

[Shri C. Subramaniam]

11. The Raj Committee has recommended that everyone should be free to trade in steel. This will hereafter be the position in respect of all de-controlled categories of steel. In the case of categories which continue to be controlled, the existing controlled and registered stockists will function as usual for some time to come. After this transitional period, there will be no distinction between controlled and registered stockists.

12. Hon'ble Members are aware that during the long period of control we have maintained a Steel Equalisation Fund, the principle object of which has been to maintain parity between the prices of imported and indigenous steel by levy of surcharge or payment of subsidy as the case may be. Freight equalisation and a variety of minor consequential transactions have also been put through this Fund. Now that freight equalisation will be entrusted to the Joint Plant Committee and statutory control over price is abolished in the case of the bulk of production, there is no further need to continue the operations of Equalisation Fund. Accruals to the Fund and payments from the Fund resulting from previous transactions will, however, have to continue. Government have decided that as from the 1st March, there shall be no new transactions involving payment either to or from the Equalisation Fund. This means that there will be no longer any distinction between sale prices and retention prices—whether in the case of controlled or uncontrolled categories—and, therefore, no surcharges. Mainly for this reason, the excise duties on various categories of steel have already been suitably revised. Government have also sought powers under the Finance Bill to raise excise duties further should it become necessary to do so because of market prices rising unduly.

13. The Raj Committee has commented on the abuses of the present

system under which barter imports have been allowed to be sold to nominees of the importers' choice. Government have examined this question and are thinking in terms of routing all such imports only through the Mineral and Metal Trading Corporation or through the Joint Plant Committee. Government propose to further examine this matter and take a final decision shortly.

14. Before I conclude, I must express Government's appreciation of the work done by the Raj Committee which has ably analysed the problem and suggested a number of fresh ideas. I am aware that during the change-over from the present to the new system all concerned—producers, stockists, consumers and Government—will have to make a number of adjustments. But I am sure that these will be found well worthwhile and will lead to better utilisation of productive capacity in response to the changing needs of consumers.

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath (Hoshangabad): On a point of clarification I welcome the statement but it is not so short as he promised it to be.

Mr. Speaker: He said that it was rather long.

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath: He said that it was rather short.

Mr. Speaker: I heard it was rather long.

An Hon. Member: May we request that it be circulated?

Mr. Speaker: All right. I will get it circulated.

12.11 hrs.

APPROPRIATION (RAILWAYS)
BILL*, 1964

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Railways (Shri S. V. Ramaswamy): Sir, on behalf of Shri Dasappa, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill to authorise payment

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(Conditions of Service)

Amendment Bill

and appropriation of certain sums from and out of the Consolidated Fund of India for the service of the financial year 1964-65 for the purposes or Railways.

Mr. Speaker: The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill to authorise payment and appropriation of certain sums from and out of the Consolidated Fund of India for the service of the financial year 1964-65 for the purposes of Railways."

The motion was adopted.

Shri S. V. Ramaswamy: I introduce the Bill.

12-11½ hrs.

HIGH COURT JUDGES (CONDITIONS OF SERVICE) AMENDMENT BILL*, 1964

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs (Shri Hajarnavis): Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the High Court Judges (Conditions of Service) Act, 1954.

Mr. Speaker: The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the High Court Judge (Condition of Service) Act, 1954."

The motion was adopted.

Shri Hajarnavis: I introduce the Bill.

12.12 hrs.

MOTION RE: FOOD SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Swaran Singh): Sir I have already placed before the House a statement giving the latest trends about the availability of food and also about the prices. It is not my intention to make any further speech at this stage. I would like to give more time to the Hon. Members and I will make my submission at the end. I beg to move:

"That the Food situation in the country be taken into consideration."

Mr. Speaker: I am told there are some substitute motions as well. I would like to know whether they are being moved.

Shri S. M. Banerjee (Kanpur): I beg to move:

"That for the original motion, the following be substituted, namely:—

This House, having considered the Food Situation in the country, recommends to Government to—

- (a) ban speculation on foodgrains;
- (b) fix minimum price for wheat and all other foodgrain to assure reasonable price to the farmers and build up a buffer stock;
- (c) start State Trading in foodgrains to check hoarding and black-marketing;
- (d) use D.I.R. to punish the hoarders and black marketers;
- (e) take over the rice and flour mills;

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†Introduced with the recommendation of the President.