

[Shri Satya Narayan Sinha.]

As it has since not been found possible to provide for the reference of the University Grants Commission Bill in this session to a Joint Committee, it is proposed, time permitting, to provide for the consideration and passing of the Tea (Amendment) Bill which was passed by the Rajya Sabha on 30th November, and laid on the Table of this House on 2nd December 1954. I find that according to the present time allocation order, adequate time for this short and non-controversial Bill will be available on Saturday, the 18th December, 1954.

TEA (SECOND AMENDMENT) BILL

The Minister of Commerce and Industry (Shri T. T. Krishnamachari):
I beg to move:

"That the Bill further to amend the Tea Act, 1953, be taken into consideration."

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER in the Chair.]

Hon. Members who have read the contents of the Bill will realise that the scope of this particular measure is to raise the cess on exports now being levied for the purpose of the administration of the Tea Act and for the functioning of the Central Tea Board from Rs. 2 per 100 lbs. to Rs. 4 per 100 lbs. The existing rate of Rs. 2 per 100 lbs. yields about Rs. 85 lakhs a year, which is more or less enough to cover the expense of the Tea Board, and a certain amount of limited propaganda for our tea in foreign markets.

12 Noon.

Sir, the House would recollect that, when it passed the Tea Act some time back last year, it had laid down as part of the duties of the Board under section 10(2)(b) to promote by such measures as it thinks fit, better working conditions and provisions for the improvement in the amenities and incentives of workers. It has not been found possible to undertake this task to any considerable extent largely because of the paucity of funds

available. The Tea Board has, in the past, made certain attempts. In fact, I think, all along they have allocated about Rs. 4 lakhs since 1951-52. They could not set up an organisation for this purpose or even investigate into the condition of workers. They had to depend very largely on State Governments' co-operation. The net result is that a very large quantum of even this amount of money is not being spent. It is the intention of Government to take up this obligation laid down on the Central Tea Board under section 10(2)(b) seriously and chalk out a plan for rendering so much aid and facilities to workers as is possible.

It is with this object, primarily, that we are coming before the House to raise the cess from Rs. 2 to Rs. 4. I would also like to say that in our view the Rs. 85 lakhs or so that might be realised by the increased cess is not intended for the pure and simple purpose of providing amenities and facilities for workers; it may even be spent on rehabilitating the smaller gardens and for development of the tea industry as a whole, even for which purpose the existing funds available allow no room.

Hon. Members may very well ask: "We are passing this measure. How is it going to be spent?" A programme will have to be made for the purpose, so he included in the Budget and the approval of the House sought for the purpose of appropriating a particular amount for: (a) providing amenities and facilities for workers, and (b) for the purpose of affording facilities to the smaller tea gardens. I am particularly mentioning this fact, because my hon. friend Shri N. M. Lingam, when we were discussing this question in a different context the other day, drew my attention to the need for some effort on the part of Government and the Central Tea Board for the purpose of rehabilitating smaller gardens.

Sir, the measure before the House is comparatively simple. The objects

are fairly well known and for any appropriation of the funds available we will have to come back again to the House and obtain its approval to the Budget that we lay before the House.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Motion moved.

"That the Bill further to amend the Tea Act, 1953, be taken into consideration."

Shri Tusbar Chatterjea (Serampore): Sir, on reading the Statement of Objects and Reasons of this Bill I find that this Bill should be considered as a welcome measure in so far as the increment of cess is sought for providing improved conditions of labour. From that point of view we welcome this Bill, particularly because the condition of the tea labour is pretty well known to all of us. What horrible conditions the tea labour has to suffer have been well known for a long time. I only refer to what one of our hon. friends Shri K. P. Tripathi wrote in some of the daily papers. He drew a very vivid picture of the horrible condition of tea labour. He said:

"The conditions of the tea labour can be better termed as sub-human conditions."

He cited so many examples, and said:

"Tea workers cannot have two square meals a day. They cannot have even a noon meal. The houses that they occupy are occupied not by one family. The houses are so poor in number that more than one family has to live in such houses and so all sorts of evil practice develop. No protection against bad weather and no provision for canteen and crechers. 80 per cent. of the tea labourers are affected by hook worms. Schools exist, no doubt, but only in name; actually tea labourers' children cannot get the facility of such schools.

Hospitals are there no doubt but proper help is not given."

Sir, this is the description given by one of our hon. Members. So there is no controversy about the point that much has to be done to improve the condition of the tea labourers.

But, my point is this: This cess at the rate of Rs. 4, I think, is not enough. The huge profit that the tea estate-owners reap is well known and I think a provision should be made so that in case of necessity a higher rate of cess can be obtained.

Then, I want to raise another important point here. In the Statement of Objects and Reasons it is said that one of the objects of this Cess Fund that is being created is to provide for amenities of labour. Now, simply stating that one of the objects is providing amenities to the labour is not enough in our view. There must be a fixed provision that such and such a part of the Fund shall be utilised for improving the conditions of labour. Unless that fixed provision is made, we doubt that a larger part of the Fund may be utilised, not for the good of the labour, but for the good of the so-called industry. I mean by "so-called" that a larger part may be utilised, not for the good of the employers. Therefore, I think a fixed provision should be made saying that a particular part of the Fund should be utilised for the betterment of the conditions of the labour.

In this connection I want to raise another point. We have some experience of the Coal Mines Labour Welfare Fund. Although a good fund has been created there in the name of the Coal Mines Labour Welfare Fund we know that in respect of housing conditions not more than 35 per cent. of that Fund has been spent although a very large number of coal mines labour is suffering

[Shri Tushar Chatterjea]

from want of houses. The whole Fund is not utilised and even the number of houses that are constructed are not being availed of by the coal mines labour. This has happened in the case of the Coal Mines Labour Welfare Fund and so I feel that if such a thing happens here also, then the loud claim of providing for labour amenities will only be in words. Therefore, I want the hon. Minister to be particular about this point in spending this Fund.

But the more important point that I want to raise is something else. While welcoming this Bill I also want to raise this question. I want the hon. Minister to be particular about this point. Why is it that instead of enforcing the normal labour laws for enabling the labour to get better amenities, this backdoor method is being adopted? I refer to the Plantation Labour Act. So far as I have read from the Plantation Labour Act, if the Plantation Labour Act is applied in toto, all sorts of amenities that the tea labour requires can be provided through that Act. But we know that for a long time this Plantation Labour Act has been kept in abeyance. The employers object to the Act. Due to the employers' Objection, Government fumbled, and Government hesitated to apply it and under the pressure of labour demand, Government implemented it only the other day and that too in a restricted manner.

Shri A. K. Gopalan (Cannanore): There are certain things which are placed for the consideration of the Minister. But if the Minister does not hear them, he cannot give an answer to those points. The Member who is speaking and making points so that the Minister may give an assurance or something like that. I hope that if the Minister, attends to

the speech, he could give those assurances.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I find that one hour—12 NOON to 1 P.M.—has been allotted for the disposal of all three stages of this Bill. Ten minutes have already been taken away. I find very many hon. Members—in front of me, to my right and to my left—are interested in this subject and they want to speak. The representatives of the parties must assess the time that would be possibly taken by their Members, and not impose that work on the Chair who is not a party to this business. Of course, hon. Members in the lobby or in the Advisory Committee think that the Bill could be over in a trice, but here, in the House, I have to satisfy all hon. Members, and within the limited time at the disposal of the House for this Bill, I have naturally to exclude so many Members from the list, much to their chagrin. Therefore, I would advise hon. Member: to sit in groups with their leaders, study the matter and think out the appropriate assessment of time and then begin to speak. I find that this is a subject of importance and also of interest. The hon. Member who is in possession of the House is developing good points. Therefore, I am very much reluctant to ask him to sit down, but I am bound by the time limit allotted. There is only one hour for all the stages of the Bill and for all sections of the House. Therefore, hereafter, whichever representative comes on behalf of a particular group, will look into this matter deeply, and if he wants equal opportunities and curtailment of time for each Member accordingly, he himself must ask the Member belonging to his group to sit down without imposing the obligation on me.

Shri Tushar Chatterjea: The Plantation Labour Act provided for these things: medical facilities, canteen facilities, recreational facilities, educational facilities, housing facilities,

provision for umbrella, rain-coat, etc. My point is this: when the Plantation Labour Act provides for all these facilities, why not first of all enforce this Act strictly. Instead of doing that, by the back-door, you are creating some fund for the labour welfare. If this is the process adopted, then I think the employers will always try to evade the existing labour laws. The employers are doing so now. I now refer to the Maternity Benefit Act. I know there are several instances in tea gardens where actually, even the most meagre maternity benefit is not offered to the female labour. Why not the Government enforce this law very strictly? If they do so, it will actually better the conditions of labour.

Then, I refer to the Minimum Wages Act. The persistent demand is raised from the tea garden labourers that the existing rate that has been fixed is inadequate. So, on that score also, the Government must take some steps. Now, we all know that tea estate-owners behave in a cruel and inhuman manner with their tea labourers. Only the other day, I put a question about the tragic death of 200 labour families in the Tundu tea gardens. The Manager behaved in such a cruel manner. In spite of the flood, the labourers were forced to live downstairs where the flood-water came and swept the 200 families away. We wanted the Government to make an enquiry. The Government did not make any enquiry. This is the way in which the estate-owners behave with the tea labourers. So, unless and until the attitude of the tea estate-owners is changed, which can be done by compelling them to follow the existing labour laws, I think this sort of back-door way of providing for the amenities of labour is not a good policy of the Government. If this back-door way is always followed, then I think the tea estate-owners, as they are doing now, will always be inspired to evade the labour laws. With these critical observations and

suggestions, I shall welcome this Bill.

Shri N. M. Lingam (Coimbatore): As the hon. Minister said just now, the measure is a very simple one and also it is a very welcome one. But I think this occasion is appropriate for reviewing the working of the Tea Board. The Tea Board has been very ineffective so far.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Is this the occasion for that?

Shri N. M. Lingam: Yes, because the additional levy is to augment the funds of the Tea Board.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: It is for providing amenities for labour. Is the hon. Member afraid that the whole thing might be misused?

Shri N. M. Lingam: Yes. Now, the Tea Board has been confining itself to propaganda in tea. The latest report of the Board made available to us gives only a two-and-a-half page narrative of the activities of the Board. One cannot know from this report the details of the activities of the Board. The Indian Tea Licensing Committee and the Rubber Board and the Coffee Board have given a detailed account of their activities. They have given the statement of receipt and expenditure. But it is unfortunate that the Tea Board has given only a summary which does not convey much. But it is seen from the report that the bulk of this fund has been utilised for propaganda. Rs. 25,48,000 have been utilised for internal propaganda and Rs. 53,50,000 for propaganda abroad. I would like to say a few words about propaganda in this connection. Hitherto, the functions of the Tea Board and the Tea Licensing Committee were separate. The Tea Board was engaged purely in propaganda whereas the Tea Licensing Committee was regulating the extension of tea cultivation. The result has been that while one body was doing propaganda for increased consumption of

[Shri N. M. Lingam]

tea, the other body went on restricting tea cultivation, with the result that we face a situation today where there is a wide gap between supply and demand. Now, under the new Tea Act, it is good that both the functions have been brought under the purview of one body. But then, I began to doubt the utility of propaganda hereafter, because the Tea Board has been doing propaganda for a long time now, and the whole country has become tea-conscious. Again, propaganda is a very airy thing and large sums of money are spent on it. Then again, about the nature of the propaganda, I have to say a few words. The quality of tea that is prepared by way of propaganda by the Tea Board is very inferior. I should even say that it is not tea, whatever else it may be. A wayside tea-shop even in a remote countryside serves better tea than that served by the Tea Board. If the tea now served by the Board is passed on as Indian tea, it is doing a definite disservice.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Are there no tea-tasters in India?

Shri N. M. Lingam: No. Unfortunately very few. The principal activities of the Tea Board have been neglected. Tea planting, marketing, sales technique, broking, and research are according to me the major items among the functions assigned to the Tea Board. But, not much seems to have been done along these directions. Even the very minor grievances brought before the Tea Board such as the difficulties experienced in broking by the Indian brokers, have not been solved adequately. I think it is time that the Board bestowed its attention to these and remove the difficulties experienced by the Indian tea brokers in matters of credit facilities, etc.

The hon. Minister was also good enough to say that one of the functions of the Board was to set up a corporation or to make available

credit facilities for the rehabilitation of small growers. I am glad a beginning is going to be made because under the International Tea Agreement, the small grower had a raw deal. I want to bring to your notice one particular aspect of the matter. We are at the end of the present regulation period. We have to renew the International Agreement if we want to restrict the cultivation of tea beyond 1st April, 1955. Till now even the permissive acreage under the Agreement has not been utilised. It comes to about 40,000 acres. Even if we are a signatory to the agreement hereafter, the permissible acreage will be another 40,000 acres; our country will have about 80,000 acres yet to be cultivated. It is inconceivable that even without any restriction the country will be able to utilise this acreage. I see there is no point in India continuing to be a member of the International Tea Agreement. The only result that had come out of India's being a member of that International Tea Agreement is that the small growers were hit hard. The only estates which could have afforded the facilities for expansion are the big estates. They made the rules for the expansion of small estates so stringent that they could not make any appreciable headway. I am glad the hon. Minister's attention has been focussed on this problem and that he wants to see that the Tea Board, with its increased funds, rehabilitates the small tea garden owner. I shall reserve my other comments to the clause by clause discussion. With these words, I give my whole-hearted support to this Bill.

Shri Barman (North Bengal-Reserved—Sch. Castes): I wholeheartedly support this measure by which the tea cess is being raised from Rs. 2 to Rs. 4 per hundred pounds. Government have given two things in the Statement of Objects and Reasons. The first thing is all round development of the tea industry. The second

is the better working conditions to the labour. I do not doubt, as Shri Tushar Chatterjea doubted, that Government is by this measure, taking upon itself the responsibilities and obligations which are primarily the responsibilities of the tea garden owners, namely, bettering the conditions of the tea garden labourers. I would like to know which part of this responsibility is being taken by the Government upon itself and which part will lie with the tea garden owners according to the Plantation Labour Act. There may be some suspicion in the minds of people that at a time when the tea industry is having its boom period and making enough income, they may just give a little more—Rs. 2/- more per hundred lbs.—and try to shift upon Government their responsibility of bettering the conditions of labourers. This is the time when the Plantation Labour Act can be enforced with all the force. Formerly there was depression and though the Act was passed, the tea garden owners could not be forced to do their duty. Now that there is a boom period, they should do their duty towards the labourers. It may be that they are trying to evade the responsibility by just saying to the Government, 'You are now receiving about a crore of rupees in addition and so you should have the duty of ameliorating the conditions of the labourers'. I hope Government cannot be duped in that way. I should like to tell the Government that this is the proper time when they can enforce this and force the owners of tea gardens to do their duty towards the labourers.

Another point which I wanted to mention is this. After Independence, there was a proposal in the Central Tea Board to construct a godown, warehouse and also a tea auction room at Calcutta so that India could be a world centre of tea trade. There was a proposal in the meeting of the Board that about Rs. 80 or Rs. 90 lakhs would be required for such works and that if Government would

give that money as a loan, that money would be repaid by raising a cess. Now the Government is raising the cess and having an additional revenue of more than Rs. 80 lakhs. I would ask the Government to consider whether a portion of this sum could be spent towards the scheme that was at that time proposed. It would be a very good day for the tea industry and also for the Government of India to have such a scheme. It will bring them more revenue and the money that is now going into the pockets of the British middlemen will come to the Government of India and the Indian Businessmen. I would just invite the attention of the Government to this aspect of the question also.

Shri K. P. Tripathi (Darrang): I rise to support this Bill. I am rather surprised that the Bill has come so late because I read in the papers today a report that the price of tea in England has risen so high that they might as well produce a cabinet crisis. In the last August Session, the Chairman of the Planters' Association in Calcutta made a statement that the industry was suffering from price inflation. It will be realised that this is an industry which is entirely dependent on export. If the prices rise very high, there is always the danger that it may drop. Therefore, for the good of this industry, it is very essential that there should be price stabilisation. From that point of view, Government, the Central Tea Board as well as the industry should always have it in their view so that the prices may not rise in a boom; the price must be stabilised. Boom is always followed by a slump and when a slump comes as it does in the structure of the economy which we have, the result is always that the labour has to bear the brunt of the slump. The profit boom is enjoyed by the planters whereas the slump comes down upon the labour. This sort of thing is dangerous. We always protested against this sort of

[Shri K. P. Tripathi]

partnership. There must be some agency in this country, whether it be the Government or employers, to take upon itself the responsibility of stabilising the prices in such a way so that this sort of recurring boom and slump may be avoided and we might progress steadily from prosperity to prosperity. But somehow or other this was not done. So I had begun to feel that perhaps the Commerce and Industry Ministry had gone to sleep. But luckily they have come forward with this measure. They have provided for two things here. They are going to provide for smaller gardens. That is a very necessary step. You will remember, Mr. Deputy-Speaker, that in the last crisis, the smaller gardens went to the wall; many of them were closed and about 60,000 labourers were thrown out of work. The Central Tea Board thereafter conducted an enquiry. That enquiry has also proved that some fund is necessary for bringing these smaller gardens up. How shall it be done unless there is some fund. In the last crisis we were going from door to door, from the Finance Minister to the Commerce Minister and back again, trying to get some funds. After three or four months of time the only thing we got was an assurance and a guarantee. That guarantee was not accepted by the employers, and nothing happened. We hoped that this price boom at least will be utilised by Government for pumping some extra money which has come into the hands of the industry, so that a fund might be created which might be called an equalisation fund, for the purpose both of financing the smaller gardens and having a pool for the purpose of price stabilisation and wage stabilisation. But nothing has been done.

It will be realised that tea is enjoying a price which is the highest ever attained by that commodity. Even today I may tell the House that there are gardens in Cachar where

wages have been reduced. The other day in the Rajya Sabha in answer to a question it was stated that the restoration of it was being considered. What a strange thing that when tea is enjoying the highest price ever attained, the workers are getting low wages and even the cut in their wages is not restored? Our Commerce Minister gave an assurance during the crisis in 1952 that labour interests will not be touched, and yet this was the first thing to be touched. Therefore, I would think that our Commerce Ministry may consider the matter and plan out a scheme so that such a contingency may not arise in the future at least. But I am sorry to say that he is merely tinkering with the problem. He has not looked at the problem in all its entirety. This was undoubtedly the opportunity when he could have pumped out some money from the industry so that on a future occasion this industry would not be able to blame the Ministry. The Ministry could as well have said: "You threw out labour during the last crisis; now it is our duty to make sure that such situation may not arise in future." The whole country would have applauded him. But he has not thought on those constructive lines. He has thought in a smaller way; he has pumped a very small amount.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker, if you compare the profits of the tea industry from 1949 onwards till 1954, you will find that there has been a consistently rising graph of profit except in 1952. Even in 1952 which was the year of crisis, according to the industry itself, 80 per cent. of the gardens made a profit. In other industries when 80 per cent. of the industry makes a profit, it is not regarded as crisis at all. But in this industry it was regarded as a crisis. From April 1952 prices began to rise and the crisis was over. They have been rising continuously and steadily. Today the prices know no bounds, so much so people are going over from tea to

other drinks. But no attempt has been made to see that we have a stable market in the world. By a fortuitous combination of circumstances last year and even this year we got a good market. But those conditions may not remain. What would then happen if a crisis were to come again? Therefore, I would appeal to the Labour Minister, who luckily for us is present here, and the Commerce Minister to put their heads together and finalise a policy whereby in the plantation industry which is mainly dependent on exports there might be stabilisation of wages for the labour.

The Plantation Act has been passed, but nothing has been done to implement it, except three sections which entail a very small percentage of the cost involved. When is it going to be implemented. Before it is implemented whether crisis might come and the Government may say: "Oh, a crisis has come; how shall we implement it?" Therefore, cold-storage it further. I think that would be an unfortunate state of affairs. When prosperity comes to the industry, it is psychologically the right time to implement the Act. After all the Act was passed, not with a view to its being put in the cold-storage, but it was passed for being implemented, and the disgrace which obtains in the plantations might be wiped out. But that has not been done. I have with great sorrow to speak here in this Parliament year in year out about tea workers and yet we feel that nobody listens; as if, we were talking to the walls. I hope it shall not happen again. I hope the wisdom which is in the Congress Party, the wisdom which is in the Ministers opposite, will be pooled together for the purpose of evolving a policy in the plantation industry which will provide for stabilisation of prices and wages.

A quotation was given by an hon. Member. It was not my statement. It was a quotation from the report of an enquiry conducted by Dr. Lloyd

George and others. Those reports were made in 1948. After that the tea industry, labour and Government unanimously decided that there shall be a Plantation Act. So, that was not a unilateral action of ours. The provisions of that Act were agreed to by the industry itself in 1948. It is now 1954. Shall it now be said: "Oh, it was a fortuitous enactment; the industry did not agree, therefore it is now difficult to make the industry agree?" It cannot be said so. On the contrary, it must now be admitted that an Act, the provisions of which were unanimously agreed to, should have been implemented. I hope that Government will now be alive to its responsibilities that when an Act is passed it has to be implemented. The right time to implement it is when the industry is in prosperity. That time is now. That time will move away, because of the lack of any systematic policy on the part of the Commerce Ministry with regard to the stabilisation of prices. I request both the Commerce and Labour Ministries, because of the assurance given in 1952, that labour interests should not be neglected. I request them to evolve a policy whereby the Plantation Act might be implemented and a pool created so that prices and wages might be stabilised, and these recurring booms and slumps might be prevented.

Shri A. M. Thomas (Ernakulam): Sir, the object with which this Bill has been brought is a move in the right direction. I was surprised at the latter part of the speech of my hon. friend Shri Tushar Chatterjea. He said it is a back-door method: that is providing labour amenities from the fund that is collected out of this cess. Sir, that is the very criticism that has been levelled by the capitalist producers, who have been saying: "There is the Plantation Labour Act: why do you resort to these back-door methods to collect funds from us and utilise it for labour amenities?" So, I am sorry that my hon. friend Mr. Chatterjea has fallen into the trap that has been

[Shri A. M. Thomas]

laid by the producer-capitalist interests.

What is intended by this Bill is only to provide a fund to supplement the work that has been done by the Plantation Labour Act. I find that the Tea Board has a Labour Welfare Fund. I do not know how that Labour Welfare Fund has been utilised. I hope that the hon. Minister in his reply will tell us how that fund has been utilised. It cannot be disputed that the normal medium for the enforcement of labour amenities is the implementation of the Plantation Labour Act. There is no doubt with regard to that. The provisions of the Plantation Labour Act should be implemented. The fund that we are going to provide is not in substitution at all of the amenities that are intended to be provided by the Plantation Labour Act.

My friend Shri Lingam referred to the propaganda aspect and said we need not do so much of propaganda as we do now. I beg to differ from him. I can concede that the type of propaganda that may be necessary may be a little different. But it is very difficult to agree with the point of view that has been urged by Shri Lingam.

Shri N. M. Lingam: I referred to internal propaganda only.

Shri A. M. Thomas: Yes. A sum of Rs. 23 lakhs is being spent on it now. But I think it is an expenditure in the right direction. It may be said that the type of propaganda that has to be done and the type of stuff to be sold might be different. But you cannot say you should get rid of internal propaganda altogether.

I beg to bring to the notice of the Government one object with which we dropped out of the International arrangement and entered into agreements for propaganda with the various countries like U.S.A., Canada, West Germany and Ireland. It was for doing propaganda for Indian tea. We must exert a little in the direction

of doing propaganda for Indian tea. That is not being done at all by the propaganda machinery that is now being set up in the various countries.

I think this is a measure which was long overdue, especially since the industry could bear the additional cess. I support the Bill.

Shri Ramachandra Reddi (Nellore): I desire to seek some more clarification from the hon. the Commerce Minister. Since he has already thought of and passed orders to increase this export duty from two rupees to four rupees per 100 lb. he must have also worked out a plan for the expenditure of the enhanced amount. He has not revealed to us what amounts will be expended on each of the items which are going to be taken up by the Government in furtherance of the idea of giving further assistance to the tea trade here.

I find from the papers that the consumer's price has been fluctuating and increasing from month to month. The consumer's price in Calcutta was Rs. 1-9-3 in August 1953 and in August 1954 it has risen to Rs. 2-2-7 per lb. That shows there is an enhancement of 22 to 23 per cent. within the last one year, and the question is to what extent this export duty would be able to help the consumer's interests in India.

As far as the propaganda that is required in favour of tea in India is concerned, I do agree with Shri Lingam that further propaganda in India may not be necessary and the sum of Rs. 23 lakhs that is being spent today on internal propaganda might be reduced and the amount thus saved diverted to some other channel.

I have noted in the press today that there has been a slump in tea in the United Kingdom which is one of our biggest foreign markets, and in 1953 the dealers there were not able to pay dividends because there was a slump. If that is correct I would like to ascertain from the hon.

Minister whether this export duty on tea, enhanced by a hundred per cent., would not adversely affect our external market, especially in the United Kingdom.

I would also like to ascertain from the hon. Minister what amount of money he is likely to allot for the development of the propaganda machinery, both internally and externally and what amount he is going to spend on the maintenance of the staff which is supposed to be already very heavy.

In the end I would ask whether he has got any intention to set apart a definite proportion or percentage of this income for labour amenities. If we put all this money into one pool it may or may not be possible to extend the benefit of these amenities to labour which seems to deserve much. On the other hand it is desirable to see that a particular percentage of this cess should be earmarked and put down as a non lapsable fund, so that for labour amenities it can be drawn upon whenever it is necessary.

I would therefore request the hon. Minister to clarify in terms of rupees, annas and pies his programme for utilisation of these funds and this enhanced revenue to the several aspects which he has got in his mind.

Shri K. C. Sodhia (Sagar) rose—

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: There is no time.

Shri Punnoose (Alleppey): Can we extend the time by fifteen minutes more?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: How can I? I am bound by the order of the House.

Shri K. C. Sodhia: I have to express my doubts.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Subject to the limitation of time.

Shri K. C. Sodhia: Yes.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: There is no time now.

Shri K. C. Sodhia: I may have to move my amendment. If my doubts

are removed by the hon. Minister now, I may not move my amendment and thereby I will not take time then.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I will give an opportunity to the hon. Member, if there is time, to move his amendment.

Shri K. C. Sodhia: If the hon. Minister removes my doubts I will not be put to the necessity of moving the amendment.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Even for this talk there is no time.

Shri Damodara Menon (Kozhikode): I want to ask one or two questions.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: He may put them.

Shri Damodara Menon: The Tea Board was reconstituted only recently. I want to ask the hon. Minister whether this recommendation for the enhancement of the cess has been made with the approval or in consultation with the new Tea Board. I am raising this point because these Commodity Boards that have come into existence must have some functions. And if in a matter like this concerning labour welfare as well as providing money for development purposes etc., which everybody would welcome, this amount is going to be handed over to the Tea Board, what schemes they and what amounts they want for development purposes are matters which lie in their sphere. Therefore, I want to know whether before bringing in this House a recommendation for the enhancement of the cess, this normal consultation with the new Tea Board has been made.

Another point is this. My friend Mr. Thomas was saying about propaganda in West Germany, U.S.A. and Ireland by the Government of India. And he asked the hon. Minister whether the propaganda is done for Indian tea. I want to know why it is not possible for us to carry on propaganda for Indian tea in foreign

[Shri Damodara Menon]

countries. We were members of the International Tea Market Expansion Board and we withdrew from that Board because that Board was doing propoganda for not only Indian tea but for tea in general. If after coming out we are spending moneys abroad for doing propoganda generally for tea, what is the purpose of our coming out of that Board? We are spending about Rs. 50 lakhs and we may spend in future more on this. Are we going to spend this money for propoganda for tea of other countries? About this matter also I hope the hon. Minister will provide some clarification.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Now **Mr. Sodhia** may put his question.

Shri K. C. Sodhia: The hon. Minister just now said that he was going to take away from the functions of the Tea Board the function relating to welfare of labour. I would like to know whether he is going to do it by amending the Act and taking away this duty from the Tea Board or in some other way.

Now the second thing is that under the parent Act it has been provided that all collections minus the cost of collections will be made over to the Tea Board. The amount collected has now increased and I want to know how the Government are going to utilise the extra amount that they are making, because under the present Act it may go to the Tea Board.

The third point is that out of the 15 or 16 functions that have been allotted to them under the present Act, many of them have been neglected altogether. Therefore I am not in favour of giving any money to the Central Tea Board. They have refused to perform any of the functions laid down under the Act.

Therefore, such a Board does not deserve any increase to its funds and I have tabled the amendment simply to condemn the present activities of the Board and to bring out that they ought to fulfil the functions that

have been laid down for them under the Act. I want to know what they have been doing to remove the difficulties of the workers when it is well known that the tea market is controlled by the foreigners and it is the foreigners who are dominating the poor workers. My request to the hon. Minister is that he should see that the Indian interests in the plantations are not let down by the activities of the Board.

It is on these points that I wanted to speak.

Shri Punnoose: I would like to know, while it is one of the specific duties of the Board to look after the amenities for labour, whether the hon. Minister or the Board have in mind any plans for amenities for labour.

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: A number of questions have been asked and I shall answer them to the best of my ability.

If the hon. Member refers to Section 26 of the Tea Act, he will find that the Government is not obliged to hand over the entire proceeds to the Tea Board. What it says is, as much of the proceeds as possible should be handed over. The maximum amount indicated is the amount of the collections. It does not mean that the entire money should be handed over, unless it is sanctioned by Government.

In regard to the general question of functions of the Board, it has been said that section 10(2)(b) is redundant and is the same as the provisions contained in the Plantations Labour Act. It may be that there is a certain amount of redundancy. The hon. Member, Shri Tushar Chatterjea, will certainly realise that whatever is obligatory on the tea gardens to do in respect of labour, Government would insist on their doing that. Whatever they cannot do, that will be taken up by the Tea Board. There must have been some intention in the minds of

the framers of the Tea Act who put in this particular obligation on the Tea Board that they should look after the question of amenities and facilities for labour. It is only the residue that would be dealt with. The whole amount of Rs. 85 lakhs would not be enough if the Tea Board is to take up the entire responsibility. I am not asking for an appropriation of the amount now. The amount has to be collected first. In the budget we will have to ask for so much money for the Central Tea Board. At that time I shall probably be in a position to give you an idea of how much has got to be spent on labour amenities. At the present moment we have got plans up to Rs. 10 lakhs. Perhaps it may be increased further when we finalise the budget.

Mr. Damodaran said that the Tea Board has not been consulted. If the Hon. Member refers to the Act he will find that there is a declaration under the Collection of Provisional Taxes Act there. Nobody is taken into confidence in respect of such Legislation excepting the few people concerned. If we consult somebody else in regard to this matter, possibly all the export would have been finished by the time we start collecting the tax. So, in the matter of revenue collection, consultation is a thing which is very improper.

The point raised by Mr. Lingam has been dealt with adequately by Mr. Thomas. Mr. Lingam says no propaganda is necessary for internal consumption. It is completely wrong. We are producing 650 or 640 million lbs. of tea and we cannot depend on foreign countries for its consumption? Our internal consumption has to rise. We must be able to consume at least half of it, so that for the other half we may depend upon foreign countries. I do apologise for the type of propaganda that has been carried on as I wonder it is not satisfactory. We should do more of it. We must make people more tea-conscious so that we can have an internal market for at least half of the produce.

1 P.M.

Mr. Tripathi raised a number of points, but I will deal with only one, namely, whether the law of diminishing returns would operate because of high prices as we depend largely on the foreign buyer of tea. Perhaps it would. But it cannot be suggested that the buyer will take to something cheaper than tea—unless he is going to drink hot water—which will give him that little cheer that he gets from a cup of tea? I am very conscious of this fact, because, after all who drinks tea in the foreign country? It happens to be the common man. It is not the rich man. We want our customers to be preserved for us. I have tried to tell the people concerned in the other countries that I am prepared to co-operate if there is to be any price control; but I am afraid they found it rather difficult politically and otherwise. So far as I am concerned, my mind is quite clear. We do not want to make more money than is absolutely necessary. Though we might lose a part of our export revenues we do not want to mulct the consumer in the foreign country who, I pointed out, is not always a rich man. And I am quite prepared to co-operate with any Government in controlling the price of tea if that Government asks for it. But, if because of short supply and because of the operation of the law of supply and demand the prices rise to 7 sh. a pound and if I control prices at this end somebody else at the other end will make the money. On the other hand, if our tea planter makes that money, a part of it at any rate seven annas in the rupee comes to us by way of income-tax. There is at least that. Therefore, I cannot do anything more than express my wish to co-operate with other countries.

Shri K. P. Tripathi: Why does not the International Tea Board function in this connection?

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: I do not think it is within their scope at all. As a matter of fact, the Government of each country has to deal

[Shri T. T. Krishnamachari]

with this matter. The International Tea Board cannot deal with it.

So far as expansion is concerned, I can assure the hon. Member Mr. Lingam that if we continue to be in the International Tea Agreement, no let or hindrance will be put to our capacity to expand. As it is, we have got about 40,000 acres, unutilised and if we are going to have more acreage under tea than at present, a revision of the Agreement which will expire in 1955 will give us enough elbow-room for purposes of expanding as much we want and as much we can.

So far as advertising Indian tea is concerned, I am afraid, the hon. Members are taking a very narrow view of things. If we are collaborating with the tea trade in another country, we can only advertise tea. If you want to advertise Indian tea, you have got to go on your own and do it—and it does not pay to do that kind of thing, because we do get a certain amount of co-operation from the other Tea interests. There is no rivalry actually, except perhaps in the United Kingdom where Ceylon does a certain amount of advertising on its own. In other countries, there is no advertisement carried on to any large extent for the tea of any particular country.

We are in fact at liberty to spend more money on Indian Tea: we could have advertisements separately; but a common effort with the tea trade in the various countries is made on the ground of increasing the consumption of tea, so that everybody will get the benefit, and we will undoubtedly get a larger share of the benefit because we are the biggest producers of tea. And that is the proper way to look at it. There is no use saying: "You have not done anything for Indian tea". If you have Darjeeling brand or Nilgiri brand, we can go and advertise it. Nothing prevents us from doing so, but it must be done entirely on our own. We cannot get the tea trade in other countries who deal in tea as such to col-

Hospital are there no doubt, but proper help is not given."

I think I have said all that I have to say and I would finally like to remind hon. Members that this is not an appropriation Bill. This is merely a question of levying a tax. When the time comes for me to present the demands for my Ministry, I shall endeavour to supply hon. Members with as much information as they want in regard to the disposal of the amount so collected.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The question is:

"That the Bill further to amend the Tea Act, 1953, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: So far as the amendments are concerned, I have no time. I think I will treat as if there will be no amendment, but there has been enough discussion on these amendments.

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: I do not know if one amendment which is of a consequential nature.....

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Government's amendment is always allowed.

Clause 1.—(Short Title)

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: In view of the fact that my hon. friend the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs has suggested that the second Tea (Amendment) Bill will also be introduced, I do not know if this will be necessary. Anyway, by way of abundant caution, I beg to move:

In page 1, lines 3 and 4, for "(Second Amendment)" substitute "(Amendment)".

Long Title

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: I beg to move:

In page 1, omit "further".

Perhaps I might have to reverse this process when I bring in the other Bill.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The question is:

In page 1, lines 3 and 4, for "(Second Amendment)" substitute "(Amendment)".

The motion was adopted.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The question is:

In page 1, omit "further".

The motion was adopted.

Clause 2.— (Amendment of section 25, Act 29 of 1953).

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: So far as Shri Tushar Chatterjea's amendment is concerned, it is out of order, because he wants to raise it, and he says "at such rate not less than four rupees". As he knows, any tax ought not to be increased without the sanction of the President. "Not less than four rupees" means it is the minimum. It is not "not exceeding four rupees".

Regarding the other amendment, I only want to impress upon the House that there is not much of substance in it. The amendment is "not exceeding four rupees" instead of "four rupees". If power is given to the Government to impose tax at the rate of Rs. 4, it is open to them to impose a tax at a rate less than Rs. 4 also.

The question is:

"That clause 2, clause 1, as amended, the Title, as amended, and the Enacting Formula stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clause 2, clause 1, as amended, the Title, as amended, and the Enacting Formula were added to the Bill.

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: I beg to move:

"That the Bill, as amended, be passed."

Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy (Mysore): May I say a word?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The question is:

"That the Bill, as amended, be passed."

The motion was adopted.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: We have exceeded the time allotted by five minutes. I would urge upon hon. Members, whoever is on the Advisory Committee, to take note of it. It is rather embarrassing for me not to allow Members to speak. I would certainly have called Mr. Gurupadaswamy—he comes from Mysore—and other hon. Members, particularly businessmen like Shri Tulsidas, to make their own contributions.

Shri Tulsidas (Mehsana West): I did not want to speak at all.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I shall remember their names, but more time must be allowed in such matters as this. It is for the Business Advisory Committee.

INDIAN TARIFF (THIRD AMENDMENT) BILL

The Deputy Minister of Commerce and Industry (Shri Kanungo): I beg to move:

"That the Bill further to amend the Indian Tariff Act, 1934, be taken into consideration."

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: On behalf of Shri T. T. Krishnamachari. Otherwise, the hon. Ministers may give notice in their own names. Very well.

Shri Kanungo: Sir, this Bill seeks to amend the Indian Tariff Act, 1934, by.....

Shri A. M. Thomas (Ernakulam): The time-limit may be fixed.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: From 1-10 to 2-10 P.M.

An Hon. Member: Five minutes each.