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LOK SABHA

Friday, 24th December, 1954

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the
Clock

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER in the Chair]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(See part I)

11-28 A.M.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER
OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

OPIUM CULTIVATION IN MADHYA
BHARAT AND RAJASTHAN

Shri U. M. Trivedi (Chittor):
Under Rule 215, I beg to call the attention of the Minister against Finance to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon:

"The grave situation which has arisen by granting fresh permits last week for growing opium in Susner Agar Tehsils in Madhya Bharat against International commitments for reducing the cultivation of opium, more particularly after having closed that area for cultivation of opium, causing further discontent to the opium cultivator of Kapsin and Rashmi Tehsils of Rajasthan where its cultivation was only stopped this year on the grounds of international policy accepted by the Government of India."

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The Minister of Revenue and Defence Expenditure (Shri A. C. Guha): I have received this notice just now, and about two days ago, I received a letter from the hon. Member on this subject. I cannot accept the allegation made in this matter—that there has been a violation of the international commitments. The international commitments or whatever commitments we have are only as regards the stoppage of oral consumption of opium by 1959. Accordingly, we are also curtailing the acreage under opium cultivation. Out of the 45,000 acres which have to be cultivated this year, permission has been given only for 200 acres in that area, at the special request of the Madhya Bharat Government and also at the request of the Finance Minister of the Madhya Bharat Government. In view of the fact that this area has got no possibility of growing any other cash crop. I do not see what serious or grave situation has been created, or how a violation of international commitment has occurred in this small administrative matter.

Shri U. M. Trivedi: Can I put a question with the leave of the Chair? The hon. Minister has stated that no grave situation has arisen. He also stated that this year only 200 acres have been permitted to be sown. How is it that when permission was asked by cultivators of Kapsin and Roshmi tehsils for about 300 acres it was refused?

Shri A. C. Guha: Sir, with your permission I would like to place my difficulties before this hon. House. Almost every day I have been receiving requests from hon. Members of both Houses for allowing opium

[Shri A. C. Guha].

cultivation in certain areas. It is very difficult for me to say why permission in respect of a particular area has not been given, while it has been given in another case. This is a matter concerning the Narcotic Commissioner and it is not possible for me to look into every small detail. Anyhow, I received the hon. Member's letter only two days back and in proper time I shall give him a reply.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

APPROPRIATION AND OTHER ACCOUNTS OF RAILWAYS AND AUDIT REPORT

The Minister of Revenue and Civil Expenditure (Shri M. C. Shah): I beg to lay on the Table a copy of each of the following papers, under Article 151(1) of the Constitution:

- (1) Appropriation Accounts of Railways in India for 1952-53, Part I—Review. [Placed in Library. See No. S-527/54.]
- (2) Appropriation Accounts of Railways in India for 1952-53, Part II—Detailed Appropriation Accounts. [Placed in Library. See No. S-528/54.]
- (3) Block Accounts (including Capital Statements comprising the Loan Accounts), Balance sheets and Profit and Loss Accounts of Indian Government Railways, 1952-53. [Placed in Library. See No. S-529/54.]
- (4) Balance Sheets and Review of working of Railway, Collieries and Statements of all-in-cost of coal etc., for 1952-53. [Placed in Library. See No. S-530/54.]
- (5) Audit Report, Railways, 1954. [Placed in Library. See No. S-531/54.]

STATEMENT Re DECISIONS OF SECOND MEETING OF CENTRAL FLOOD CONTROL BOARD

The Deputy Minister of Irrigation and Power (Shri Hathi): I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Statement regarding the decisions taken at the second meeting of the Central Flood Control Board held under the chairmanship of the Union Minister of Irrigation and Power on the 14th December, 1954. [See Appendix VI, annexure No. 68.]

CORRECTION OF ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

The Minister of Revenue and Defence Expenditure (Shri A. C. Guha): On the 8th December, 1954 arising out of Starred Question No. 876 regarding exports to Nepal, my hon. friend Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad asked a supplementary question whether Government were aware that rock salt "licence for which was given to the Nepalese merchant for a thousand wagons, has been re-imported into India from Raxaul beyond which it did not go". I replied that according to the information at my disposal, I did not think the statement was correct, on which Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad rejoined that my information was wrong. That very definite assertion of the hon. Member is likely to leave an unsavoury impression on the House.

So, I looked into the matter very carefully and examined all the available papers on the subject. The whole stock of rock salt aggregating 55 wagons, and not 1,000 wagons, was sold not to a Nepalese merchant but to the Nepal Government on their special request and under certain very definite precautionary conditions to prevent the flowback of this salt into India. Our responsibility is to give delivery of the salt at Ravaul and from there the Nepal Government would have to take it to Kathmandu where our Embassy will have to be satisfied that the salt has actually reach Kathmandu. There are