

a unit in the public sector for the manufacture of a scooter of a proven foreign design, for an annual capacity of 1,00,000 scooters.

**Setting up of Public Sector
Scooterette Project**

*49. SHRI INDER J. MALHOTRA : Will the MINISTER OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT (AUDYOGIK VIKAS MANTRI) be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have taken any decision in regard to the setting up of Public Sector Scooterette Project in the country;

(b) if so, the details of the proposal; and

(c) the financial implications thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT (AUDYOGIK VIKAS MANTRI) (SHRI MOINUL HAQUE CHOUHDURY) : (a) to (c). There is no proposal under the consideration to set up a Unit in the public sector for the manufacture of scooterettes. However, Government have decided to set up a public sector unit for the manufacture of scooters of a proven foreign design with an annual capacity of 100,000 Nos. In pursuance of this decision, offers had been invited from interested parties in foreign countries. In response an offer of collaboration has been received from a firm in Italy manufacturing Vespa Scooters. This offer is under consideration.

SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY : The Government's policy regarding the scooter manufacture is characterized by procrastination, sluggishness and sloppiness, it seems probably that the hon. minister is not aware that in the past many decisions have been taken in this matter, but subsequently they have been set at rest; God knows for what reasons This is what has happened.

You will find that the Government is seeking foreign collaboration, and, at the same time, in reply to another starred question asking about the Government's

policy, the Government said that they are also thinking of taking it up under the public sector.

Now, may I know from the hon. Minister whether a technical committee, an expert committee was, formed last year and it was suggested that its report should be submitted by February of this year, and whether this report has been submitted and, if so, what has happened to its recommendations ?

Then, about this foreign collaboration, may I know how long will this Government go on negotiating with this firm-Messrs Piaggio of Italy. and when will they start it?

Thirdly, will the hon. Minister please state before this august house what is the latest requirement and what is the demand, for scooters ? To my knowledge, it is said that more than three lakh applications are still pending for scooters today, which are regarded as the common man's vehicle. May I know whether the Government will take up this matter expeditiously and come to a final settlement in this matter?

SHRI MOINUL HAQUE CHOUHDURY : it is true a committee of experts to work out and advise the Government on a suitable indigenous design and a programme of production of scooters in the public sector was appointed. The committee came to the conclusion that no indigenously developed design for a scooter was readily available and that the development of a new design of a scooter starting from the drawing-board would take about four to five years.

Thereafter, the project planning and implementation may take a further period of three years. Therefore, this question was abandoned.

Thereafter, my predecessor made a Statement in the Lok Sabha as well as the Rajya Sabha on the 18th August 1970, in the course of which he said that we would set up a project in the public sector with an initial capacity for producing 1 lakh scooters per year on double shift. After this, we have started negotiation, which is in progress. It is true that there is a very great shortage of scooters. We have ourselves decided to go into produc-

tion after setting up this public sector company. The question of allowing the existing producers to increase their capacity is also under consideration. Over and above this, we have issued 16 letters of intent to other parties as well.

SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY: What is our total requirement of scooters now?

SHRI MOINUL HAQUE CHOUDHURY: It is very high. The study has not been made for scooters alone. But the demand for scooters, motorcycles, three wheelers, mopeds, etc. has been estimated by the planning group on machinery industries to be 2.10 lakhs per annum by 1973-74.

SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY: The Minister is very much anxious to see that these industrial licences are given where employment opportunity is saturated. I would request the Minister to consider starting this foreign collaboration scooter project in an area which is really backward. North Bengal is the most backward area in India and I would request him to remember it.

SHRI INDER J. MALHOTRA: From small car, we have come down to scooter. In answer to my question, he said that there is no proposal before Government to set up this industry in the public sector. What are the major hurds and difficulties before the Government in doing so?

SHRI MOINUL HAQUE CHOUDHURY: We are setting up a scooter project in the public sector. So far as scooterette is concerned, I said, we are not setting it up in public sector.

SHRI INDER J. MALHOTRA: What are the major hurdles? Is there any technical difficulty, financial difficulty or some political difficulty?

SHRI MOINUL HAQUE CHOUDHURY: The difficulty is we cannot take too many things on our hand.

SHRI K. LAKKAPPA: For a long time, we have been urging on this Government not only in this house but outside also to

set up plants for manufacturing scooters. Several States like Mysore have suggested that a scooter industry should be started there. This is an instance where Government has not come forth to start a scooter industry in the public sector because the officers attached to the ministry are in the hands of big business houses and they are interested in seeing that this industry is not started in the public sector. Will the Government set up a scooter industry in public sector to meet our needs?

SHRI MOINUL HAQUE CHOWDHURY: I strongly deny the insinuations made against the Ministry or the officers. So far as Mysore State is concerned, we have already given a letter of intent to the Mysore State Industrial and Development Corporation for setting up a project for producing 24,000 scooters a year.

SHRI PILOO MODY: I strongly recommend that they should not do it in the public sector because no poor man will be able to afford it thereafter.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA: Has Government any knowledge of the fact that a big cycle factory at Asansol in West Bengal, Sen-Raleigh by name, is closed for more than a month; if so, what steps will the Government take to see that this factory is reopened?

SHRI MOINUL HAQUE CHOUDHURY: I am afraid, I am at the moment on a scooter and not on a bicycle.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA: He has said that Government has under its contemplation setting up of bicycle factories to meet the demands of the people for bicycles. Why will the bicycle question not come in here?

MR. SPEAKER: I think, a scooter is faster than a bicycle..... (Interruption).

Question Hour is over.