

# LOK SABHA DEBATES

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## LOK SABHA

Thursday, December 18, 1980/Agrahayana 27,1902 (Saka).

The Lok Sabha met at two minutes past Eleven of the Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

### ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

News Item Captioned "Polio Vaccine getting into Market untested"

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\*460. SHRI CHINTAMANI PANI.  
GRAHI:

SHRI JANARDHANA POO-  
JARY:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news item published in *Hindustan Times* of 24th November, 1980 under the caption "Polio Vaccine Getting Into Market Untested"; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI NIHAR RANJAN LASKAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A statement is placed on the Table of the House.

### Statement

The Report in question published in the *Hindustan Times* dated 24th November, 1980 indicates that doubts about the potency of polio vaccine used by hospitals and private doctors have

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once again been raised following the closure of the only Polio Vaccine Testing Laboratory in Delhi.

2. The Country's requirements of oral polio vaccine are met through imports. The imports are from Soviet Union and Belgium, with Soviet Union providing the maximum quantity. Out of 47 consignments imported during the five years from 1975-76 to 1979-80, 44 consignments came from Soviet Union and 3 consignments from Belgium.

3. Each of these consignments is required to be accompanied by a test certificate issued by the manufacturer, abroad and a quality certificate from the government authorities of the exporting country, certifying that the consignment conforms to W.H.O. standards. The Drugs Controller (India) examines these certificates. If they are in order, the consignments are released for sale. In addition, samples from imported consignments were being subjected to tests on a regular basis at the Polio Testing Unit in the National Institute of Communicable Diseases, Delhi. Subsequent to the closure of the Unit in 1979, samples from such imported consignments were tested occasionally at the Haffkine Bio-pharmaceutical Corporation, Bombay, where facilities for such testing exist. All the samples tested either at the Polio Vaccine Testing Laboratory, Delhi or at the Haffkine Bio-pharmaceutical Corporation, Bombay, passed the test. Facilities for testing samples from imported consignments have now also been established at the Central Research Institute, Kasauli. In the light of these facts, the correct position is that imported consignments of the vaccine are not released unless the Drugs Controller (India) is satisfied that they

[Shri N. R. LASKAR]

conform to the stipulated W.H.O. standards.

4. Oral Polio Vaccine requires special conditions of cold storage and loses its potency if not stored properly. A survey conducted during 1973-74 showed that in institutions where proper storage conditions were not maintained, there was a loss of potency in the vaccine. Accordingly, instructions were issued by the Director General of Health Services, in March 1974 to the State Administrative Medical Officers, the State Drug Control authorities, the Central Government Health Scheme etc. regarding the precautions to be taken for storage and administration of the vaccine.

**SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI:**

Is the Government aware that in recent years, the incidence of polio is on the rise? Have any reports been received from different States about it by now? If so, is polio on the rise? If it is, what is the reason for it, when you are immunizing the children with these vaccines?

**THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND):** All necessary steps have been taken for immunizing the children. I don't have any information about the increase in the incidence of polio.

**SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI:**

Is the Minister aware that Dr. Jacob of the Vellore Medical College Hospital has said recently that the potency of whatever vaccine, he had used was only 2 per cent? Will Government be guided solely by the certificates of the countries from which the vaccine is being imported, or is it being tested by our own official laboratory, as it was being done from 1972 till 1978? Is the Government thinking of having a regular check on these imported vaccines before they go to people?

**SHRI B. SHANKARANAND:** Perhaps my hon. friend has not read the opinion of Dr. Jacob. He has said

that the vaccine has been tested at various centres regarding its potency. It was two years ago that he said that the potency was very low. But today Dr. Jacob himself says that the potency is all right.

**SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY:**

Will the Minister state whether it is a fact that Dr. Arya, the former Director of PVTL had to quit as he was the only person trained in that test in India; and whether he had to quit because he was harassed, and also because there was curtailment so far as staff was concerned? If that is so, with the closure of PVTL is there any national laboratory left in the country to test the safety of the vaccine? If not, will Dr. Arya be asked to continue, by providing sufficient staff?

**SHRI B. SHANKARANAND:** It is a fact that at the time Dr. Arya left the Institute he was the only person trained in that; but it is not a fact that he left the Institute because of harassment.

**SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY:** May I know whether they are going to reopen what had been closed in 1979?

**SHRI B. SHANKARANAND:** It is a suggestion for action.

#### Jaisalmer-Abu Road Line

\*461. **SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT:** Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a representation has been received for the construction of new railway lines from Jaisalmer to Abu Road, Devikot to Pali, Medata City to Ajmer and Phalodi to Kolayat;

(b) whether Government are taking steps to complete this work;

(c) if so, the outlines thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS AND IN**