

[Shri Morarji Desai]

2. I should like to take this opportunity of placing on record the Government's appreciation of the very valuable work done by the Committee in examining and reporting upon the complicated problems arising in the course of the administration of the direct taxes of the Central Government.

STATEMENT RE: COTTON TEXTILE PRICES

Shri Vajpayee (Balrampur): Sir, it is an important statement, it should be read.

The Minister of Commerce and Industry (Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri): It is about three pages.

Mr. Speaker: He will get a copy. He can go and take it. He may lay it on the Table of the House.

Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri: I beg to lay on the Table a statement on cotton textiles. prices. [See Appendix III, annexure No. 160].

Mr. Speaker: Let us get through the work today.

Shri Braj Raj Singh (Ferozabad): May I put a question?

From the papers it appears that the Government have agreed to on *ad hoc* increase on August, 1959 prices of 19 per cent. in the cloth prices. In the case of coarse cloth, I think they have agreed to an increase of 25 per cent. There has not been an increase of 25 per cent. in all the items which go into the manufacture of cloth. May I know whether Government have considered the matter as to how this affect the consumer of coarse cloth?

Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri: If the hon. Member reads my statement, he will find that these points have been explained. In so far as coarse cloth is concerned, there will be an appreciable reduction for the consumer. I do not say that I am fully satisfied

with the reduction made, but it is undoubtedly an improvement on the past.

Shri Damani (Jalore): Regarding the stamping of prices, I want to know whether prices will be stamped on cycle tyre codes, motor tyre codes, filter cloth and ducks for rubber belting.

Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri: The stamping will be done by the mills. I cannot go into the different varieties of cloth, but some of the non-wearable cloth is also to be stamped. That is what I have come to know from the Indian Cotton Mills Federation.

Shrimati Ila Palchoudhuri: May I seek a clarification? Is it a fact that there will be something done about cotton blankets because that is a commodity used only by the very poor persons who cannot afford woollen blankets?

Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri: It is included in the reduction.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: Non-wearable cheap blankets are included in the reduction?

Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri: Yes.

12-40 hrs.

STATEMENT RE: WRONG DELIVERY OF A REGISTERED LETTER

Mr. Speaker: Now, Dr. P. Subbarayan.

The Minister of Transport and Communications (Dr. P. Subbarayan): The statement is about 2½ pages long. I promised to make a statement. Shall I lay it on the Table of the House?

Some Hon. Members: Let him read it.

Mr. Speaker: Yes, let him read it.

Dr. P. Subbarayan: The House will recollect that during the course of answering supplementaries put to me on the Short Notice Question of Shri Ram Krishan Gupta answered by me on the 31st August, 1960, I had assured the Members that I would collect full details as to how the Registered letter addressed to the Chairman, Non-Official Vigilance Committee, happened to be wrongly delivered to the Chief Minister. On the basis of the information which I have now in my possession I find there was no malafide intention on anybody's part and the letter in question was accidentally delivered wrongly to the Chief Minister.

Briefly this registered letter was received in the Chandigarh Secretariat Post Office and was mistakenly entered in the special list intended for the Chief Minister as a number of registered letters are received daily addressed to the Chief Minister by name or designation. The procedure followed by the Postal Department is to prepare a single list of all these letters for the day and obtain the signature of an official in the Chief Minister's Office on the list after delivering the letters. On 15th July, 1960, the list was signed by a Daftry in Chief Minister's office and he, perhaps, did not notice that this was not intended for that office. It may be stated here that there is no evidence to show that this article was deliberately handed over to the Chief Minister's office. Though reports had appeared in the Press regarding the appointment of a Non-official Vigilance Committee, no specific instructions appear to have been given to the post office regarding the delivery of articles addressed to this Committee. Actually on the same day an article addressed to Pandit Sri Ram Sharma, M.L.A., Chandigarh, was delivered correctly to him. But the article in question was merely addressed as "Chairman, Non-Official Vigilance Committee" without giving the name or address. Many articles are also received for the Official Vigilance Committee of which the Chief Minister is the Chairman. Some

letters are received addressed merely to the Vigilance Committee without specifying whether it is official or non-official. In this particular case the clerk handling the article apparently did not notice the word "Non-Official" nor was he aware of the existence of such a Committee and must have in a routine manner put it along with other articles intended for the Chief Minister and the Official Vigilance Committee.

The registered letter under discussion was delivered to the Chief Minister's office on 15th July along with other letters addressed to Chief Minister, opened and put up to the Chief Minister. Neither the official charged with opening of letters nor the Chief Minister noticed that the letter in question was addressed to the Chairman, Non-Official Vigilance Committee. The Chief Minister under the impression that it was a complaint addressed to him passed it on to Pandit Mohan Lal, Minister of Industry, as some of the items complained against related to the department under that Minister. The letter was returned along with the comments of the Industries Minister to the Chief Minister's office on the 9th August and was put up in the form of a file marked to the Chief Minister. The Chief Minister could not attend to it early as a large number of files had accumulated on account of heavy rush of work.

In the meantime, a report appeared in the Press on 19th August about the wrong delivery of the registered letter referred to. On seeing this, the Chief Minister directed his office to get hold of the papers which had been sent to the Industries Minister. The file was put up to him on the 20th August. The Chief Minister forwarded the letter and its enclosures in original to Pandit Sri Ram Sharma, Chairman, Non-Official Vigilance Committee. The documents were delivered in his office on the 22nd August and the Chairman was also shown the comments of the Industries

[Dr. P. Subbarayan]

Minister on the points raised in the complaint.

Sardar Iqbal Singh (Ferozepur): May I ask one question regarding this matter? When the short notice question was asked here, there was a suggestion to the effect that the complaint was against the Chief Minister. I want the hon. Minister to make it clear whether the complaint addressed in this letter was anything against the Chief Minister or not.

Dr. P. Subbarayan: No, there was no complaint against the Chief Minister in that letter.

Shri Braj Raj Singh (Firozabad): May I know whether any enquiry was made from Mr. Ram Pyara, MLA, who had made this complaint? Did any officer of the Postal Department approach Mr. Ram Pyara to ask anything about this letter?

Dr. P. Subbarayan: No, they did not think that it was necessary, because they had the letter and they found the acknowledgment also. And this is the conclusion that has been come to after a due enquiry by the Government.

Shri Ram Krishan Gupta (Mahendragarh): May I know whether it is a fact that Mr. Sri Ram Sharma, chairman of the Non-official Vigilance Committee wrote a letter to the Chief Minister, Punjab, on or about the 1st of August, to return this letter to him, and if so, why this letter was not returned to him earlier?

Dr. P. Subbarayan: The hon. Member seems to know more than I do, because I did get all the information from the Chief Minister, and he does not refer to this at all.

Shri Vajpayee (Balrampur): May I know who conducted the enquiry?

Mr. Speaker: There is no enquiry.

Shri Ram Krishan Gupta: May I ask only one question?....

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. I am not going to allow any further questions.

Shri Ram Krishan Gupta: May I know whether Government have received any complaint from Mr. Ram Pyara.....

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. The hon. Minister has already said that so far as the postal authorities are concerned, they are not concerned with the complaint against the Chief Minister. If it is a non-official agency, it is their business. I admitted this question for this reason that it was a case of wrong delivery, and that was admitted by the postal authorities. This has been more than amply explained. It was addressed to the Chairman, Non-official Vigilance Committee. Nobody knows the difference between non-official and official agencies. By inadvertence, it was sent to the official agency, and the Chief Minister returned it. As to why he did not return it earlier, hon. Members will ask their counterparts to put the question in the Punjab Legislative Assembly.

Shri Anthony Pillai (Madras North): On a point of order. You have allowed the Minister of Transport and Communications to make a statement in which he referred not merely to the question of delivery of the letter for which the postal authorities were responsible, but he has gone into the question how the papers went on from one Minister to another Minister who returned it and so on. Once he has been allowed to make such references to the internal transit portion of it, then, surely, it is permissible for Members of the House to raise questions about those matters as well.

Mr. Speaker: I understand the point. I have heard the point of order.

Shri Ram Krishan Gupta: On a point of order.....

*Delivery of a
Registered Letter*

Mr. Speaker: One point of order cannot overlap another point of order.

I allowed it for this reason that if the letter had not been delivered to the right person, the postal authorities would then be asked why when they came to know of it they did not immediately pursue the matter and take up the question of delivering it to the right person. The other day, a question was put as to what steps were taken by the postal authorities to recover it and send it on the proper addressee. Whatever has happened in the meanwhile, how the delay has occurred, how it was noticed, and how as soon as it was noticed, prompt action was taken to redirect it and give it to the proper person—these were all questions which had necessarily to be explained. A delay has been caused in delivering it to the proper person. That does not mean that the whole field is thrown open.

Shri Ram Krishan Gupta: On a point of order. Under the Indian Post Office Act, it is an offence to retain the cover or envelope of the letter. In this case, from the statement it is quite clear that the envelope of the letter has not been returned to the addressee so far. If that is so what action will be taken against the Chief Minister of Punjab?

Mr. Speaker: Against the Chief Minister? For the cover? All right, that is a suggestion for action. The hon. Member wants the hon. Minister in charge of Posts and Telegraphs to pursue this matter....

Shri Braj Raj Singh: It is a contravention of the law.

Mr. Speaker: as to why the cover has been not sent. If the same letter had been addressed to the hon. Member, would he have preserved the cover?

STATEMENT RE: PLASTIC EBONOID-MAKING EQUIPMENT

The Deputy Minister of Works, Housing and Supply (Shri Anil K. Chanda): During the course of supplementaries to Question No. 351 which was answered by the Minister of Information and Broadcasting on the 12th August, 1960, some honourable Members asked for information about the progress of the Machinery for making plastic Ebonoid Blocks installed at the Government of India Press, Faridabad. I promised to make a statement in this regard after getting the detailed information. As the statement is a lengthy one I place a copy on the table of the House. [See Appendix III, annexure No. 161.]

12.48 hrs.

**EMPLOYEES' PROVIDENT FUNDS
(AMENDMENT) BILL***

The Deputy Minister of Labour (Shri Abid Ali): On behalf of Shri Nanda, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Employees' Provident Funds Act, 1952.

Mr. Speaker: The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Employees' Provident Funds Act, 1952."

The motion was adopted.

Shri Abid Ali: I introduce the Bill.

**MOTOR VEHICLES (SECOND
AMENDMENT) BILL***

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur): I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Motor Vehicles Act, 1939.

Mr. Speaker: The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Motor Vehicles Act, 1939."

The motion was adopted.

*Introduced with the recommendation of the President.