

## LOK SABHA

*Friday, May 4, 1984/Vaisakha 14, 1906*  
(SAKA)

*The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock*

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

### ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

#### Import of Power Sprayers

\*927. PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Himachal Pradesh Govt. have applied for an import licence for importing 2000 power sprayers for spraying in apple orchards ;

(b) if so, whether indigenous equipment is available for such spraying operations ;

(c) whether import of sprayers will not adversely affect India's general policy of self-reliance besides draining the foreign exchange reserves ; and

(d) if so, whether this import of sprayers is being allowed ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SUPPLY (SHRI NIHAR RANJAN LASKAR) : (a) M/s. Himachal Pradesh Horticultural Produce Marketing Corporation had applied for import of light weight, high pressure power sprayers of compact design that could be carried easily in the Hilly terrains for spraying in Apple Orchards.

(b) The indigenous equivalents of comparable specifications are reported by the DGTD to be not available.

(c) and (d) Import of 2300 Nos. of Light Weight high pressure Power Sprayers in 3 different designs and sizes has been

permitted since indigenous equivalents of comparable specifications were not available. DGTD have written to M/s. Himachal Pradesh Horticultural Produce Marketing & Processing Corporation Ltd. as well as to the domestic manufacturers to take up local manufacture of compact design power sprayers particularly to be used in the Hilly terrains. This matter is being pursued by the Director General Technical Development.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether it is not a fact that the general policy of this Government in regard to the purchase of sprayers in Himachal Pradesh and elsewhere is not keeping pace with the declared policy of self-reliance and is it not a fact that despite the fact that there are four to five indigenous manufacturers who are prepared to meet all the requirements of Himachal Pradesh and also other areas where there are apple orchards and in spite of the fact that even the boosted demand of 2,000—my own feeling is that it is not more than 500—sprayers that are required by Himachal Pradesh and others and the manufacturers are telling that with necessary alterations and modifications they are prepared to meet, you have rejected the offer and you are unnecessarily importing the sprayers, thereby squandering the foreign exchange reserves ?

SHRI NIHAR RANJAN LASKAR: Sir, the policy for the import of sprayers is very clear. I can inform the hon. Member that import of sprayers was neither in the list of banned items nor in the list of Open General Licence. Therefore, imports are considered having regard to the recommendations of the sponsoring authority or the administrative authority and the need for the same under the circumstances. On the technical side also clearance is obtained from DGTD and the question of availability is also looked into. The highest body in such matters is under the Central Government and is Chair-ed by the Secretary, Department of Industrial Development. This is a coordinated

body which is the highest authority on this. They must have gone through all these requirements. This matter has come to CCI & E for issuing the licence. Before that it has come through all these agencies and those agencies have gone through the points raised by the hon. Member.

**PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE :** Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has quoted certain advice given by various agencies to indicate that some of the technological aspects of sprayers are not available with the indigenous manufacturers and that is why import has become inevitable. In the light of this, my next supplementary will be on the basis of certain facts and figures that I will place before you. Either you accept them or contradict them. If you say that import has become inevitable because these modifications and alternations in the indigenous production are not available, I will quote the experience of three years in relation to a manufacturer who is supplying them the necessary sprayers indigenously :

Year	Indigenous production available from that manufacturer	Imports
1981	982	Nil
1982	1024	Nil
1983	1715	Nil
1984 (Figures for January and February)	485	Nil

So, according to the figures for 1981, 1982, 1983 and 1984 (January and February), there are no imports. Despite that what has happened recently that has compelled you to have an import under the garb that some modifications are required? I have given you the figures. Either confirm them or contradict them and tell us why there is lapse on the part of the Government in relation to the declared policy of self-reliance? I will complete the question by giving one more factual data. I want a confirmation from him. You will get an idea as to how much foreign exchange they are squandering. Look at the wholesale market price per unit of indigenous production: spraying unit Rs. 1,590; engine Rs. 2,525. So, if it is indigenous, the unit of production cost is Rs. 4,115. On the contrary, if you import the device,

the landed cost per unit is Rs. 2,670 plus an import duty of Rs. 3,337; the total comes to Rs. 6,007 per unit... (*Interruptions*) There is a Speaker in the Chair. Sir, have you decentralised your power? If it goes above his head, I cannot help it. I am very relevant; it is connected with the policy. I am telling the Minister that if we have an indigenous device, the per unit cost would be Rs. 4,115; on the contrary, if we have imported device, we are required to pay Rs. 6,007 as the landed price. Despite the big margin between the indigenous and imported cost and despite the fact that we did not import them in 1981, 1982 and 1983, what were the special circumstances which made you go in for imports in 1984?

**SHRI NIHAR RANJAN LASKAR :** I have already replied to most of the points raised by my hon. friend. We are only the issuing agency. Before it comes to us, there are so many technical bodies which go into the various aspects. The Ministry of Agriculture is the administrative Ministry which recommended the import. The DGTD is the technical body, which cleared it, keeping in view the urgent demand and considering all the technical aspects. Though there are 4 or 5 companies manufacturing this, only one is in the field. Admittedly, they are not in a position to supply this equipment, the technical equipments which are needed for the sprayers. That is why the recommendation for import was made.

I may say for the information of the hon. Member that the import of only a limited quantity has been allowed, after comparing the technical details of the sprayers being manufactured indigenously vis-a-vis the demand for import from Japan. The sprayers proposed to be imported were light weight high pressure, weighing 20 to 21 kg and 10 kg, compared to 40 kg without engine and 28 kg without engine respectively being manufactured indigenously. This is one point.

The imported sprayers would generate adequate pressure to reach high altitude trees, were of much compact design and light in weight, capable for operating with high pressure. These are the factors which weighed in favour of importing them.

**PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE** seek a clarification. I asked a pointed ques-

tion by giving the figures for four years, the same operation with the same type of spray, where no import was necessary. I am not concerned with what advice your technical body gave you. You settle it with them. Even on the basis of their advice, for the past four years there was no import at all. Why did you feel the necessity for imports only now ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SUPPLY (SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH) : There is only one angle of indigenisation, which the hon. Member is rightly concerned with, which is our concern also. On this aspect of indigenisation or protection to indigenous capacity by not allowing imports, the Industries Ministry and the DGTD have gone into it and given their recommendations. By and large, we go by the recommendations of the administrative Ministry, which in the present case is the Agriculture Ministry and DGTD, which also take care of the indigenous angle. Secondly, apart from the indigenous manufacture, there is also the aspect of the growers, those who are in horticulture, the farmers. The Agriculture Ministry stated that for high altitude spraying high pressure pumps are required and these pumps are not being produced here; the DGTD confirmed it. So, in the interests of the farmers, on the strong recommendation of the Ministry of Agriculture, a limited quantity was imported.

PROF. MADHU DANDEVATE : High altitude existed previously also or it developed later when imports were decided ?

MR. SPEAKER : Professor, there is something much more than that.

PROF. MADHU DANDEVATE : You are an agriculturist and you will be able to judge it.

MR. SPEAKER : That is what I am telling you.

SHRI SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY : These arguments can be applied for importing anything, because they are superior. Sir, this is very important. These arguments can be applied for importing all these things.

PROF. MADHU DANDEVATE : Sir,

he says that due to the pressure the whole machinery cannot work. Altitude has been there for a long time. Altitude did not develop after February 1984.

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH : But it is being tackled now.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I am saying something. There are technological advances from time to time and when we find that some change is needed, technological advances are needed, I am all for this indigenous production, we must produce for ourselves, and that is the primary object of it and we must make these things available in India. I know in certain times people feel that this bag is too heavy or something like that, then the farmers also say, 'Why don't we get that ? So we must make that available. This should be our endeavour. I have seen lately that our chaff, the harvester combine, has come to stay; without it you cannot harvest. These are all vast fields nowadays. And when the bailer was being manufactured here, some impediments came and it has been left out. So, the whole chaff is going down the drain. Why don't we, on our own initiative, take these things and allow these things to be manufactured so that we can bail ? Not only the high altitude apples but even mangoes and other things and our citrus fruits we are in need of. I know we need much more effective sprayers for them and they are in need. We need a very good thing and please try to help in getting us this.

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH : Sir, precisely it is the effort of the Industry Ministry. If they recommend that this is not available, we are not technical people, we cannot say this is available or not, so whenever they say this is not available, we go by that.

PROF. MADHU DANDEVATE : Is there any pressure for import ?

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH : There is a positive pressure from the Agriculture Ministry and also the State Government—Himachal Pradesh. If they say that it is not available, how can we say that this is available ?

(Interruptions)