

the hon. Members that this Act applies to all the consumer goods and services and it covers all public, private, joint and cooperative sector organisations. Under the provision of this Act, there are quasi judicial forums right from the district level up to the Central level. We are trying our best that these institutions are set up as early as possible so that when the complaint comes, whether it relates to the public sector or the private sector, those quasi judicial forums will have every right to take cognizance of all the complaints. So, the moment these commissions come into existence, then action will be taken against all the defaulters.

SHRI THAMPAN THOMAS : Sir, I think the Hon. Minister has not given the clear picture. Sir, when this Bill was discussed and the Act was passed in the House, it was said that there will be two bodies, one is the prosecuting agency and the other is the quasi judicial courts. His question is whether it is implemented or not. The Prosecuting Agency which was to be constituted under the Companies Act and the voluntary organisations which were to be registered, I would like to know how many of them have been registered in India so far and also how many courts, as on today, are functioning since this Act came into force.

Also, I would like to tell my learned friend that the Food Corporation of India supplies sub-standard goods in various parts of the country. What action has been taken in this regard? I would like to have a categorical answer instead of beating about the bush.

SHRI SUKH RAM : Sir, as I said earlier, under this Act redressal machinery have to be constituted at the Central, State and the district level. So far they have not been constituted. We are trying our best and persuading the State governments to constitute these quasi-judicial bodies.

As far as the other protection to the consumer is concerned, there are certain other acts which are punitive in nature. But this is the only Act which is compensatory in nature. So, whenever the com-

plaints come and these forums or Commissions are constituted, then, they will start taking actions against the defaulters whether they are public sector companies or in the private sector.

SHRI CHANDRA PRATAP NARAIN SINGH : The hon. Member and I have asked a specific question whether any action has been taken by the Government? What will he do with the public sector companies of the Central Government?

MR. SPEAKER : Whenever it comes, it will be done.

Newsprint prices

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*109. **SHRIMATI KISHORI SINHA :**
DR. A.K. PATEL :

Will the Minister of **INDUSTRY** be pleased to state :

(a) whether the newsprint prices of public sector newsprint plants have been raised early this year;

(b) if so, the reasons thereof;

(c) the effect of price rise on medium and small newspapers and magazines;

(d) whether the Associations of Newspapers have opposed this price rise; and

(e) whether any studies have been conducted into the cost structure of the newsprint industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) to (c) A Statement is given below.

Statement

(a) and (b) There are five units in the country manufacturing newsprint. Two of them are Central Government Enterprises, two are State Government Enter-

prises and one a Joint Sector Enterprise. All the five units have been permitted on 27.1.1988 to revise their ex-factory price of newsprint on account of the following reasons :—

- (i) Increase in the cost of inputs that have taken place since the last revision allowed in December, 1985.
- (ii) The price that was being charged by indigenous newsprint mills was not sufficient to absorb the escalations in the cost of inputs.
- (iii) Majority of newsprint mills are incurring substantial losses in their operations, in spite of high capacity utilisation.
- (iv) It is essential to maintain steady growth of newsprint production in the wake of increasing demand.

(c) The revision of the price indigenous newsprint will not have any significant impact on the existing small and medium newspapers whose annual entitlement is less than 300 tonnes, as they have the option to get their entire requirement in imported variety.

(d) The Indian Newspaper Society and the Indian Languages Newspapers Association have represented against the revision.

(e) Yes, Sir. The Bureau of Industrial Costs and Prices (BICP) had undertaken a study in 1981 to recommend fair prices for domestically produced newsprint. In March, 1984, a Committee on Newsprint Pricing headed by the Chairman, B.I.C.P. had gone into the impact of the escalations in the cost of inputs for production of newsprint. Again in October, 1985, BICP had examined the impact of the increase in the input prices on indigenous newsprint.

SHRIMATI KISHORI SINHA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, is it a fact that the Government had given an assurance to that Newsprint Advisory Committee before allowing

increase in the prices. If so was the Committee consulted before permitting increase in the prices in January, 1988 ?

SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM : There was an assurance which was given to the Committee. This is an ad hoc increase. We have asked the BICP to go into it. As soon as the BICP completes its study, we will ask those concerns to discuss with them.

SHRIMATI KISHORI SINHA : In Part 'e' of the reply, it is stated the BICP the Bureau of Industrial Cost and Prices has carried out a study on the impact of the increase in the input prices on indigenous newsprint. May I know the findings of this study and whether any suggestion has been made for reducing the cost of production ?

SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM : On the basis of the study by BICP, we have increased the prices in 1988. If the hon. Member wants the entire detail, I will pass it on to her.

DR. A. K. PALL : The hon. Minister has tried to give the explanation for raising the prices of newsprints. As such the prices in India is maximum as far as newsprint is concerned compared other countries. Today, the people are losing faith in TV and Radio. The only agency left to the common people, who constitute a large section of the society, is newsprint.

Therefore, I would like to know from the hon. Minister, whether he will revise this policy of raising prices of newsprints ?

SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM : It is a good suggestion. We will take into consideration This suggestion.

Monitoring cell for price decontrolled medicines

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*110. SHRI RAJ KUMAR RAI.
SHRI MANVENDRA SINGH.

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :