—after putting the question by me has extended the period from six days

to 11 days. But according to the latest position, this extension is not helpful. The situation is that there is complete, chaos, confusion and uncertainty prevailing.

I would like to know whether the Minister will consider further extending the period from six days to eleven days—at least two weeks—for airlifting so that the Airlines do not get heavy bills from the International Airports Authority.

SHRI P.R. DAS MUNSI: I would like to inform the Hon. Member first that it is not a fact that no improvement has been made and we have not taken care of the situation. The fact remains that whereas from January to April 1987 the capacity of charge operation in extra load was only to the tune of 4709 tonnes, we have been able to create extra capacity from January to April 1988 to the tune of 9308 tonnes. This year it is more than that. The Hon. Member will appreciate that we have increased the extra capacity by about 100% by this time.

In so far as the flight operations are concerned, apart from the regular cargo operations, we have cleared extra special flights. The growth rate actually is; in 1986—143; in 1987—159 thereby 11% growth; in 1988—2251 extra flights thereby 58% growth; and during January-March 1989—231 ad-hoc charters we have cleared thereby adding some more. However, the problem of providing more exemption cannot be solved by the Ministry of Commerce. We are prepared to take it up once again with the Airports authority from time to time on the basis of the wishes of the concerned parties.

I would like to again assure the Hon. Member that we keep regular track of the exporters' problems and we do take it up on daily monitoring basis. If some specific seriousness is there of a specific party, the Hon. Member can refer the matter specifically to us. We shall certainly look into it.

[Translation]

SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL: Mr.

Speaker, Sir, it is not for the first time that Cargo are lying uncleared. Last year also it had happened and earlier to that also this thing had happened. Today commendable steps are being taken to boost exports. However, from January to March it often so happens that cargo lies uncleared and the exporters bear the consequences. Due to this they do not get bank loan and they are not able to get the next cargo ready. For this, their next L.C. is not cleared and the L.C. which has since expired cannot be renewed. In this way they have to face lots of difficulties. I would like to know as to what steps have been taken keeping in view the past experience and even then if any difficulty was experienced what were the reasons therefor?

SHRI P.R. DAS MUNSI: So far as the question of cargo export is concerned, it is a fact that our export has gone up. By and large export has been going up by 100 per cent every year. But the difficulty is that the exports consist mostly of perishable goods and finished goods like leather goods. There are mandatory freight orders for this under which these goods are transported on low freight charges. As such the cargo operators who undertake commercial operation do not want that goods should be transported on so low freight charges. Where the freight charges are high and the Government has a share in the exports, share of the cargo operators is less than 50 per cent. It is a problem. The second problem is that we operate 20 per cent cargo by Air India and the remaining cargo is operated by non-scheduled and scheduled chartered flights. Keeping in view the increasing exports we are sorting out the short term problems by chartering the freights. We are preparing a comprehensive Civil Aviation Plan in Eighth Five Year Plan and we are formulating it keeping in view the future requirements. We try to ensure that there are concrete programmes in the Ministry of Commerce for this purpose so that there are opportunities to sort out their difficulties on short term basis. Steps are being taken to see that cargo operation in the country is boosted further keeping in view the long term needs also. In the context of

tourism also we are thinking of plans to see that the tourist carry the cargo with them. I agree with the hon. Member that if we do not make arrangements for cargo while boosting exports it will cause loss and the export will come to a stand still. The Government is taking action to take suitable measures in this regard.

SHRI V. TULSIRAM: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, a number of items that the exporters send consist of raw materials. If these goods are not sent they suffer losses to the tune of lakhs and crores of rupees. As such, are you taking any measures to see that these goods are sent specially through all the airports at the earliest? We have come to know from the exporters that a lot of irregularities take place there. There is favouritism. They send goods of some persons and delay others goods. Please let us know if there is anything irregular in it. I do not want to make a comparative assessment, but I want to know if you had received any such complaints? If so, did you hold any enquiry into it and are you going to do the same now. Are you thinking of any measures for the goods being exported through Hyderabad?

SHRI P.R. DAS MUNSI: I have already said in my reply that the quantity of unfinished goods is very low. We want that they should carry more and more unfinished goods. We have not received any specific complaints about consignments. If any such complaint is received by us we will definitely take action. So far as raw material is concerned, I would like to say that its quantity of export is not high. Apart from our cargo complex, the cargo complexes belonging to other countries also give preference to other items and they do not prefer to carry raw materials. They give priority to textile good because they get large quantity of goods in it. We have constituted an Agricultural Export Authority for raw material. We are consulting them. Particular attention is being paid to ensure that cargo and warehouse facilities are available near the airports so that the exporters get maximum facilities.