

molasses to every State according to their needs at least from the next year ?

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR : As I said, so far as the Molasses Board is concerned, it is only a consultative body. It does not have any statutory recognition whatsoever. This Board itself came into being...

AN HON. MEMBER : Who is the Chairman ?

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR : I am the Chairman.

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY : Then how can it be on a consultative basis ?

You are a Minister.

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR : Dr. Swamy, merely because somebody is a Minister, that does not mean that its discretion is wide enough to act in any manner whatsoever. *(Interruption)* The point that I was trying to make was that it is as a result of the meeting of the Excise Ministers that was held in 1967, that this Molasses Board came into being—more for the purposes that I have already enumerated—as a result of which it is not possible to lay down norms of production, as far as this Board is concerned. It has necessarily to be left to the States.

Norms of production in the ultimate analysis depends on the sugar cane industry. Suppose in a particular State the sugar cane growth is more; then the molasses will also be more. *(Interruption)*

I am saying things about the production part of it. I have not come to the distribution part of it. Why are you jumping to that ? In the first, part, you asked about production. So, give me a chance to answer that part also. *(Interruption)*

In fact, so far as the Molasses Board is concerned, the Centre was very particular that it should be given a statutory status, but the various States opposed it, as a result of which action was not possible. There is a Molasses Control Order, issued under the Industries Regulation Act and there are certain States, including U.P., where there is a statute controlling the molasses. Rules have also been framed.

About the distribution part, of course it is a matter for the State again, what is happening in some of the States :—

I am ware of it. For example, West Bengal lifts alcohol from States like U. P., Maharashtra and others. Because the duty has been raised, some of the States are finding difficulty. But ultimately this is a matter which comes within the realm of the States. We do take note of it, as far as the Board is concerned. In the Board, the Excise Ministers of various States are also Members. Discussions do take place. In fact, some time back, I took up the issue with three States, viz. Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and U. P., to reduce the duties—vending duties and other things—so that other States may lift alcohol and molasses may not be glutted in those States. Therefore, distribution is not a matter where we can interfere much, for the simple reason that it is a State subject. *(Interruptions)*

Availability of Life Saving Drugs at reasonable prices

*228. **SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN :** Will the Minister of PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that essential and life saving drugs are not available at reasonable prices in the country and the

suppliers have been demanding exorbitant prices for them; and

(b) whether Government propose to take any steps to provide life saving drugs and essential drugs at reasonable prices to give relief to poor and low income people in the country?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR) : (a) and (b). A Statement is laid on the Table of the Lok Sabha.

Statement

(a) and (b). It has been Government's endeavour to make essential medicines available at reasonable prices to consumers. With this purpose in view, the prices of essential medicines are statutorily controlled under the Drugs (Prices Control) Order 1979. In fixing the prices of such medicines, Government assesses the ex-factory costs of manufacturers to which are added specified mark-ups laid down in DPCO 1979. Price controlled formulations have been divided into three categories depending on their essentiality and importance from the point of view of mass consumption. Separate mark-ups are provided for each category. The more essential drugs are given lower mark-ups to ensure that they are available at relatively lower prices.

In addition, a number of essential and life-saving medicines and some bulk drugs which are used for them, and are either wholly or substantially imported, have been completely exempted from the payment of customs duty. On some intermediates which are required for the production of certain essential drugs, concessional customs duty rates have been levied to keep the prices low. A number of essential medicines produced in the country have

been exempted from payment of excise duty also.

Government monitors the market availability of essential medicines on a weekly basis. Reports are obtained from the State Drug Controllers and the Zonal Offices of the Central Drug Standard Control Organisations. A watch is also kept on public complaints that may be received. So far, no instances of demand of exorbitant prices by suppliers have been reported.

श्री राम विलास पासवान : अध्यक्ष जी, मंत्री महोदय द्वारा जो स्टेटमेंट दिया गया है, उसमें कुछ जवाब ही नहीं है।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : सिर्फ स्टेटमेंट है।

श्री राम विलास पासवान : मैंने प्रश्न पूछा है कि क्या सरकार को पता है कि आवश्यक तथा जीवन रक्षक औषधियां देश में उचित मूल्यों पर नहीं मिलती हैं या सप्लाई करने वाले उनके बहुत अधिक मूल्य मांग रहे हैं? इसका जवाब हो सकता है कि मांगते हैं या नहीं मांगते हैं, उचित मूल्य पर मिलती है या नहीं मिलती है।

दूसरा प्रश्न मैंने पूछा है कि क्या कम आय वाले लोगों को राहत देने के लिए जीवन रक्षक औषधियां और आवश्यक औषधियां उचित मूल्यों पर दिलाने हेतु कोई कदम उठाने का विचार है? इन दोनों प्रश्नों का कोई उल्लेख ही नहीं है। मंत्री महोदय इन दोनों प्रश्नों का जवाब दें तो मैं आगे प्रश्न पूछूँ।

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR : This question is in two parts. The first part of the question is whether Government are aware that essential and life saving drugs are not available at reasonable prices. The

second part of the question is whether Government propose to take any steps to provide life saving drugs and essential drugs at reasonable prices. These are the two parts of the question. In the statement that I have already laid on the Table I have said how the prices are fixed, because if the Hon. member reads the statement that I have filed he will come to know about it because he has asked me how the prices are fixed. That is the first part of the question.

श्री राम विलास पासवान : मैंने आपका स्टेटमेंट पढ़ लिया है कि आप का एक लाइन में उसका जवाब हो सकता है। उसके बाद प्रश्न आता है कि उचित मूल्य पर दवाई मिलती है या नहीं ?

श्री पी० शिव शंकर : जहाँ तक उचित मूल्य का प्रश्न है। आप मेरे स्टेटमेंट के लास्ट सेंटेंस को पढ़ लीजिए। "So far no instances of demand of exorbitant price by suppliers have been reported." इससे आपके प्रश्न का उत्तर आपको मिल जाता है।

श्री राम विलास पासवान : अध्यक्ष जी, मंत्री महोदय जानते हैं कि उचित मूल्य पर कहीं भी कोई दवाई नहीं मिलती है, जीवन-रक्षक की बात छोड़ दीजिए। सबसे दुःखद स्थिति यह है कि देश में नकली दवाइयों की भरमार चल रही है, मंत्री जी जब जवाब देंगे तो इस बारे में बतायेंगे। मैं एक पत्रिका पढ़ रहा था, उसमें लिखा है कि देश में 50 से 60 करोड़ रुपए की नकली दवाइयां प्रतिवर्ष देश में बेची जा रही हैं, जिसका नतीजा अन्ततोगत्वा यह होता है कि लोगों की मृत्यु हो जाती है। विदेशों में जो जीवन-रक्षक दवाइयां हैं, वहाँ उस दवाई की कीमत 100 रु० है

और यहाँ अपने देश में 300 रु० है। हमारे यहाँ एक मिर्गी की दवाई है और कैंसर है, कैंसर के आपके यहाँ एक्सपर्ट हैं, लेकिन उसकी टैबेलांजी नहीं है। मैं मंत्री महोदय से जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या आपने कभी एसेसमेंट किया है कि आपके यहाँ लाइफ सेविंग ड्रग्स का कितना उत्पादन हो रहा है, उसकी कितनी आवश्यकता है? आपने आयात के सम्बन्ध में कहा है, मैं यह पूछना चाहता हूँ कि आप कितना आयात कर रहे हैं? क्या यह भी सही है कि प्रतिवर्ष जो आयात की रकम है...

अध्यक्ष महोदय : पासवान जी एक सवाल कीजिए। पहले टेढ़ा सवाल करते हों, फिर सीधा सवाल करते हों और फिर लम्बा सवाल करते हों।

सूचना और प्रसारण मंत्री (श्री वसंत साठे) : इसकी कोई दवा नहीं है।

प्रो० मधु दंडवते : टेढ़ा करने के बाद उसको सीधा भी करना होता है।

श्री राम विलास पासवान : क्या यह सही है कि आयात जो आप करते हैं, उसमें आयात की रकम प्रतिवर्ष बढ़ती जा रही है ?

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR : There is a Drug Price Control Order of 1979. The prices of the drugs are fixed having regard to the various provisions of this Order. What happens is that the ex-factory costs are taken into consideration and afterwards a little mark-up is added. (Interruptions) Not too much. (Interruptions)

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY : He is thinking of marks up.

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR :
That on which discussion had taken
place yesterday.

PROF. MADU DANDAVATE :
Not marks up. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR :
Mark-up is in a different context.
(*Interruptions*)

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR :
I may submit that the more essential
drugs are given lower mark-ups to
ensure that they are available at rela-
tively lower prices. That is the con-
cept which is taken into considera-
tion. On the question of the duty, I
must submit that quite a large num-
ber of essential bulk drugs are totally
exempt from the customs duty.

AN HON. MEMBER : For
example !

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR : I
am prepared to give the details if you
would like to have. I can give exam-
ples, because I have them.

SHRI M. M. LAWRENCE :
Examples are there, you are correct,
but at the same time the advantage
goes to the big manufacturers, not
to the people.

श्री राम विलास पासवान : उस प्राइस
पर कहां मिलता है ?

श्री पी० शिव शंकर : अगर नहीं मिलता
है तो....

श्री राम विलास पासवान : तो कौन
दिलवायेगा उस प्राइस पर ? आप ही तो
दिलवायेंगे ।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : सवाल-जवाब नहीं
होना चाहिये । It is a running dia-
logue. It is not a question-answer
session.

श्री राम विलास पासवान : हमारा
प्रश्न तो बहुत सीधा-सादा है ।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : आप बीच में बात
को काट देते हैं ।

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR : I
was submitting, that with reference
to certain formulations of essential
medicines, the import duty on bulk
drugs is exempt, and so far as the
medicines are concerned, excise duty
is totally exempt with reference to
essential medicines and Govern-
ment monitors their availability on a
weekly basis. I am prepared to give
the details if my Hon. friend wants,
but they run into quite a large
number. I have got the annexures
here. If he is very particular, I can go
on reading them. But it will take some
time. The imports for 1980-81 were
of the order of Rs. 112 crores. There
is a slight decrease in the imports
from Rs. 120 crores; we are expect-
ing that the imports would be far
less this year also. Now, it is not
as though that so far as the duty is
concerned, it is kept constant. I
agree. But that is a question of
policy having regard to the demand,
and the imports. All those factors
have to be taken into consideration
for the purpose of fixing the import
duty and also taking into considera-
tion the impetus to be given to the
indigenous industry.

श्री राम विलास पासवान : मेरा दूसरा
प्रश्न है—हाथी साहब तो मर गये, लेकिन
उनकी अध्यक्षता में एक कमेटी बनी थी,
उस कमेटी ने ड्रग्स के सम्बन्ध में क्या रिपोर्ट
दी है तथा उस पर अभी तक सरकार के
द्वारा क्या कार्यवाही की गई है ?

मैं आप से फिर पूछना चाहता हूँ—प्रति-
वर्ष 60 करोड़ रुपये की नकली दवाइयां
बिकती हैं, उन के सम्बन्ध में आप ने कुछ
नहीं कहा है । उनको रोकने के लिये आप
क्या कर रहे हैं ?

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR : The Hathi Committee Report is a voluminous document and I am prepared to lay on the Table, the action that has been taken. (*Interruptions*) Let me complete. I must say that the recommendations of the Hathi Committee have by and large been accepted and action has been taken in pursuance thereof. That has different facets of recommendations. I would rather prefer to place it on the Table of the House, the exhaustive action that has been taken from time to time in that regard on the basis of the different recommendations.

So far as the sale of the spurious medicines is concerned, as and when such aspects are brought to the notice of the Government, Government does take action. My friend seems to know that about Rs. 60 crores worth of drugs or medicines are being sold. I do not think that it is a correct statement, but if he brings some facts to my notice I can certainly take action. (*Interruptions*) I entirely agree, but if some details are given to me, action can certainly be taken in the matter. What happens is, that if a bald statement is made, it creates complications.

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL : Under the standing instructions the Information and Broadcasting Ministry has to bring all such information to your notice. It is the P. I. B's job. The concerned Ministry gets the facts. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR : Excuse me. I never wanted to get myself absolved of the responsibility about essential drugs ; but so far as the spurious drugs and their quality are concerned, that is a matter for the Health Ministry. It is a case of joint responsibility of the Cabinet. Therefore, if facts are brought to my notice I will certainly take it up with the Health Ministry also.

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL : That is a better approach.

श्रीमती कृष्णा साहू : अध्यक्ष महोदय, जीवन-रक्षक औषधियां देश में उचित मूल्यों पर नहीं मिल रही हैं। क्या इसका कारण सरकारी लाइफ सेविंग ड्रग्स की फैक्ट्रियों में उत्पादन क्षमता का ह्रास है क्या क्वालिटी कंट्रोल में ह्रास के कारण करोड़ों रुपयों की क्षति हुई है। क्या सरकार इसके बारे में कुछ बतलायेगी ?

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR : I do not share the apprehension of the Hon. member. I do not think that quality control, so far as Government laboratories are concerned is low, as a result of which the prices are going up. I have already made my submission about the fixation of price mechanism. I need not repeat that part of it.

SHRI KRISHNA CHANDRA HALDER : In spite of the Minister's reply, our poor people are not getting essential and life-saving drugs at a reasonable price, because most of the life-saving and essential drugs are produced by the multinational companies and they are earning hundreds of crores of rupees of profit which they remit to foreign countries. They are controlling the market and so, Government has to regulate that process. May I know whether Government will come forward to nationalise the foreign multinational drug companies so that our people can get life-saving essential drugs at a reasonable price ? I want to have an exact answer from the Minister.

MR. SPEAKER : He has already replied to that.

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR : About the price mechanism, I have already made my submission. So far as multi-nationals are concerned, the Foreign Exchange

Regulation Act is taking care of it. From time to time directions are being issued under that Act to reduce the equity participation to 40% of the shareholdings. (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Soundararajan.

SHRI KRISHNA CHANDRA HALDER : You should protect me, not protect the Minister. It is a very vital question.

MR. SPEAKER : I am not protecting anybody. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI N. SOUNDARARAJAN : The Hon. Minister knows that there are many multi-national drug companies which are operating in our country with more than 75% foreign equity. I want to know whether the Minister will take steps to reduce the foreign equity of the multi-national companies ?

MR. SPEAKER : He has already replied to that question.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : The record of multi-national operations in developing countries has remained a very devious one and has to be very carefully watched so as to prevent consumer exploitation for untempered profiteering. In this context, is it a fact that IDPL in its Rishikesh plant manufactures tetracycline and that vibromycin, a broad spectrum life-saving antibiotic, is its derivative? If so, what are the reasons for giving permission to Pfizer Laboratories to manufacture vibromycin, instead of getting it manufactured at IDPL, Rishikesh, which will enable the poorer sections of the society to obtain this drug at reasonable prices, instead of at exorbitant prices?

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR : The price question, I have already answered, need not repeat my submission in regard to the price mechanism.

MR. SPEAKER : You may answer the relevant portion.

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR : It is true that certain multinationals are no doubt manufacturing essential drugs. I do not deny it. But that is based on the technology part. Government from time to time have been taking steps under FERA to reduce the equity participation of the multinationals. There is no doubt that the pace has been slow because some of the life saving drugs are such where the quality of technology has not been upto the mark as far as indigenous production is concerned, as a result of which a Committee goes into it even for the purpose of reduction of equity of such companies. I may submit that when we come to a stage where our quality of technology is of the same standard as that of the multi-nationals, I am sure, action will be taken in the interest of the nation. In the ultimate analysis, I assure the House that so far as the national interest is concerned, that will be kept supreme.

Bifurcation of P & T Department

*229. PROF. NARAIN CHAD PARASHAR :
SHRI XAVIER ARAKAL :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Sarin Committee on Telecommunications has recommended the bifurcation of the P & T Department for more efficient functioning and expansion of the Telecom. services in the country ;

(b) if so, whether any decision has been taken by Government on this recommendation and the nature thereof ; and

(c) if not, the likely date by which a decision would be taken ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI VIJAY N. PATIL) : (a) The Committee on