

श्री राम विलास पासवान : अध्यक्ष महोदय, सरकार का हमेशा जवाब रहता है कि फ्लड कंट्रोल हो रहा है। मैं सरकार से जानना चाहता हूँ कि फ्लड प्रिवेंशन के लिए क्या आपने कुछ राशि आवंटित की है या नहीं ?

दूसरा मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि बिहार में जो बाढ़ की भयानक स्थिति है, उसके लिए आप क्या करने जा रहे हैं। क्या बिहार सरकार ने अक्सिस्टेंस के लिए लिखा है ? इस बाढ़ की विभीषिका को देखते हुए कुछ राशि का प्रावधान किया गया है या नहीं ?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE : It is a patent question and the reply will also be a patent one. So far as the provision for flood control is concerned, the hon. Member is fully aware of the position because we have given the Plan Document where the Central sector and the State sectors taken together, during the current plan, we have allocated about Rs. 1000 crores for prevention of floods. The other parts of the question relates to relief provided to the States due to flood havoc or damages caused by flood. So these are two different questions.

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI : May I know from the hon. Minister whether the Government is aware that Orissa Government had prepared a detailed plan for the control of Mahanadi floods ? Every year, the flood in Mahanadi, beyond Hirakud Dam, has been causing a great loss and damage to the life and property in the areas. I would like to know whether any such proposal is pending before the Government so that you can work out a scheme for prevention of flood havoc in areas beyond Hirakud Dam in Mahanadi river.

MR. SPEAKER : I think he will not be able to answer this question.

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI : I hope the hon. Minister has something to say about this Mahanadi floods. It is a big problem for us. The hon. Minister can say something about this.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE : The

Mahanadi is a big problem, I know. But for that there is another Ministry to look into it.

Imposition of Additional Excise on Vanaspati

*291. SHRI H.N. BAHUGUNA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have imposed a new additional excise impost on Vanaspati w.e.f. 11 May, 1984 ;

(b) if so, full details and background thereof ;

(c) whether there have been any protests against this levy ; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and Government's decision thereon ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.M. KRISHNA) : (a) to (d). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (d). A concessional rate of excise duty of five per cent ad valorem was leviable on vegetable product until the 11th May, 1984 in terms of notification No. 24/65-Central Excise, dated the 28th February, 1965. This notification was inadvertently rescinded on the 11th May, 1984 with the result that vegetable product attracted the tariff rate of excise duty of ten per cent ad valorem from that date. The concessional rate of five per cent ad valorem was, however restored with effect from the 1st June, 1984. Further, Government have decided not to levy central excise duty on vegetable product in excess of five per cent ad valorem during the period from the 11th May, 1984 to the 31st May, 1984, as requested by the vanaspati industry.

SHRI H.N. BAHUGUNA : The hon. Minister has, in the written statement, stated that the notification regarding concessional rate of excise duty of 5% instead of 10% on vegetable products was inadvertently withdrawn. May I know, (a) who is responsible for this inadvertence, (b) has any action

been taken against the person responsible, and (c) what permanent remedy has been provided so that such inadvertence does not take place hereafter ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : Sir, constitutional and moral responsibility is all mine, because I preside over the Ministry. But how it happened, I will explain in a little detail. As the hon. Member is aware, there was a proposal in the Finance Bill that silver would be shifted from Central Excise Classification item No. 24 to Item 68, and this notification, as the hon. Member is aware, is a very old one. The notification was issued on 28.2.1965, where it was said that on one of these items viz., vanaspati—though the duty is 10%, they are not to pay more than 5%. In the original notification there were 14 items, and over the period of years a number of items were removed from this particular notification. When after the passage of the Finance Bill on 11th May, the new notification was issued, as I have mentioned in the statement, inadvertently—and I am sorry for that—both these two other items, silver and silk fabrics which are also covered by that were not taken note of. What should have been done normally is that for these items separate notification should have been issued on the same date.

Now, when it came to our notice, immediately on 1st June, we rectified the position and said that the Vanaspati industry is not to pay 10% as a result of rescinding the earlier notification on 11th May, from 1st June they have to pay 5%. Now the question comes, what is happening for the period 11th May to 1st June, 20 days. For that also, I have replied that there is a legal formality, 11 (c) is there ; notification has to be issued and before that certain information has to be got. This is a formality. That point is also taken care of. We have already taken care of the problem created as a result of our mistake and once again I express my regret for the mistake caused by my Department.

SHRI H.N. BAHUGUNA : While I congratulate the Minister for such a candid reply, because it seldom comes ; it is a refreshing change. To that extent, I am happy.

MR. SPEAKER : A good change is always welcome.

SHRI H.N. BAHUGUNA : Yes, and I have already congratulated him for this refreshing change of admission of something which has gone wrong, because things can go wrong in such a big organisation.

May I request the Minister to go into the whole structure of Vanaspati industry ? What is happening in the Vanaspati industry is, that unlike the rest of the world, we are hydrogenating it, adding nickle to it, adding so many catalysts to it, washing them out, adding vitamins etc. What we are importing, we are giving to the Vanaspati industry at Rs. 9.50 per kg. and that is being processed by them to be sold from Rs. 21/- to Rs. 27/- per kg. depending on the mark and label, because Ganesh Flour Mill will give one mark and the other industries will give other marks and so on. May I know whether you will allow soyabean, groundnut oil and other types of oil to be just refined and sold as oil, which will be much cheaper and bring down the price of this particular commodity which is in the interest of the people ?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE : With regard to the problem of edible oils, presently we are giving 65% of the imported material to the vanaspati industry.

As the hon. Members are aware, these matters are being looked into. Strictly speaking, not as a Finance Minister, but in the other capacity as the Chairman of the Cabinet Committee, I am also involved with it and the suggestions which the hon. members have made will be taken into consideration.

श्री मनी राम बागड़ी : अध्यक्ष जी, इस देश में चर्बी के सवाल को लेकर सूअर और गाय की चर्बी के सवाल को लेकर बहुत बवंडर चला और सरकार ने उस पर ऐक्शन लिया...

श्री हेमवती नन्धन बहुगुणा : कहां लिया ? वह तो ओसवाल बूलन मिल्स को फिर दे दिया ।

श्री मनी राम बागड़ी : अध्यक्ष जी, एक बात आपके माध्यम से जानना चाहता हूं उसका नतीजा

क्या हुआ कि घी जो बनना चाहिए था उसकी मिकदार घटी, मिलें बन्द हुई, सजा जिन्होंने चर्बी लेकर दी उनको नहीं मिली, बल्कि देश की मशीनों को, मजदूरों को और खरीददारों को सजा दी गई और नफा, यानी सरकार को, सेठ को उसका नफा हुआ जो सरकार के पास मिल था। तो क्या मंत्री जो देश हित के अन्दर, अगर बदबू आती है तो नाक को काटने के बजाय बदबू को हटाना चाहिये, न कि नाक को ही काट दिया जाय, तो मिलों के बन्द होने से जो मजदूर बेकार हैं, घी की पैदावार घट रही है और दाम बढ़ रहे हैं, कल कारखाने बेकार पड़े हैं क्या सरकार चर्बी के ऊपर पाबन्दी लगा करके कल कारखानों को चलाने और मजदूरों का काम देने पर पुनर्विचार कर रही है और जिनके साथ पक्षपात करके जिनकी चर्बी को पकड़ा गया और छोड़ दिया गया, उनको पकड़ेंगे, बन्द करेंगे ? या सबके साथ बराबरी का व्यवहार करेंगे ?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE : So far as the first part of the question of the hon. member is concerned, he himself would agree with me that it is beyond the competence of my Ministry to answer that. And it has been discussed in detail. In regard to matters arising out of the price situation, which he has referred to, in fact, we have taken certain decisions particularly, not only this, with reference to vanaspati industries and others. But as the hon. members are aware, there was a problem created, as a result of the non-availability of raw-materials, by putting a total ban on import of tallow, in the soap industries. So, arrangements are being made to import fatty acids as substitute, not only to protect and to utilise the capacities created in various industries, but at the same time to have an effect on the price front.

श्री मनोराम बागड़ी : अब भी चर्बी वालों को खुला रख रखा है। आप तो चेयरमैन हैं कैबिनेट कमेटी के। उसके बारे में क्या कर रहें हैं।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : बाद में देख लेना।

श्री मनोराम बागड़ी : बाद में क्या देखेंगे।

Clearance of the Claims of Indians from Bangladesh Regarding their Property

*292. DR. VASANT KUMAR PANDIT : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to lay a statement showing :

(a) whether the custodian of enemy property for India by notice in 1971 invited applications of affected persons from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) ;

(b) whether, after Bangladesh was formed Government constituted two panels in 1975 for verification of claims and payment thereof ;

(c) the decisions taken by Government in 1981 and 1984 on this issue of compensation ; and

(d) the steps proposed to be taken to clear the claims of Indians from Bangladesh regarding their property ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SUPPLY (SHRI NIHAR RANJAN LASKAR) : (a) to (d). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) In 1974, the Government constituted a Panel under Chairmanship of the Custodian of Enemy Property, Bombay for verification of claims for payment of ex-gratia.

(c) In order to expedite the process of verification of claims, in 1980 the Government increased the number of panels from one to eight ; and the value of claim to be initially scrutinised was raised to Rs. 50 lakhs from Rs. 10 lakhs in 1982.

(d) Government of India have been in touch with Bangladesh authorities in order to ensure that the properties vested by them are not disposed of without the consent of the owners or without the question of compen-