

[Shri K. D. Malaviya]

(2) Notification No. MII-152(271)/53, dated the 9th March, 1954. [Placed in Library. See No. S-195/54.]

(3) Notification No. MII-159(1)/54, dated the 9th April, 1954. [Placed in Library. See No. S-196/54.]

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

PRESENTATION OF EIGHTH AND NINTH REPORTS

Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava (Gurgaon): I beg to present the following:

(i) Eighth Report of the Estimates Committee on the Damodar Valley Corporation; and

(ii) Ninth Report of the Estimates Committee on the Administrative, Financial and other Reforms.

COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS

PRESENTATION OF THIRD REPORT

Shri Raghubarasaiah (Tenali): I beg to present the Third Report of the Committee on Petitions.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The Committee on Absence of Members in its Third Report has recommended that Leave of Absence be granted to **Shri Chowkhamoon Gohain**, **Shri Shyam Nandan Mishra**, **Shrimati Sucheta Kripalani**, **Shri Devi Datt Pant** and **Shri Bhajahari Mahata** for the periods indicated in the Report. The Committee has further recommended that in the cases of **Shri Sibnarayan Singh Mahapatra** and **Shri B. Shiva Rao** who had been absent without permission, their absence for the period indicated against each in the report may be condoned.

I take it that the House agrees with the recommendations of the Committee.

Some Hon. Members: Yes.

Leave was granted and absence condoned.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I have to inform the hon. Members that copies of the two publications containing opinions of the State Governments on the Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 1954 (Group A and Group B) have been received from the Ministry of Home Affairs for distribution to hon. Members in pursuance of the undertaking given by the Minister of Home Affairs in the House on the 3rd May 1954. These have been placed in the Publications Counter for distribution to hon. Members. Hon. Members may collect their copies from the counter.

STATEMENT RE. PURCHASE OF TRACTORS FOR CENTRAL TRACTOR ORGANISATION

The Minister of Agriculture (Dr. P. S. Deshmukh): I rise to make a brief statement on the Seventh Report of the Estimates Committee in so far as it concerns the Central Tractor Organisation. I was asked if I would accept a short notice question which covered a number of points to which specific attention had been drawn by the Estimates Committee. Until the report had been fully examined, it would not have been possible for me to answer all the questions satisfactorily and I suggested, therefore, that, if the Speaker so desired, I would make a brief but general statement. I am grateful to him for having given me this opportunity to do so.

It will help in appreciating the position in respect of the Central Tractor Organisation properly if at the outset I recall briefly the situation as it obtained in 1949. We were then faced with a serious food shortage. That, as you will remember, was the year in which our imports of foodgrains were as high as 3.8 million tons. It was in that year again that we decided to achieve self-sufficiency by 1951. The Foodgrains Policy Committee had recommended that the Ministry of Agriculture should take up immediately for reclamation the 85 million acres

of culturable waste land that were said to be available in the country. That Committee set a target of 3 million tons of additional foodgrains to be obtained by reclaiming about 9 million acres of land. The Government then decided that as a first instalment they would proceed with a scheme for reclaiming 2.5 million acres within a period of 5 years. It was further decided to concentrate mainly on lands infested with *kans*. With this decision, the Central Tractor Organisation came into being.

Initially it was decided to purchase 180 tractors. There were then said to be available four types of well-known and reputable tractors which could have served our purpose, viz. Caterpillar D8, Allis Chalmers HD 19, International Harvester TD 24 and Oliver F.D.E. and these incidentally are also the types which were accepted later by the World Bank as suitable type. Our experts had some experience of Caterpillar D7 and knew something about D8s. They knew very little, if at all, about the others. The decision, however, in a way, was made for us by the fact that Allis Chalmers and Oliver F.D.E., were the ones which were offered for earlier delivery and, as I have already said, our main anxiety was to begin the work of reclamation as quickly as possible. Accordingly we purchased 90 Oliver F.D.E. and 90 Allis Chalmers HD 19. It is stated by the Estimates Committee that we should not have purchased these without a full trial. Now I do not know what particular type of trial the Estimates Committee had in mind, but if the tractors in question had been submitted to the type of test which alone would have been worthwhile, it would have taken us several thousand hours of experimental work, stretching over more than two seasons, that is. two years, before we could have come to any definite conclusion. That much time we did not then have to spare, and indeed, if such a suggestion had been made to this House at that time, it would have been said, and I think rightly, that we did not have the sense of urgency that the situation demanded. However, it is not contended that

these tractors did not do the task for which they were purchased. They did. The only criticism that can be made against them is that their operational cost was found to be higher under our conditions than that of other types which we purchased later, on the basis of experience which we gained. These tractors, indeed, are still being used effectively for the purpose of reclamation. Would it be altogether unreasonable to suggest that for a proper assessment of loss and gain to the country, we should set the extra-operational cost incurred over the period against the cost of the additional food produced by the four to five hundred thousand acres of land reclaimed and brought under cultivation within the two years which would have been spent in testing?

At the same time, as the tractors were purchased, Government purchased 24 diesel-operated trucks. The Estimates Committee says that no effort was made by Government to ascertain before making this purchase the economics of diesel-operated trucks. Now it is a well established fact that other things being equal, diesel engines though more expensive initially, are more economic in operation than petrol engines, and their superiority in the heavier vehicles, heavier than a three-ton truck, is, I believe, generally accepted. The next important and relevant consideration which weighed with Government was that as the tractors were all diesel-engined tractors, a greater standardisation and convenience in maintenance would be secured if the trucks too, which together with tractors formed a unit of operation, were also equipped with diesel engines. And for three years, these trucks were, in fact, worked with diesel engines. Incidentally we have forgotten now that those were the days when petrol was still rationed and one could not then foresee when petrol rationing would be lifted. Then, in the ordinary course of things, these engines had to be overhauled. It was at this stage that it was decided that instead of overhauling the old diesel engines, it would be advantageous to change over to petrol

[Dr. P. S. Deshmukh]

engines. The cost of a new petrol engine with which this truck is normally equipped was lower than the cost of overhauling the diesel engine. It was this consideration which probably immediately influenced the decision to change-over at that stage to petrol engine. However that may be, I suggest that it would be incorrect to say on the available evidence that the original action betrayed lack of planning and foresight. At the most, it may be said that those concerned with taking the decision were not as wise and knowledgeable as they should have been, though let me say even to this day argument rages as to the point at which diesel has the better of petrol. Quite apart from the fact, then, it is by no means established that Government's action in purchasing the diesel trucks was a mistake, even if we assume that a mistake has been made, it is doubtful if it would be correct to say that any one concerned with their purchase had committed an irregularity.

I must here note with pain the rather summary way in which the Estimates Committee have brushed aside the view of the Zaidi Committee that "some mistakes were inevitable in an enterprise of the magnitude undertaken by the Central Tractor Organisation with no precedents and traditions". Is it not correct that the Central Tractor Organisation does represent an enterprise of a magnitude never before undertaken in this country? Even today, it is probably correct to say that it is quite the biggest organisation of its kind anywhere. Is it incorrect to say that no precedents or traditions or experience existed in this country for the running of such an organisation? Are these then not relevant circumstances?

The next important criticism relates to the policy adopted by the Central Tractor Organisation in regard to the spare parts required for the maintenance of the tractors. Simultaneously with the initial purchase of the tractors, spare parts worth 25 per cent. of the cost of tractors were purchased. As

the House is aware, there are thousands of different spare parts required for a tractor, and requirements of spare parts are worked out for normal use of a tractor by the manufacturers on the basis of their own experience of the normal working of tractors and of the experience of their customers. We had necessarily to rely at the outset on the advice of the manufacturers, but our needs were bound to be different. For one thing, these tractors were not designed to do the type of work for which we had purchased them, and therefore, the experience of normal wear and tear was of little use. The spare parts, again, are of two kinds, parts which are used up rapidly and parts which last much longer. In the conditions in which the tractors had to operate in this country, the life of fast moving parts was found to be shorter than we would have ordinarily expected. In order to keep the tractors going, the initial purchases of spare parts worth 25 per cent. of the cost of tractors had, therefore, to be followed up by further purchases in the light of actual needs. We were not in a position to adopt a policy that was really satisfactory in regard to spare parts in the early days and it is only now that we are beginning to evolve a satisfactory formula for assessing our needs of spare parts in a realistic manner. What must be remembered is that we were anxious to see that our tractors were not held up for want of vital spare parts. This led to the decision being made to err on the side of safety, that is, more spare parts rather than less, so that the tractors may be able to function without a hitch. Many of my hon. friends must be aware of the tremendous waste involved in the large number of privately owned tractors, which are standing idle all over the country because some few spare parts are not available. That did not happen in the Central Tractor Organisation. The question that requires to be asked, therefore, is: "Was an excessive price paid for ensuring that the work of reclamation should go on unhampered and continuously?"

I will refer to only one more of the important points made by the Estimates Committee. (*Interruptions*). They have referred to some 500 and odd boxes containing spare parts of Caterpillar tractors which had remained unopened for the past two years and more. These boxes were part of the army disposals. The contents of these boxes were not known, nor did each of these boxes contain one type of spare part. In each indeed, there was a jumble of spare parts and considerable amount of sorting was necessary when these were eventually opened. The Central Tractor Organisation took over from the disposals several thousand boxes of spare parts weighing some 750 tons in all. In a heavy tractor there are thousands of separate components. Only an expert can identify all the components properly and we did not have too many such experts. The progress was, therefore, bound to be slow. In spite of these difficulties, I may inform that by March 1953, eighty per cent. of the work had been completed.....

Shri Gadgil (Poona Central): May I, on a point of Order, ask this question? The ruling of the Chair is that long statements should not be read but that they should be laid on the Table of the House. This is more over a matter on which Government should be given greater opportunity and the House also should be given an opportunity to discuss; that is much better. I would request the Leader of the House to give us some time that way instead of reading this; it seems to be a big volume.

Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava (Gurgaon): I also suggest that the House should be given an opportunity to discuss this statement as well as the Estimates Committee's report so that we can come to some conclusion. This is an *ex parte* statement as this is in the nature of a reply to the Estimates Committee. I therefore request that the whole thing may be discussed in the House if such an unusual statement is allowed to be made.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The hon. Minister may place it on the Table of the House. I have only to make one observation. The Estimates Committee is a Committee of this House. It hears all the witnesses; sends memoranda; puts questions; gives ample opportunity to the Ministry to reply; they are considered and then they are asked also to explain certain of these matters. The draft report is again sent to the Ministry and after their verification, the reply is received. Ultimately that Committee of the House comes to a conclusion. I never knew that the hon. Minister will take advantage of this opportunity to make a statement categorically saying that whatever the Committee has done is wrong. Therefore, either abolish this Committee or let the hon. Minister have the final word in this matter. This is an unusual practice and we have not done so, so far. When the hon. Prime Minister on a prior occasion felt that one of the recommendations could not be implemented, he sent for the Chairman of the Committee, discussed with him and asked the Committee to reconsider the matter so that the tradition and convention that the Committee's report is generally accepted as a report of the House may be maintained. It is not that the Committee claims that its decisions are infallible but this is not the method in which an advantage should be taken of the opportunity to make a statement and say categorically, item after item, that the Committee's report is wrong. I am exceedingly sorry. He need not continue to read the statement; he may place it before the House. I shall have a discussion with the Leader of the House as to what should be the procedure in regard to these matters.

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Kidwai): I think in the end we have said that before this Committee's report was received, I myself felt that we have been purchasing things which we did not require, and that the Zaidi Committee was appointed to investigate...

Shri S. S. More (Sholapur): Is it not another attempt to explain away?

Shri Kidwai: I myself realised it. Everyday I am receiving reports of the purchases that should not have been made. Therefore, at the end of this statement, we have said that all the findings.....

Shri S. S. More: Sir, I rise on a point of order. You had definitely ruled it out that he should not continue to read the statement. The hon. Minister now by way of oral explanation is giving the substance of the whole report.

An Hon. Member: There is absolutely no harm in doing so.

Shri Kidwai: I was going to say that at the end of the statement it is said that every point that has been raised by the Estimates Committee is being looked into and if there is anything wrong the person responsible for it will be properly dealt with. That is how the statement ends.

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh rose—

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: He need not pursue it. It is a long statement. We have other work before the House. The hon. Minister will kindly feel how the House is anxious to get through the other work. The statement is a long one and time must be given to hon. Members to read it and digest it. Enough has been said. He may place it on the Table of the House.

Shri Venkataraman (Tanjore): I suggest that copies of the statement may be circulated to hon. Members.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Yes, they will be circulated.

Shri Ramachandra Reddi (Nellore): May I know whether a day will be allotted at least in the next session, for a discussion of this?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: It will be considered later on, what ought to be the procedure. Till now the recommendations of the Estimates Committee have not been discussed on the floor of the House. It is a Committee consisting of twenty-five Members. The usual convention has been for the Government to implement the recommendations and make a statement on the

floor of the House as to what has been implemented, and if perchance in the light of any subsequent events or other facts that might have come to the notice of the Government they think that it requires reconsideration, they place it once again before the Committee for reconsideration. That is how they have been readjusting, instead of saying that the Committee's recommendations have not been accepted. Therefore, all these five years we have not been allowing any discussion of the report in the House. It is accepted as a convention that the recommendations ought to be accepted except where, in the light of subsequent events or other facts, they think it requires revision. And the Committee has been too willing to revise in the light of the facts put before it.

It requires serious consideration as to what is necessary in the future, whether the original convention ought to be continued or whether we should make it one other advisory body, placing its report before the House for discussion, dividing on majority and minority and making the whole thing useless. That is not the convention in the House of Commons. Whatever the Estimates Committee has been doing has been done on behalf of the whole Parliament. And if there is any difference the Estimates Committee may be asked to revise.

As regards the question of practice I shall consider. I shall request the hon. Speaker also to consider and consult the hon. the Leader of the House and to take such steps as may be necessary in the interest of the proper working of the Committee as the organ of the whole Parliament.

Shri H. N. Mukerjee (Calcutta North-East): It happens that from time to time the report of the Estimates Committee or of the Public Accounts Committee brings to light certain points which require a serious discussion. At one time in the Assembly which preceded this Parliament the reports of the Public Accounts Committee used to

be regularly discussed. That is what I find from the proceedings. If that is so I think it is necessary that when the Estimates Committee report produces certain points which excite the House and when the Government reaction is of the character that we have just experienced, it is really necessary that we have some opportunity for discussion. I know you cannot bind the next session and you cannot decide here and now as to what is going to be done at the next session but since you are in the Chair we want to have from you some kind of assurance that this matter will be looked into with all seriousness and sympathy and the House will get the opportunity which Mr. Reddi wants.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The hon. the Leader of the House is here. I will convey this to the Speaker. Both of them will consult and take such action as may be necessary.

As regards the statement, the hon. Minister may lay it on the Table of the House.

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: Sir, I beg to lay the statement on the Table of the House.

*STATEMENT

Purchase of Tractors for Central Tractor Organisation.

In spite of these difficulties, I may inform that by March 1953, 80 per cent. of the work had been completed and in fact lists of these spares, prepared by the Central Tractor Organisation after the sorting out, were circulated to Caterpillar dealers in this country with a view to ascertaining whether they were interested in taking them over and if so, on what terms. The boxes which the Estimates Committee saw were presumably the few which had still to be opened and sorted out. Again, it would seem as if the delay for which we can hold the Central Tractor Organisation responsible is for not taking in hand this programme of opening the boxes soon after the stores were taken over from the disposals. It must

not be forgotten that the years 1948, 1949 and 1950 were years during which this organisation was really establishing itself. Indeed it did not have proper storage facilities during any of these years, nor did they have even such ordinary items as proper bins for keeping the various spare parts separately. On the facts as far as I have been able to see so far, I am not at all sure if it would be reasonable to hold the Central Tractor Organisation to be seriously at fault on this account.

As I made clear at the outset, my remarks are designed only to provide a necessary background in studying the report of the Estimates Committee. They do not mean that I have already made up my mind on this subject. Far from it. The report of the Estimates Committee and the report of the Zaidi Committee are both being examined in my Ministry in a thorough manner and I shall myself go into each of the points made by the two Committees and in particular the Estimates Committee. If I find that there has been culpable negligence on the part of any one, I shall not hesitate to take suitable action. But I am sure you will agree that I would be failing in my duty if I do not take account of the fact that one has to pay a certain price for acquiring experience in a new field and also of the positive side in the shape of the achievements of this Organisation, which I submit, deserves some recognition. As a Minister in charge, I would not like to forget that it is this organisation which has reclaimed over a million acres of land, somewhat in excess of the target set for it, and thereby contributed materially to the satisfactory foodgrain production of the country today.

Conscious of the possibility of some errors of judgment, some mis-calculations etc. in the past we have done much in eliminating their repetition. The result is that we are in a position now to present quite a different and a proud picture of the work of the Central Tractor Organisation. It would not be strictly relevant to go into this in any great detail here because the

*Residuary portion of the statement

made by the Minister of Agriculture

objections and criticism relate to a very different period. And yet it would not be regarded as out of place that as a result of closer scrutiny and continuous watch we saved a sum of Rs. 4,04,900 by dropping purchase proposals and Rs. 4.5 lacs by cancellation of indents already placed on D.G., S. & D. Details of these figures are given in Annexures Nos. I and II which I lay on the Table of the House.

Only one word more and I will close. If the matter is considered in all its bearings the whole thing is not so bad nor black as it *prima facie* looks, but while saying so I would like to assure the House that if we can fix any definite blame on any one, we will not spare him irrespective of the fact as to who he is.

Annexure No. I

Indents cancelled and saving made against the indents already placed on D.G., S. & D.

		Rs.
(1) May, '53	Machine Tools	1,30,000
(2) July, '53	Iron & Steel including nuts and bolts	78,420
(3) Oct. '53	Master Mech. Tool Kits	45,000
(4) Dec. '53	Tyres and Tubes	20,353
(5) 2nd July '53	Universal cutting machine	4,584
(6) July '53	Grease Gun fillers	1,600
(7) 22nd April '53	Spare parts for Issacson P.C. Us.	25,000
	Total	3,04,957
(8) 28th Sept. '53	20 sets of final drives	
	Net Cancellation Rs. 3,05,000	21,498.6
	Dollars 21,498.6	Dollars
	Total Rs. 4,50,000/-	

Annexure No. II

Purchase proposals dropped as a measure towards economy—

		Rs.
July 1953	(1) Proposal to purchase Arc welding set	25,000
Dec. 1953	(2) Proposal to purchase a crankshaft grinder for Delhi workshop.	44,000
March 1954	(3) Proposal to purchase Remetalling Machine	30,000

		Rs.
Oct., 1953	(4) Proposal to purchase crane attachments 8 Nos.	56,000
February, 1953	(5) Proposal to purchase 16 sets Anchor Chains.	2,20,000
		3,75,000
	Plus	
	(6) A & U Frame =	₹8,000 = 1,04,000
	(7) Spare parts of Blue Diamond Engine.	19,500
	TOTAL	4,04,900

STATEMENT RE: INDIAN CATTLE PRESERVATION BILL

The Minister of Agriculture (Dr. P. S. Deshmukh): With your permission, Sir, I beg to make a brief statement on the Indian Cattle Preservation Bill, 1952 of Seth Govind Das. The Attorney-General has already elucidated the constitutional position. While there is no need to add to it, I think it is desirable that I should indicate the Government's position in the matter, and the steps that have been taken by the Central Government in providing for protection and preservation of cattle and directing the policies on this important subject to be pursued by the State Governments.

This is a subject about which popular sentiment is greatly exercised and it is desirable therefore that I give to the House briefly both an idea of the magnitude and implication of this difficult and vital problem and explain briefly Government's approach to it. This is all the more necessary, because the temptation to make political capital out of it has not always been resisted and at times very relevant but inconvenient facts have been ignored. The Government, however, must take account of all relevant considerations and formulate a policy which, without being violent to popular sentiments, is calculated to safeguard the true interests of the country.

I will take the first point first, viz., the immensity and dimensions of the