

in building up goes, healthy co-operative purchasing societies of farmers. We would very much like to co-operate with the Members.

Misuse of Import Licences by Edible Oil Importers

*291. SHRI P. K. KODIYAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the steps recently announced by Government to check the misuse of import licences by edible oil importers have yielded any desired results;

(b) if so, to what extent; and

(c) what further steps are proposed in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION (SHRI MOHAN DHARIA): (a) to (c). A large number of licences against which no imports or firm import commitments were made within three months to the date of issue have been invalidated, and now licences are being issued only on the basis of firm import commitments made by an applicant. There is no possibility of misuse of the licences now being issued. Further steps will be taken in the light of experience, and on the basis of the findings of the enquiries which have been ordered into cases of suspected misutilisation. In the meantime State Trading Corporation has been asked to gear up its mechanism to effect more imports of edible oil.

SHRI P. K. KODIYAN: The hon. Minister is under the impression that no further misuse will take place as a result of the measures that he has taken. The edible oil business is a big business domain. Not only the licencees, but the vanaspati manufacturers, the groundnut kulaks and so many

other big business people are involved in this, and they have devised various methods to hoodwink the Government. May I know whether the private sector will be entirely dispensed with in the import of edible oil and whether the import will be handed over to STC?

SHRI MOHAN DHARIA: I have already indicated in my reply that we are gearing up the STC for more imports. And, as I said at the time of the discussion of the Demands of my Ministry, nearly 90 per cent of the imports of edible oil is through the STC. It is true that we have allowed certain private persons to import oil, but then we have taken care to see that there is a firm commitment from the applicant's end. And that it should be imported within three months. If it has happened, naturally we have to take some other action. But here when the country is facing acute shortage, the problem is to bring the oil from whatever source it is possible. The only thing is that we should not allow those who import oil to take undue advantage of these scarcity conditions, and about this the Government is quite conscious.

SHRI P. K. KODIYAN: Even the oil imported by STC had gone to the vanaspati industry when the industry had sufficiently stock and the vanaspati manufacturers had misused this oil in the sense that they produced vanaspati but hoarded it and created artificial shortage and thereby made huge profits from this artificial shortage. Whether Government are taking any steps to see that transfer of oil from the STC will not take place in future.

SHRI MOHAN DHARIA: The production and the requirement of the country per year is of the order of 6 lakh tonnes. Now when there is a shortage of raw material and we do not provide that much raw material to the vanaspati manufacturers, the whole production will tumble down. Therefore, 75 per cent of the raw material is provided to the vanaspati industry by the STC or by the Government. In spite of the fact that there

is acute shortage of oil we have taken care to see that production of vanaspathi does not suffer and it remains of that order during the year.

Regarding prices, because of our mutual discussions, the vanaspathi manufacturers agreed to bring down the prices from Rs. 168 to Rs. 158 for a tin of 18.5 kg. Not only that, they have assured that if any dealer does not behave properly, his dealership will be cancelled. I would, therefore, very much like the hon. Members to bring to my notice if there is any complaint in this regard in their constituencies and necessary action will be taken.

श्री जगदम्बी प्रसाद यादव : देश को कितने एडिबल आयल, खाने के तेल की आवश्यकता है और कितना विदेशों से मंगाते हैं, मैं इसकी जानकारी के साथ यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि देश को इस मामले में स्वालम्बी बनाने की क्या योजना सरकार ने बनाई है ?

श्री मोहन धारिया : देश में 35 लाख टन एडिबल आयल, खाने का तेल लगता है जिसमें से 32 लाख टन तेल हम पैदा कर सकते हैं। लेकिन गये साल में यह पचाइस 26 लाख टन हुई, जिसकी वजह से काफी कमी आई है। इसीलिए हमें इम्पोर्ट करना पड़ा। लेकिन हम बराबर इसकी इम्पोर्ट पर निर्भर नहीं रहना चाहते, इसलिए इसी खरीफ सीजन में कुछ ऐसे प्रोग्राम हाथ में लिए हैं जिससे कि हमारे आयल सीइस का उत्पादन बढ़ सके। एक तो ज्यादा क्षेत्र हम आयल सीइस के उत्पादन के लिए ले रहे हैं, दूसरे जो कमांड एरियाज इरिगेशन के नीचे हैं, वहाँ ज्यादा क्षेत्र लेने की कोशिश कर रहे हैं और तीसरे हाई इल्व बराइटीज का प्रोग्राम हाथ में लिया है, जिसमें ज्यादा तेल होता है।

श्री सोमजी माई बाजोर : खाद्य तेल की कमी भी है और जनता सरकार के भ्राने के बाद तेल का दाम दुगुना हो गया है। एक तरफ सरकार इसका प्रायात कर रही है और दूसरी तरफ मूंगफली का दाना बाहर क्यों भेजा जा रहा है ?

श्री मोहन धारिया : यह जो एच० पी० एस० दाना भजने का काम किया, यह हमारी गवर्नमेंट ने नहीं बल्कि कांग्रेस ने किया है। हमारे भ्राने के बाद हमने इसे रोक दिया है। इसके अलावा यह जो तेल की कमी है, यह हमारी वजह से नहीं है यह भी पिछली सरकार की वजह से है जिसने इसमें ज्यादा प्रोडक्शन नहीं किया।

SHRI R. K. MHALGI: May I know how many licences have been issued recently and to whom?

SHRI MOHAN DHARIA: Up to the end of May, 1977, 6,183 licences were issued and the amount involved was of the order of Rs. 686 crores. However, the licences that were issued earlier before my taking charge were of the order of Rs. 547 crores. After we have taken the charge, we have taken care to see that only those who have expressed their firm commitments that they shall be importing oil within three months have been given licences. That was not done in the past.

श्री सतीश शर्मावाल : क्या यह सही है कि कांग्रेस गवर्नमेंट ने 540 करोड़ रुपये के इम्पोर्ट लाइसेंस जारी किये थे; यदि हाँ, तो क्या उन पर माल आयोजित किया गया था या नहीं? क्या सरकार को यह भी सूचना मिली है कि उन में से कई लोगों ने देश से बाहर जो तेल खरीदा, उसको देश से बाहर ही ज्वैक में बेच दिया ?

SHRI MOHAN DHARIA: As I said at the time of the debate on the demands of my Ministry, it is true that these

are certain allegations which are being investigated by the Central Bureau of Investigation that the oil was purchased outside and it was sold outside because the prices had gone up in the international market. When it was all done there were scarcity conditions in the country and they did great harm and damage to the country.

Steps to curb Smuggling in collaboration with Neighbouring Countries

*292, SHRI NIHAR LASKAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND REVENUE AND BANKING be pleased to state:

(a) whether India is approaching neighbouring countries for taking measures to curb smuggling; and

(b) if so, the salient features thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND REVENUE AND BANKING (SHRI H. M. PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir. There has always been mutual cooperation between India and its neighbouring countries with regard to measures taken to curb smuggling.

(b) These measures are taken under the provisions of bilateral treaty or by periodical meetings between the officers of the Customs and Police Departments with their counterparts in these countries.

SHRI NIHAR LASKAR: From such a plain answer we cannot make out anything. Our main problem is how to check smuggling and that can be done with the help of our neighbouring countries. I want to know specifically what is the nature of talks with the neighbouring countries, whether the Government has benefited by these talks and whether smuggling is being curbed as a result of these talks or not. On the one hand, you say that you are going to check smuggling and you are holding talks with neighbouring countries and, on the other hand,

you are releasing your own smugglers in your own country. Recently, it has come in bold letters in the press that smuggling has been rampant after the release of smugglers in the country and that smuggling has been increasing like anything. On the one hand, you want to check smuggling and, on the other hand, you are releasing smugglers in your own country. What is your policy in this regard?

SHRI H M PATEL: First of all, the hon. Member asked, "On the one hand, you are releasing smugglers and, on the other hand, you are talking about curbing smuggling." The smugglers were released before this Government came in power.

Without taking any precaution whatsoever as to what activities they would indulge in thereafter, they have done it. But that is not particularly relevant. The hon. Member has said that I have not given a clear reply. Your question was whether India is approaching neighbouring countries for taking measures to curb smuggling. I said, 'yes.' There has always been mutual co-operation between India and its neighbouring countries. Now you would like to know what was the nature of discussion that took place. This is a very strange question, but I would still tell him about it. Recently, for instance, we had a discussion with Sri Lanka. Recently, our officers had a meeting with their officers in Ceylon, in Colombo and there the points that they discussed were: review of the progress on the decisions taken at the last conference held in Madras in 1973, the present trend in smuggling between India and Sri Lanka, discussion and exchange of views pertaining to smuggling goods between the two countries and discussion on further areas of co-operation for prevention of smuggling between the two countries. So, this is the kind of discussion that took place. When we had conferences with our neighbours. Now, for instance, between India and Nepal, there are treaties. Between India and Nepal, according to one of the provisions,