

going to take some specific steps towards that direction ?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE : So far as the anomaly which cropped up because of the duty structure as far as the excise duty is concerned, that has been taken care of by that amendment and even with the countervailing duty of 15% there were some products made out of it and these are in various stages of production. So in between there was some anomaly which cropped up because of the manufacture out of the imported metal which took place earlier.

SHRI H.N. BAHUGUNA : Why not you pool the two and levy the price ?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE : There is the pooling arrangement. But, at the same time, you know when you are claiming the duty set off, may be technically—that is why I am saying this is also a technical problem—their demand may be justified, but it is difficult to do it because I can set off only that part which is actually paid out.

I cannot set off. Therefore, for the controversy arising out of 22% and 15%, there is a problem. But in future, we are trying to see that the price of the product out of indigenous and out of imported material is at par.

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Nadar—Q. No. 609—not here. Shri Narayan Choubey—Q. No. 610—not here. Dr. C. Pratap Wagh—Not here. Shrimati Rane—not here. Q. No. 612—Shri Sanat Kumar Mandal.

**Permission for Setting up of
Commercial Bank by West
Bengal Government**

*612 **SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL :** Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred Question No.

192 on 24 February, 1984 regarding new licences to foreign banks and state :

(a) whether West Bengal Government has reiterated its demand for a commercial bank to be set up by that Government which has been pending with the Reserve Bank of India for the last three years ;

(c) if so, the stage at which the matter stands at present ; and

(c) how long will it take for the Reserve Bank of India to decide the matter and whether he will ask the Bank to expedite it ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY) : (a) to (c) Reserve Bank of India, which is the statutory authority for licensing a banking company, has conveyed its views to the Government of West Bengal in February, 1984. No further reference has been received so far by the Reserve Bank from the State Government.

SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, from the reply of the Hon. Minister, it is clear that the Government of India has stated its views to the Government of West Bengal. May I know from him what is the content in the letter and whether the Government of India is ready to set up a commercial bank in West Bengal.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : No, Sir.

SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL : If the answer is 'No', what is the reason you have explained in detail, in the letter which you have sent to the West Bengal Government ?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE : No.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE : Sir, the Minister has stated that he has let the West Bengal Government know the reasons. Since this is a

Central subject and since we are Members of Parliament, we may be apprised of the reasons. Let him please do that.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE : I have no objection. And I think that at least half a dozen times this matter has been discussed on the floor of this very House and I had explained in detail. I have already explained that when the banks were nationalised, one of the major objectives was that there should be a Central Board and it should be under the Central sector. As for as setting up a commercial bank is concerned, I had explained that it is not our intention if it is a question of the branch expansion. For that there is a regular institutional arrangement. A Committee consisting of the Chief Ministers of various zones and Finance Ministers meet annually, every year and take stock of the staff. If it is a question of the ownership, even in the regional rural bank, in every State, it is owned to the extent of 1/3. Nowadays, the major emphasis has been to establish regional rural banks. As many as 162 regional rural banks have been established covering 270 districts ; in West Bengal also, eight regional rural banks have been established, As such, the regional rural bank is owned by the State Government to the extent of 1/3. Therefore, considering all these aspects, it was thought that a separate bank to be established by a State is not necessary.

Mr. SPEAKER : I have to ask the House a question. If three Members in a row are absent, we call it a hat trick. If six members in a row are absent, then what do we call that ?

Professor has suggested that it is a six trick.

Shri Sidnal—Q. No. 613—absent.

Q. No. 614—Shri R. P. Gaekwad.

Export of Ornamental Horticulture Produce

*614. SHRI R. P. GAEKWAD :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether a study had been made for exploring large potential for exporting ornamental horticulture produce in the world market and to gain recognition for our glory and expertise in horticulture, landscaping and gardening ; and

(b) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SUPPLY (SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH) : (a) and (b) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

A study group was constituted to undertake an indepth study to identify possible growth areas for exports of flowers and live plants and to outline remedial measures for augmentation of exports.

2. The study observed that the total exports of floricultural products and fruit trees during 1978-79 reached Rs. 8 million of which cut-flowers/buds constituted 38% and foliage plants 37%. Middle East accounted for 39% of these exports which were mainly foliage plants followed by Western Europe—mainly West Germany, Holland and Italy—31% mainly cut flowers. Indian floricultural products have to face stiff competition from the established West European markets on account of higher prices, inferior quality and lack of assortments.

3. The salient recommendations of the group were :

- (i) Import duty on Peat Moss should be reduced.
- (ii) Special commodity rates for air freighting cut-flowers, foliage plants, etc. should be introduced by Air India.