

replied to the question of the hon. Member.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Next question. One more question is coming of this nature, at that time, you can ask your question.

स्वर्ण की नीलामी

*84. श्रीमती कृष्णा साही : क्या वित्त मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या यह सच है कि जनता पार्टी के शासन के दौरान 13 मी० टन सोना नीलाम किया गया था ;

(ख) क्या यह भी सच है कि वह 13 मी० टन स्वर्ण के ल 86 करोड़ रुपये में नीलाम किया गया; और

(ग) यदि उपरोक्त भागों का उत्तर स्वीकारात्मक हो तो उक्त 13 मी० टन स्वर्ण की नीलामी के क्या कारण थे ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN): (a) to (c). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

Pursuant to the decision of the Government announced by the Finance Minister in his Budget Speech on 28-2-1978 a total quantity of 12.556 tonnes of gold was sold by the Reserve Bank of India in 14 auctions held between May-October 1978 on behalf of the Government. The total value of sale proceeds was Rs. 86.5 crores.

While announcing the decision to sell gold the then Finance Minister stated the following in his Budget Speech of 1978.

"...Despite the utmost vigilance of the Customs authorities and con-

siderable seizures and confiscations of smuggled gold, it is an unfortunate and distressing fact that gold smuggling has to some degree continued. The substantial difference between Indian gold prices and International gold prices has served as a temptation to smugglers. Gold smuggling is not only illegal but has helped to sustain black money operations and foreign exchange racketeering. It is, therefore, necessary for us to think of economic measures in addition to preventive measures to tackle this evil of gold smuggling. We have given very careful thought to the question and have decided to commence the sale of gold from the stocks held by Government....'

Sale of gold by auction was thus introduced by the then Government on an experimental basis designed to supplement other anti-smuggling measures. It was also intended incidentally to mitigate the expansionary impact of the budgetary deficit.

Consequent to a sudden steep rise in the international price of gold towards the end of September, 1978, sharper increase in the internal price of gold due to speculative forces, the Government suspended the gold auctions on 26-10-1978.

SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN: There is another Q. No. 95 of Prof. Madhu Dandavate. If you allow, we can take up both the questions together.

MR. SPEAKER: If the Professor has no objection to it.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: I have no objection. But my question is different from my wife's question. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: So, both the questions—84 and 95—are being taken up together. You can put two supplementaries. Prof. Madhu Dandavate can also put two supplementaries.