

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now, I put clause 2 to the vote of the House is. The question is :

"That clause 2 stand part of the Bill"

*The motion was adopted.*

*Clause 2 was added to the Bill.*

Clause 1—(Short title)

SHRI GOVINDA MENON : I move :

Page 1, line 4,—

*for "1968" substitute "1969"(2)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : I put Government Amendment No. 2 to the vote of the House.

The question is :

Page 1, line 4,—

*for "1968" substitute "1969"(2)*

*The motion was adopted.*

MR. CHAIRMAN : The question is :

"That clause 1, as amended, stand part of the Bill"

*The motion was adopted.*

*Clause 1, as amended, was added to the Bill.*

Enacting Formula

SHRI GOVINDA MENON : I move :

Page 1, line 1,—

*for "Nineteenth" substitute "Twentieth"(1)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : I now put Government Amendment No. 1 to the vote of the House.

The question is :

Page 1, line 1,—

*for "Nineteenth" substitute "Twentieth"(1)*

*The motion was adopted.*

MR. CHAIRMAN : I now put Enacting Formula, as amended, to the vote of the House. The question :

"That the Enacting Formula, as amended, stand part of the Bill"

*The motion was adopted.*

*The Enacting Formula, as amended, was added to the Bill.*

*The Title was added to Bill.*

SHRI GOVINDA MENON : I move :

"That the Bill, as amended, be passed"

MR. CHAIRMAN : The question is :

"That the Bill, as amended, be passed"

*The motion was adopted.*

16.39 hrs.

TEA (AMENDMENT) BILL

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE (SHRI CHOWDHARY RAM SEWAK) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I beg to move\* :

"That the Bill further to amend the Tea Act, 1953, be taken into consideration".

Sir, before the hon. Members are given an opportunity to express their views on the Bill, I would like to say a few words. The tea industry in India is one of the best organised industries in the whole world. The Tea Act, 1953, which came into force on 1st April, 1954 seeks to provide for the control by the Union Government of the tea industry and for that purpose to establish a Tea Board. Section 10 of the Act places on the Tea Board the responsibility for taking measures for the development of the tea industry. In the discharge of its responsibilities, under this section, the Tea Board has taken up schemes like loans for tea extensions or replantations schemes and

\*Moved with the recommendations of the President.

[Shri Chaudhary Ram Sewak]

supply of tea machinery on hire-purchase schemes. The Tea Board advances long-term loans to the tea industry for undertaking extensions, tea plantations or replantations. These schemes are financed by loans advanced by the Union Government to the Tea Board. On a review by the Government of the requirements of the Tea Industry for long term development, Government have decided to assist this industry with a subsidy for replantation of the old over-aged tea bushes with a view to ensuring a desirable level of replantation. The Tea Act in its present form makes no provision for Tea Board to receive either grants-in-aid or loans that are being advanced to it by the Central Government. It is, therefore, considered necessary to amend the Tea Act, 1953 to enable the Tea Board to receive grants-in-aid or loans from the Central Government.

Clause 2 of the Bill provides for grants or loans to be made by the Central Government to the Tea Board since the cess collected under Sec. 25 of the 1953 Act is not sufficient to meet the costs of the developmental schemes of the tea industry as already mentioned. These grants or loans are intended to ensure that the activities of the Tea Board do not receive a set back.

It is also proposed to avail of this opportunity to substitute Sub-Section (3) of Sec. 49 of the Act relating to rules framed to be placed before each House of Parliament, in order to bring it into conformity with the present pattern.

With these words I beg to move that the Bill further to amend the Tea Act 1953 be taken into consideration.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Motion moved :

"That the Bill further to amend the Tea Act, 1953, be taken into Consideration."

Now there are some amendments

Mr. Jha

SHRI SHIVA CHANDRA JHA  
(Madhubani) : Sir, I beg to move :

"That the Bill be circulated for the purpose of eliciting opinion thereon by the 31st January 1970." (1)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Jyotirmoy Basu.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU (Diamond Harbar) : Unfortunately, as I am not well, I cannot deal with this Bill in detail. However, I would just like to make some random comments and the Government may make a note of them.

With regard to this idea of giving loans and subsidies, I suggest that the Government should make a preferential treatment. Take, for example, the sterling companies--100 per cent sterling companies. Why do you want to advance loans to these people at a low interest of 2% or 4% or 6% and allow them to reap a harvest of 25% repatriable, in foreign currency? We are not running 'Dharmshala' here for these old colonialists. Why do you want to give the same treatment to all? Then come the British-controlled rupee companies. There also the capital structure, and the control and the management are in British hands. Without making a thorough scrutiny, I will suggest that if I were in your place, I would not give them these generous and this generous treatment. You will have to take care of smaller 100% Indian rupee companies---hundred per cent Indian in management, finance and control. You should give special treatment to these smaller Indian companies and borderline cases who are struggling all the time for survival. There you will have to be really generous and give them all the assistance that you can.

I would like to know from the Minister as to how much money these British sterling companies have ploughed back from their earnings in this country and may I know if they are bringing back any fresh foreign exchange out of their general funds which they might have been holding under the garb of something in London to the existing companies that are operating in this country? How do you propose to operate these loans and subsidies? I have a few things to say here. I have an allegation. A sum of Rs. 6 crores was sanctioned by the Government for replantation subsidy at the rate of 2 per cent of the tea acreage. But the subsidies are paid only to the interested group of planters who have enough source to take loan under the Plantation Finance Scheme,

more than the prescribed limit without any inspection of the areas under the plantation and the scrutiny of documents. This is a very serious matter. What is the machinery which is there to look into all these things? Money is being lent to these people at very low subsidised rates. How do you make sure that the money is going to be utilised properly for the purpose that they have put forward when applying for the loans? You have no such machinery, as I am told.

The Board has no machinery to inspect that the machineries purchased by the gardens under the scheme have been installed by the gardens and are being utilised properly for the production and development of the industry.

Then again, the Tea Board has no machinery to control the quality of tea that is being exported by the traders, especially when being purchased by the foreign countries. Also, I wish to point out that the Tea Board is not carrying out any work entrusted to it by the Tea Waste Control Order. They are practising nepotism in the true sense of the word.

The Tea Board have recently approved the write-off of an amount of Rs. 1,80,000/- advanced to Avongrove Tea Estate of Moolji Sicka and Company,—a thug of the first order—as a loan under the Plantation Finance Scheme. The whole affair appears to be fishy. How was it that they were given a loan at all? Their credit-worthiness in the market is nil. How this write-off has been granted is something which I am unable to understand.

Then, Sir, the treatment meted out to the workers of the Tea Plantation is not at all satisfactory. They are not at all happy. They work in freezing cold temperature; they face the hot-scorching sun and they live under fear of attack by the wild animals. Therefore, they should be given proper treatment. The Plantation Enquiry Commission was set up in 1956 and they have given a report. They had made some substantial and useful recommendations. But

the Government have yielded to the pressures of the big business and monopolists and they have put the Plantation Enquiry Commission Report in cold storage. The workers who work under most severe conditions are not being properly treated. The Government have remained very callous and very negligent about the tea plantation workers.

The tea industry is a labour-intensive industry. I would like to mention here about the recommendation made by the late Dr. Sivaswamy, the Head of the Economics Department of the Delhi University. He said that the tea industry is the most ideal place for organising producers' cooperatives as well as cooperatives for supply of machinery and cooperatives for marketing and production. But so far, the Tea Board, which has been costing as a white elephant to the people of this country, has not done anything at all in this direction. You will be surprised to know that the workers received one of the lowest wages in the whole world are in the tea industry. This is the position although this a labour-intensive industry, earning second highest dividend in this country. The first highest had been, you will be interested to know, the match-box industry which is completely in the monopoly of foreign producers, mainly Swedish.

The Tea Board has been able to do very little in this connection. Although the workers have given high dividends to the country, I have repeated times without number in this House that we are selling the produce for a fraction of its real value. For a pound of tea which is bought by a housewife in any part of the world at Rs. 20, we beat our drum if we can bring home Rs. 2.75. That is the performance of this wonderful Tea Board and the wonderful Government.

The Tea Board has lavish guest houses, for class one of course. If a class three or class four man comes to Delhi, he has to sleep on the pavement or go to some relation of his where he can live free. Lavish guest houses, distribution of tea packets for VIPs—on that part of the functioning, there is no lapse, they are quite up-to-date and efficient.

[Shri Jyotirmoy Basu]

At one time, the Tea Board had a chairman who was a civil servant. I do not wish to beat my own drum. I had written questions for a friend of mine in Parliament and I had framed replies to the same one, for the civil servant of course, 10—15 years ago. The next man, I was told, was a chartered accountant and the Secretary had been a textile engineer. That is the management of the Tea Board that we have seen.

The Calcutta Tea Board is dominated by Brooke-Bond's. The world tea business is dominated by them and the Calcutta Tea Board is no exception in that set-up. Forty-two per cent of the total world marketing, packing and blending business is in the hands of Brooke-Bond's. I am told by a friend of mine there that in the meetings of the Calcutta Tea Board, what one Sinclair of Brooke Bond say is the law. The Chairman or others in the Board have neither the courage nor the guts to say 'no' to him.

Once I mentioned to a friend of mine who was a Chairman, 'Why don't you take up this packaging business?' He replied, 'Jyotirmoy, the walls have ears. I will lose my job'. This shows how powerful these Britishers are in the management of tea business in this country.

I come to another aspect of this business, although I do not have much to say in support of the present set-up of marketing tea, namely, through auctions, through brokers. In Calcutta, even today, of the brokering houses, four are British-controlled and two Indian-controlled, owned and managed. Out of the total business, 42.11 per cent is controlled by J. Thomas & Co. The name itself will tell you who they are. The next one has 21.20 per cent, the next 16.46 per cent and the fourth one 13.56 per cent. Then two M/s. Indians they get 2.69 per cent and 3.90 per cent. After 22 years of Congress rule, this is what they have brought for Indian tea business, in the present set-up of tea marketing through brokers. According to Dr. Sivaswamy's report, they are the king-pins in the marketing structure. They manipulate, they make sure that you get less money and remain happy and the others outside buy your tea cheaply and make money.

Instead of doing all this basically unproductive work, the Tea Board should vigorously concentrate on research into (a) quality improvement, (b) consumers' expectations in the international market and (3) possibilities of artificially flavouring and thickening the liquor. Because of deficiencies in these aspects, our tea is slowly walking out of the market. A day will come when you will not be able to sell your tea. There is need for reorientation of the blending formula. There is no proper research on market expansion or negotiations with foreign Governments for reduction in import duties. Import duties in certain countries with which we have a very bad trade balance are imposing very heavy duties. As a result, the tea drinking habit is not expanding. They have not made any research on the taste of the consumer, whether a steel worker or film actress, with reference to climatic conditions, temperamental needs, economic conditions and purchasing power. They have only looked after themselves. The Tea Board should be truly a tea-producing marketing, research and expansion Board. The Tea Board must go the whole hog in the matter of sale of package tea to the ultimate consumer and make sure that the profits are repatriated to this country.

The Tea Board employees are in an awful mess. You have seen the chaos in Parliament House. The poor fellows have to be on their legs for a long time. There is a list of pending demands of employees all over the country. You should look into the matter and try to do what you can for them.

The Tea Board is a governmental institution and is facing charges from the Provident Fund Commissioner of Delhi for not doing the right thing with regard to provident fund dues of Tea Board workers. It is a disgrace and it should be looked into.

SHRI J. N. HAZARIKA (Dibrugarh) : I rise to support the Bill because it enables the Government to grant loans to the Tea Board and the Tea Board on its part to advance subsidies and loans to the tea plantations. I do not agree with Mr. Basu who preceded me that the tea industry is not in need of any help. The tea industry at present is really passing through some

sort of crisis. Last year there was a lot of talk about the tea crisis and the tea industry approached the Government for necessary help. Government was pleased to give certain tax concessions as a result of which this year the tea industry is somehow surviving, but they have not fully survived as yet. They are still afraid of being exterminated on account of various difficulties.

Under this scheme, the Government are going to give loans for new plantation and re-plantations and also subsidies to those who want to extent their plantations. They are also going to give subsidies, loans, etc., on the hire purchase scheme for machinery for manufacturing tea. Therefore, this is a Bill which enables the Government to help the industry. But I cannot agree with the Government that the tea industry is really not in difficulty, because according to them, labour is not paid much. Actually, the wage rate per worker in 1969 is Rs. 2.07 as against Rs. 1.69 in 1960. The result is that there has been an increase of 22.5 per cent in the wage bill.

17 hrs.

[SHRI VASUDEVAN NAIR *in the Chair*]

While appreciating this, I do not know what will be future. Because of the labour strike for fifteen days in West Bengal probably more than 12 million kg. of tea had been lost which means a loss of income to the extent of Rs. 6 crores to the industry as a whole. In the new deal, the industry will have to pay Rs. 2.5 crores in respect of West Bengal tea and over Rs. 6 crores per annum for Assam tea. If we take this into account we have to concede that the average labour cost is increasing. Productivity per worker has also increased from 363 in 1960 to 446 kgs. in 1964 but since 1964 there has been some decline. Productivity rose by 22 per cent till 1964 and then there has been a fall in productivity per worker. Taxation has increased by 12.3 per cent in ten years time. In 1960 the excise duty was 16 paise per kg. and it rose to 47 paise per kg. in 1969—three times. Export duty

came down from 53 paise in 1960 to 48 paise kg—only 5 paise less. Tea cess was 4.40 paise per kg. in 1960 and it is 4 paise per kg. at present. West Bengal entry tax continues to remain 13.78 paise per kg. Assam road tax was 15 paise in 1960 and it has come down to 2 paise now. Thus the total burden on tea has risen from 102.18 paise in 1960 to 114.78 paise per kg. in 1969. Tax also has increased. There is no alternative for the tea manufacturers but to demand further decrease in tax. Tea industry depends upon weather conditions and the timely availability of fertilisers and other things for its success rather than labour. We have to see its profitability. The Reserve Bank concluded after a recent survey that the profitability of the tea industry was 5.2 per cent which is the lowest for any industry in the country. On the basis of profitability we have to decide whether the tea industry deserves any sympathetic consideration by way of tax concession. Profitability depends upon the position of the market. It has to be marketed well. My friend Basu said a lot of things. Last year there was a sharp fall in tea prices in the United Kingdom and the tea industry faced a crisis. This year it has not revived to the extent it should have. I was told that the tea which was stocked in the United Kingdom was sold and the tea prices became very low, or the lowest. And then, North Indian tea was somewhat of an inferior quality, and that is why prices fell down in the United Kingdom. Recently, this year, the prices have gone up to some extent. We are told that the price had gone up by at least 6.88. That is so not because of the propaganda or the business or the work of the Tea Board having been good, but because the tea produced in the country was less. Moreover, most of the tea which was meant for the United Kingdom was diverted to the domestic markets. Much of the tea meant for the London exchange was diverted to Calcutta and the South Indian tea was also diverted to Cochin. Therefore, the prices comparatively have gone up, and there was less stock in the United Kingdom. It is not because that Government have done something good for the industry or that they have done something to remove the marketing difficulties. It is not because that they have succeeded in propagating tea among the European consumers.

[Shri J. N. Hazarika]

Besides, there was a loss of 12 million kg. of North Bengal tea and that is one of the reasons why there was less tea in the country, and therefore the prices have gone up a little in the United Kingdom. In spite of all these facts, in Calcutta the sale price has not gone up this year also, although in respect of one kind of leaf tea, there is somewhat a higher price than what was obtaining last year. But taking both leaf tea and dust tea together, the price has become the same this year as it was last year. Therefore, even on the domestic market, the price of tea has not gone up. Thus, tea industry remains in the same position now as it was last year.

All the leading organisations in the country have come forward and said that the excise duty should be abolished totally and that the export duty should not be levied at all. I however do not agree with what they have asked. But I find some force in what they have asked and they have some reasons to ask for that. Therefore, I suggest that the excise duty need not be abolished but it should be reduced to some extent. Also, the export duty should be reduced. I say that from the Government's own figures, we have less of foreign exchange earned in the country. We earn foreign exchange by payment to various export industries, and we give subsidy. It is sometimes 25 per cent; sometimes it is 15 per cent and sometimes it is 10 per cent. We pay this percentage on the basis of the export, and that is the price for earning foreign exchange. The industry does not want that you should pay something to it, extra, for earning foreign exchange. What the industry wants is that there should be some reduction so that they may earn more foreign exchange. They do not want any subsidy as in the case of engineering goods or textiles or such other things. They say that the taxes should be reduced to a certain extent so that they can send some more tea to the foreign countries and earn foreign exchange and also, at the same time, the industry may grow in such a manner that it can work on commercial lines. Having said this, I would request the Government to give some thought to this matter.

My comments will not be finished if

I do not say a word about labour. The Plantation Labour Act provides for housing and that it should be provided as early as possible. I fully agree that the Government have provided Rs. 10 crores in the present Plan; that means Rs. 2 crores every year. I think Government will give 37.5 per cent as subsidy. 12.5 per cent is to be found by the planters themselves, 50 per cent will be given as loan by the Government of India. I think it is a very happy arrangement, but in spite of this, I do not know why certain planters are not implementing the housing scheme as they should under the Plantation Labour Act. I would request the Government to see that the construction of houses for plantation labour goes on according to the schedule.

SHRI BEDABRATA BARUA (Kaliabor) : Sir, tea industry has certain features peculiar to the present conditions in India. It is truly an export industry, as no other industry in India can be called an export industry. I mean what I say when I make this statement. For example, textile industry imports Rs. 150 to 200 crores worth of raw cotton and exports that much worth of goods. It is a misnomer to call it an export industry. It is one aspect of tea industry that it has been a truly export industry. It has earned foreign exchange to the extent of Rs. 115 or 120 crores. It has got capacity to compete in International market not needing any protection. Therefore, it does not need any lobby at all. There have been lobbies in big countries also where industries have developed. But this industry does not maintain or seek a lobby as the jute or cotton industry have here or elsewhere, because the people in the tea industry have specialised in exports and they are trying their best.

This does not mean that I would give a clean certificate to the industry. It has got some very disquieting features. For example, the predominance and the stranglehold of foreign interests over this industry is a thing to which we have been constantly drawing the attention of the House. Their capacity to scuttle any move to expand the industry in the way we want or to market it profitably in the world in the way we would like to is there. When I say profitably, I do not mean it in relation to the backwardness of our

country, but in relation to the prices that the world is paying for tea which we produce or which Ceylon or any other country which has the capacity to produce tea, produces. It has been discussed enough. As Mr. Basu said, we are really supplying the raw material in tea. Whether it is Brooke Bonds or Liptons, they purchase the tea from us and sell it in the world at a price which is a few hundred per cent more. Whatever we may say about our independence, we have been till now completely powerless to do anything in this regard to reverse the situation or to put the packeting in the hands of Indians. We have not even been able to make these foreign interests packet their tea in India. We must try to do something about it to stop it. At least if the packeting is done in India, we can get some more foreign exchange. But it is done in England. Because Great Britain happens to be bulk purchaser of our tea, we allow them to purchase it at their own prices.

It is something that we should very much resent.

Then, the auctions in Calcutta are dominated by foreign interests. Unfortunately, where we could have done something, as in the case of the constitution of the Tea Board, we have yielded to the same pressure that functions in the tea market on the plea that we do not want to disrupt the tea industry needlessly, which means accepting the domination of foreign interests as it is. Even when we constituted the Tea Board, we placed 7 or 8 Europeans, who control the Tea Board and who are members of the Tea Board; the rest of them, who are not Europeans, do have the temper of Europeans. Somehow, the tea industry does have that temper from the very beginning. It is more in Assam than elsewhere and to some extent in Darjeeling. This temper without the capacity to be equal to the British traders who control them, looks ridiculous.

As to the condition of tea gardens, I am very happy that the Government have taken some measure to help the tea industry in extension and replantation of their gardens. It is peculiar, however, that while they would get money for replantation they will not get it for extension though both are the same thing. A tea garden does have a

number of acres of land, 50, 100, 200 or 500 acres of land, and instead of replanting they can as well uproot the bushes after two years and yet get some leaves for these two years and get an extension of some bushes there. That would be even advantageous for them because when they uproot the bush, they would have to keep the land fallow for two years; otherwise, the land may become infective. It will not be proper to uproot the bushes and immediately start planting trees from the nursery. So, I think, money should not only be given for replantation purposes but also for extension purposes; but the intentions are good that subsidy is given.

About loan, I do not think the Tea Board is giving any loan at all. The Assam Finance Corporation, which was supposed to develop industrial enterprises in Assam, is practically doing the bulk of the financing of the tea estates in Assam for extension, replantation, machinery, purchasing factories, this and that. I think, the tea industry in Assam, as elsewhere, suffers from the same disease. They do not keep the money when they do make profit. There are tea gardens that mint money; they make a lot of profit. When they get the money, they spend it and then they demand that the Government should help them in all cases. But then there are tea gardens also which are struggling. The problems of small gardens with 100 or 200 acres of land have never been systematically thought of. I think, it will be better if we had factories installed even in a garden of 100 acres because they expect to grow in 20 years. But they remain when they are for another 20 years even if you have the money to replant tea. Then the bushes grow old. Once the bushes grow old, there is less plucking meaning less profit and less quality. The result is that they get caught up in a vicious circle and cannot get out of it and whatever loan that they take from Government they are not able to repay. I suggest the Government should consider rephasing of the loans in the case of those gardens which have got the loans, which are trying their best to make some profit but have not been able to make any profit whatsoever and the loans are a sort of a stone round their necks.

As I said, the Tea Board is very mono-

[Shri Padharta Barua]

polist in temper ; it thinks only in terms of the big tea estates. They should also think in other terms. But for that the Tea Board is not competent. As I said, tea has no lobby. Therefore Government itself must take some interest in finding out what are the problems of the small tea estates and these problems must be tackled by Government very carefully. What are the problems of packaging or of the tea industry as such and whether the tea industry would be ruined, the House has not been properly informed. The European interests have not done even replantation as Shri Basu said, They are ploughing back the profit. No one has calculate how much profit they have ploughed back. There is repatriation of the profit. It is not only that but they have taken the capital also out of it. If in a garden of 500 acres, 15 or 20 acres are not normally replanted or extended every year, then that garden is practically being gradually demolished. They might replant it somewhere else, in South Africa or in anywhere else. The money is going out in the shape of profits. It is not only going in the shape of profits but the garden itself is going out of India.

There are a lot of other problems. So far as the giving of loans is concerned, the Government itself has to go into it. Temperamentally, the Tea Board are not interested in doing this type of thing. It has a limited scope. This also has to be laid down and a sort of high-powered body should be formed to go into all the aspects of the tea industry. I am glad that a committee to look into packaging, etc has been appointed. It is good that a parliamentary committee has been appointed and that is looking into it.

That apart, there is the question of excise duty also. That is also from the point of view of small tea gardens. That is against the interests of small tea gardens and small tea producers. Then, whether it is bad tea or good tea, the excise duty charged is the same. On an inferior quality tea which sells at Rs. 3 a kilo, the excise duty charged may be 70 p. and on a good quality tea which is Rs. 100 a kilo, the excise duty is the same, that is, 70 p. So, the whole taxation system is against small gardens and small tea producers. We should think always in terms of producing quality tea.

If we have to produce quality tea, we have to insist that whatever is replanted or extended, only quality tea should be produced. Assam happens to be the most precious foreign exchange earner for India. In Assam, we produce second flush tea which is of a very good quality. It is a type of tea which is required everywhere in the world. So long as Assam produces second flush quality tea, every country, South Africa or any other country, will require that.

Lastly, I would say that it is not a good tendency to produce, in the name of quantity, bad quality tea. Some of the tea gardens do that. They do all type of things. It should be obligatory on the part of tea gardens, when they do replanting or go in for extensions, to produce only good quality tea. They should not go in for anything else than that.

SHRI JAIPAL SINGH (Khunti) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to speak because the tea industry in north India has been built up by my people from my home area. The hon. Members from Assam have spoken before me. The people of Assam refused to work and, therefore, my people had to go to north Assam and north Bengal to build up the tea industry which is now more than a hundred years old.

Today, we are talking about how this industry can again gain the position it had enjoyed before. It was the biggest foreign exchange earner. Today it is not so. The jute industry has taken the place. My hon. friend Shri Jyotirmoy Basu—I am sorry he is not here—was a tea taster in a British concern. He was the only Indian tea taster and today he is cursing the Britishers just because he has come here and he can curse them with impunity. I am sorry he is not here and so I do not want to say anything more.

I am very intimately associated with the tea industry, not only British but with Indians also. What my hon. friend over there forgets is that most of the tea estates, are now Indian through they may have British names.

These mercantile houses in Calcutta have all along had British names. Who are the people ? They are these fellows



from Rajasthan—horrible fellows. Let us be frank about it. What have the Assamese done for my people? I want to know. There are 30 lakhs of them. What have the Assamese done to them? They themselves agitate 'We want jobs. Get ride of Bengalees. Assam for Assamese only.' That is their argument.

If they want to get rid of my fellows, my people who built the industry.

AN HON MEMBER : It is not an argument.

SHRI JAIPAL SINGH : When we think of tea industry, we must think of Ceylon also, East Africa naturally, North Bengal and Assam and, of course, South India. You cannot isolate any of these. This is in relation to the Tea Board. Now I know too well the members of the Tea Board. Unfortunately, I have to-day to say some rough things about them—something harsh. I think it is about time that the Government economised and abolished the Tea Board. I do not see what function it has. What is the Indian Tea Association doing? I do not know what the Indian Tea Board does. Recently, only last year, I went to a party they gave in Calcutta. They were trying to develop how tea could be made into a cocktail and some thing like that. Just put in something. Of course, I liked it. You know I taste other thing also. (Interruptions) I am very happy. Well, there is some future for tea.

AN HON. MEMBER : It only cocktail.

SHRI JAIPAL SINGH : You do not know the meaning of the word 'cocktail'. The whole point is this. If the hon. Minister's idea is that by this Bill he is going to help the tea industry, let him be sensible. Let him come round to brassstacks. There is the excise duty. Abolish it. Then you will find right now Indian tea will be defeating Ceylon exports. Here we talk a lot about this Indo-Ceylon agreement, this and that. What happens? We lend money to Burma. Burma buys tea from Ceylon. Why? I want to know. Why are my friends, the Britishers, trying to develop tea gardens in Kenya? Why? Because my friends, these people, do not know now to behave. That is why they do that. They have been here for hundreds of years. Why should not they go to

Andemans? That is what is happening. Let us be honest with ourselves. The British are rooted here in the tea industry. If you just go into the antecedents of the proprietors of the British tea gardens, you will realise who they are. Their hearth and home is here. They may be British, but they are Indians—I am telling you. They cannot go anywhere. It is like Tata (Interruptions) being in Bengal. But where can he go? Where can he go—I want to know. Mr. Biren Mukerjee—I can quote examples like that—even through Mr. Jyoti Basu is doing something, where can he go? Let us discover that even the British people and some other people who had been here had developed these areas. (Interruption) The hon. Member has not visited the tea gardens, whereas I have actually lived in the tea gardens in Assam. It is very easy to talk about anything, but we have to be realistic. I would like to oppose this Bill, but considering the general situation, I shall support it.

MR. CHAIRMAN : The Debate will continue tomorrow.

The House will now take up the Half-an-Hour Discussion.

17.32 hrs

#### HALF-AN-HOUR DISCUSSION SETTLEMENT OF EAST PAKISTAN REFUGEES

SHRI SAMAR GUHA (Contai) ; Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am raising a Debate on the twin problems of the doubly betrayed people of East Bengal. Sir, at the time of partition, on the 15th August, 1947, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru gave an assurance to the people of East Bengal when he said :

"They are of us and will remain of us whatever may happen and we shall be sharers in their good and ill-fortune alike."

On the same day, over the All-India Radio, Sardar Vallabhai said to the people of East Bengal :

"Let not our brethren across the border feel that they are neglected and forgotten. Their welfare will claim our vigilance and we shall follow with abiding interest their future in full hope and confidence that sooner than later we shall be united in common allegiance to our country,"