

कर पा रही है। तो इस दिशा में भी वह कुछ करने का प्रयास करेंगे ?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: So far as private mining is concerned, it is a problem no doubt. This particular aspect, I do not know where it is happening, but Government is trying to stop illegal private mining. In regard to accumulation of stocks at the pitheads, in respect of both iron ore and coking coal, it is true; transport bottleneck is one of the reasons why we could not make these materials available to the steel plants I have already mentioned this. Again and again we are coming to the question of power and transport bottleneck.

Shortage of Raw Cashewnuts

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

(a) whether shortage of raw cashewnuts has almost crippled the Cashew Industry;

(b) the reasons for the shortage;

(c) whether any special efforts are being made to meet the shortage by stepping to import of raw cashewnuts; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) to (d). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

Indian Cashew Industry has been traditionally depending upon imports of raw cashew nuts to meet part of its requirement for processing. Of late, the exportable surplus with East African countries *viz.*, Tanzania Mozambique, and Kenya who have been our traditional suppliers has gone down considerably due to increase in their own processing capacity and also a sizable decline in their production. Moreover, while earlier India

used to be the only buyer for the entire raw cashew nuts available abroad, now there is severe competition from countries like China, Brazil and Hongkong for the purchase of raw cashew nuts available. As a result import of raw cashew nuts by Cashew Corporation of India, through which import are canalised, has gone down considerably, thereby affecting the total availability of raw cashew nuts for processing. On account of the shortage of raw cashewnuts for processing, the cashew processing industry has been adversely affected.

The Cashew Corporation of India has been trying to develop non-traditional sources for supply of raw cashew nuts like Madagascar, Senegal, Nigeria and Guinea. In order to promote the imports, during July 1979, actual users were also permitted to import raw cashew nuts from non-traditional sources mostly on the West African Coast. For 1980, the Cashew Corporation has been able to execute a contract with Kenya for the purchase of their entire exportable surplus of raw cashew nuts.

SHRI P. K. KODIYAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has stated in the statement that the import of raw cashewnut from the traditional sources has been declining in the past few years. May I know from the hon. Minister whether, in view of the importance of the cashew industry as the country's second largest foreign exchange earner and also in view of the crisis that has afflicted the industry at present affecting more than one and a half lakh employees, Government would take up the question of import of raw cashewnut from the traditional as well as non-traditional sources, at the highest level, Government-to-Government level, instead of entrusting this merely to the Cashew Corporation of India which has not been successful in getting...

MR. SPEAKER: What is your pointed question?

SHRI P. K. KODIYAN: My question is whether, instead of entrusting

to the Cashew Corporation of India, Government would take up the question of import of raw cashewnut at the highest level, Government-to-Government level.

SHRI Z. R. ANSARI: The Cashew Corporation of India has been trying to develop non-traditional sources for supply of raw cashewnuts—from Madagaskar and other countries—and this suggestion may be examined in view of the fact that raw cashewnuts to the cashew industry are in short supply.

SHRI P. K. KODIYAN: The industry has been facing another serious problem, apart from the decline in the import of raw cashewnuts. Whatever was produced in the Kerala State was sought to be procured by the State Government but the private cashew processors have been trying to smuggle the raw cashewnuts out of the State into the neighbouring States like Tamil Nadu particularly and get them processed there using the cheap labour because the wage rate there is comparatively lower. In view of this crisis, the State Government had been requesting the Centre to persuade the Southern States to introduce a uniform wage policy so that this smuggling of cashewnuts from the State can be avoided. I want to know what steps have been taken in this regard.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: It is not possible to have a regional wage policy. I would request the hon. Member that he can persuade his government to take it up with the neighbouring governments like the governments of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. It is just not possible to have a wage policy for a region because every State is entitled to fix the wages for workers and labourers there.

SHRI B. K. NAIR: The hon. Minister has not gone to the extent of denying that there is a serious crisis in the trade. The crisis is there. Apart from stating the policy in this regard of import of raw cashewnuts, I would like to know from the hon. Minister to what extent imports have

materialised—imports by private agencies as also by the government. It is stated that they are making inquiries and are trying to find out the sources. What is the extent of imports so far? I want to know the figures of imports that have materialised so far in the current year.

SHRI Z. R. ANSARI: It is 5000 tonnes.

SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH: Can the Minister tell us the percentage component of the imported raw cashewnuts to the local produce? Then I would also like to know what steps are taken to organize production in India itself.

SHRI Z. R. ANSARI: The imports are decreasing year by year. In 1971-72 we were importing 1,57,300 metric tonnes of cashewnuts while our production was 66,000 metric tonnes. Now the position is this. In 1978-79 our estimated production of cashewnuts was 1,20,000 tonnes while we were importing only 24,200 tonnes.

Regarding the steps to augment local production, as a matter of fact the real solution to the problem is to increase the indigenous production of raw cashewnuts.

And for that purpose, the Cashew Corporation of India has initiated steps to assist the State Government in increasing indigenous production. Under this Scheme, the Cashew Corporation of India has set aside Rs. 4 to 5 crores for the State-sponsored export-oriented environment scheme of cashew cultivation and this is in addition to the various plan schemes for the development of cashew plantations undertaken by the Ministry of Agriculture.

Sir, the World Bank assistance has also been sought for the purpose of increasing cashew production.

MR. SPEAKER: Next question. Shri Arjun Sethi.