

SHRI KARTIK ORAON: Nothing would give me more pleasure than to keep an Auto-Exchange at Navsari straightway, as far as possible. But there are certain limitations. This Navsari is at present served by manual exchanges of 1680 equipped capacity with 1642 working connections and a waiting list of 511 as on 31-3-80. There are certain difficulties for going in for the Auto-Exchange, because, first of all, we have to get the land for the building to be constructed. (2) We have to make sure that we get the Auto-Exchange equipment. Now, so far as the project report for this Auto-Exchange is concerned, so many things are involved. The first thing is about the land. The hon. member has said that the question of acquisition of land is taking a lot of time. I think the hon. Member should try to persuade the State Government to see that the land is available as early as possible. An action is in hand to acquire a piece of land at Navsari. For acquiring a piece of land at Navsari, we are having negotiations through S. B. Garua College Trust. This College is prepared to spare an area of about 6 acres of land; and as and when this is available, we will go ahead. So far as this Auto-Exchange is concerned, it takes quite some time; and it has got to be planned; and in fact, the present production capacity of supply from ITI is hardly sufficient to cater to the expansion requirement for the existing Auto-Exchanges. I can assure the hon. member that if everything goes well, then, tentatively it is proposed to allot equipment from a new cross bar factory at Rai Bareilly in 1984-85 programme. If by that time everything goes well, then we will commission the exchanges in 1986.

Prostitution

*821. **SHRI ARJUN SETHI:** Will the Minister of SOCIAL WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are some States in the country where prostitution is in practice;

(b) whether Government have framed any scheme to deal with this serious threat which is responsible for many ill and problems of the society; and

(c) if so, what action Government have decided to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND):

(a) to (c). A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

The Government of India enacted the Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act, 1956 which has been in force all over the country, except Sikkim, since 1958.

2. The Act prohibits prostitution in its commercialised form. It also prohibits prostitution in any form in, or in the vicinity of, a public place or in any area, when so notified under section 7 of the Act. The problem of prostitution as a complex and deep rooted social evil is nevertheless known to persist in many places, particularly in cities.

3. The enforcement of this Act is the responsibility of the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations. The Act has been amended recently with a view to removing the difficulties and lacunae experienced by implementing agencies. The Government of India also assists voluntary organisations to undertake measures against prostitution by establishment of Short Stay Homes.

4. This Act also provides for setting up of protective homes, and corrective Institutions for the care, protection, training and rehabilitation of women and girls rescued from the vice of prostitution.

SHRI ARJUN SETHI: The hon. Minister in his statement has stated that in spite of the best efforts of the

Government and the enactment of various laws this practice has not been abolished. May I ask the hon. Minister by what time will this practice be abolished? Will the hon. Minister speak to the concerned State Governments so that they are more particular to see that this is abolished?

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: As the House is aware prostitution can never be stopped anywhere. We enacted the Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act, 1956 which came into practice in 1957 and the State Governments are enforcing this. Many State Governments have taken very serious steps to stop this practice. But I cannot give the deadline by which date the entire prostitution can be stopped.

SHRI RATANSINH RAJDA: This is a very serious matter and I hope the hon. Minister would understand the seriousness of the situation. It is a fact and I agree with the hon. Minister that this problem cannot be solved easily. This is the oldest profession on earth and as you say it cannot be wiped out. There are social and economic implications. As far as this question is concerned, I remind the hon. Minister that there was a film named 'Pyaasa' which has given a challenge to all of us, all the leaders of the society, especially the Ministers which includes you and Shri Stephen and others.

MR. SPEAKER: Not the ex ones.

SHRI RATANSINH RAJDA: The film song says

मूलक के रहबरो को यहां ले आओ।
वे गलियाँ, ये मंजर उनो विद्याओ।

I do not know whether the Ministers have gone there. My pointed question is—there are regular systematic organised gangs which are trying to implicate girls of tender age into this profession. In the city of Bombay girls mostly from Andhra, Kerala, etc.

are brought and systematic gangs work and trade in human flesh like this. Merely passing the Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act will not help. Will the Central Government pass a new law and inform the State Governments to launch a concerted drive to wipe it out with the help of social workers? Will your Government take it seriously and do it?

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: The police alone or the law alone cannot prevent and stop this provision.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Ministers.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Neither the Ministers, the Opposition leaders nor the ex-Ministers. Prostitution is detestable, but is linked to social and economical conditions. Not only the developing countries but also the most developed countries have not been able to stop this heinous practice. This is dependent on many factors like poverty mostly and the lack of social awareness. Unless the society as a whole reacts to this profession, I do not think Government alone will be able to stop this.

(Interruptions)

Perhaps, the hon. Member is aware of these gangs.

SHRI RATANSINH RAJDA: I am aware of this as a social worker. Your Maharashtra Chief Minister, Shri Antulay, has visited those dens.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: I am not saying that any social worker should be ashamed of knowing such gangs. Everyone knows how these things are done and how people are thriving on this profession. I cannot deny the responsibility of the Government in this matter and the Government has to take action.

श्री आर० एन० राकेश : इलाहाबाद नगर के प्रांगण में स्थित वह मकान जिस में पंडित जवाहर लाल नेहरू का जन्म

हुआ था, आज वहाँ प्रॉस्टीट्यूशन हो रहा है कई बरसों से। क्या सरकार को इसकी जानकारी है, यदि हाँ, तो क्या सरकार उस मकान से और उस मुस्ले से प्रॉस्टीट्यूशन के ग्रुप्स को हटाने की कोशिश करेगी ?

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Government is not aware of this.

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: This is a very serious matter. The place where Jawaharlal Nehru was born, is a part of the red light area of Allahabad. I would like to know whether the Minister will give some instructions to the State Government to stop this?

MR. SPEAKER: It has been brought to his notice and he will look into it.

PROF. N. G. RANGA: Are you answering on behalf of the Minister? It is really a very serious matter. He should say something on this.

श्री छार० एन० राकेश : इलाहाबाद नगर निगम ने तमाम कारेसपोडेस इसके बारे में की है और मंत्री महोदय की फाइल में तमाम लैटर्ज मौजूद हैं ।

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: If whatever the Member has said, is a fact, it is a very serious matter. Government will look into the matter.

SHRI KRISHNA CHANDRA HALDER: Before I put the question, I want to tell the hon. Minister that in socialist and communist countries, there is no prostitution.

Some time back, there appeared a news item in the papers that in the State of Karnataka, which is the home State of the Minister, there is a system of 'devdasi', that is a feudal system and by this system, the Scheduled Castes and Tribal girls are forced into this profession. This system is there in Bangalore and some other places of Karnataka. I would like to know from the hon. Minister: what steps

Government will take to stop this feudal practice of 'devdasi' system?

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: What the hon. Member in the beginning said that there is no prostitution in socialist and communist countries, I am not aware of this.

(Interruptions)

May I say that 'I' means the Government, not Shankaranand? But what the Member said is about the system of deva-dasi prevailing in certain parts of Maharashtra and Karnataka and certain parts of Andhra Pradesh. It is a fact that among the lower classes there is a system which is called 'deva-dasi' system where the women do not marry, but it is said that they marry God in the name of religion. This is all done in the name of religion and such young girls are, in the name of religion, brought into the field of prostitution. It is a shame for all of us to have such a custom which is strengthened and supported by religion to tolerate in this country. But may I say that wherever there is no deva-dasi system or the like of it, there is prostitution, and deva-dasi system alone is not responsible for this?

MR. SPEAKER: Are you going to take action against that?

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Sir, the Act is there and the Government will take action according to that.

Cocoa Production, Export and its Processing

*822. **SHRI GEORGE JOSEPH MUNDACKAL:** Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that cocoa production in the country is surplus and its prices have gone down from Rs. 18 per kg. to Rs. 5.30 per kg. and actually there are no purchasers now;

(b) the reasons why Government are not coming to protect the marginal farmers by fixing a minimum price and exporting the cocoa beans to U.S.S.R. or to any consuming country; and