

Shri Pattam Gopalan:
 Shri Jyotirmoy Basu:
 Shri K. M. Abraham:
 Shri Vihvanatha Menon:
 Shri K. Anuradhan:
 Shrimati Susela Gopalan:

Will the Minister of Commerce be pleased to state:

(a) whether cotton position in the country has improved;

(b) if so, how it compares with that of 1965; and

(c) whether instructions have been issued to all textile mills not to close on Saturdays?

The Minister of Commerce (Shri Dinesh Singh): (a) No, Sir. Because of the installation of additional spinning capacity, the gap between demand and supply has increased.

(b) The general expectation is that the crop this year will not be better than the crop in 1965-66.

(c) The answer is in the negative.

Cotton Requirement during 1967-68

*333. Shri S. S. Kothari: Will the Minister of Commerce be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that adequate quantity of cotton would not be available for meeting the needs of the cotton mill industry during 1967-68;

(b) if so, the estimated shortfall; and

(c) how Government propose to make it good?

The Minister of Commerce (Shri Dinesh Singh): (a) and (b). The hon'ble Member is presumably referring to the current cotton season (September, 1966—August, 1967). In this season, the shortfall in the available supplies of cotton is estimated at about 1.1 million bales.

(c) This shortfall is proposed to be met by a reduction in the mill consumption of cotton through reduced

machine activity and by importing, to the extent possible, additional quantities of foreign cotton.

Requisitioning of Cotton Stocks by Textile Commissioner

*336. Shri Indulal Yajnik: Will the Minister of Commerce be pleased to state:

(a) whether the cotton stocks requisitioned by the Textile Commissioner are likely to prove totally inadequate to run the textile mills during the ensuing months;

(b) whether the present owners of the cotton stocks are unwilling to sell them to the mills at the ceiling prices fixed by Government at present; and

(c) whether Government are considering the upward revision of the cotton prices in view of the failure of the last monsoon with a view to giving relief to the farmers and to avoid the closure of many mills?

The Minister of Commerce (Shri Dinesh Singh): (a) It was not the intention that the Textile Commissioner should requisition the entire cotton crop for supply to all the textile mills during the ensuing months. However, the Textile Commissioner did requisition some stocks of cotton at the specific request of mills who were faced with serious difficulty in procuring supplies of cotton at appropriate ceiling prices. He is continuing to do so.

(b) According to Government's information, during the months of December and part of January, cotton was mostly available to the mills from the market around the ceiling prices fixed by Government and it was only from the second half of January that prices are reported to have started rising and have been consistently ruling above those ceilings except for Bengal Deshi Cotton.

(c) There is no proposal to raise the price of cotton further.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: I want to know whether the hon. Minister is aware that this artificial shortage of cotton is mainly due to the fact that

big business houses like Birlas, Rulas and others are cornering the whole thing and the entire cotton is concentrated in their hands. What steps does Government contemplate to take to requisition all those stocks, or rather to raid those godowns where cotton bales are lying, and because of which other small units are suffering?

Shri Dinesh Singh: I have had the benefit of discussing this matter with the hon. Member and with some other hon. Members. It was pointed out that cotton was stocked by some big mills and their owners. I had requested the hon. Members that if I could have some particulars of it, we shall make very endeavour to requisition them and to see that the rules at the moment of not stocking more than two months' supply are rigidly enforced.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: The hon. Minister is aware that as a result of the threats given by the employers, there was a sudden block closure of textile mills for 15 days which was ultimately staggered to 1 day, that is, every Saturday, a week. Now, I would like to know whether the Government is aware that all the trade unions in the country, the INTUC, the AITUC, the Hind Mazdoor Sabha, the Hind Mazdoor Panchayat and other sections representing textile workers are opposed to any further forced closure and, if so, what is the reaction of the Government, whether they are going to continue this closure even at the cost of misery of lakhs of textile workers or they want to discontinue the closure.

Shri Dinesh Singh: I am fully aware of the hardships being faced by labour in these compulsory closures. Actually, we are short of cotton and, as such, this shortage and the consequent hardships will have to be shared by all sections of the community. I have already introduced a Bill and I am awaiting an opportunity to discuss it in this House when I shall be able to give the exact proposals of the Government which, I hope, will pro-

vide some facilities to the workers, not as much as we may have wanted but still, I hope, the hon. Member will be satisfied.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: My question was that this was done for 15 days, and 14 days are over. I wanted to know from the hon. Minister, when enough sacrifice has been made by the workers for these 15 days, why another sacrifice is needed only because of these employers, at the cost of the misery of these workers.

Shri Dinesh Singh: As I said, the Bill will be before the House and the hon. Member will have an opportunity to consider my proposals.

Shri Umanath: The Minister has admitted that the expectations of cotton crop in the coming season are much lower than what were actually anticipated. Speculation is one of the things by which situations are aggravated. This is going on for a long time. I would like to know whether the Government has got any proposal to ban forward trading in cotton which they did in the earlier part the Emergency for 8 months and then relaxed it. When the situation is very critical affecting the lives of millions of workers, I want to know whether the Government has got any proposal to ban forward trading and, if the Government has no such proposal, I would like to know the reasons for not banning it.

Shri Dinesh Singh: We are considering this matter which the hon. Member has mentioned. I would like to assure him and the House that all these measures which lead to the scarcity in cotton will be fully gone into. So far as I recollect, the speculative buying and selling of cotton is already restricted and that there is a fixed time for buying in advance. We shall certainly consider that matter.

Shri C. K. Chakrapani: I want to know whether it is a fact that there was export of cotton during 1965 and 1966 despite the fact that there was an

acute shortage of cotton in the country and, if so, the reasons for the same.

Shri Dinesh Singh: We have exported some cotton and we have also imported some cotton. There are various varieties of cotton and some variety we find easy to export and import some other variety in its place which is more useful for our purposes here.

Shri P. Gopalani: May I know whether the attention of the Government is drawn to the overstock of cotton in certain mills and, if so, what measures have the Government taken to recover them from distribution?

Shri Dinesh Singh: The overstocking of cotton with cotton mills is illegal. If I have some information from the hon. Member, we shall certainly requisition them and punish the people concerned.

Shri Jyothirmoy Basu: What is the cotton stock position and how does it compare with that of the previous three years? Have we got any proposal to import cotton from abroad?

Shri Dinesh Singh: I shall be very glad to send a copy of the estimate of cotton for this year to the hon. Member. We have already imported 3 lakh bales of cotton and before June we propose to import another 5 lakh bales of cotton.

Shri Jyotirmoy Basu: From which country?

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Abraham:

Shri K. M. Abraham: Since forward trading of cotton has enabled a large number of speculators to corner huge stocks of cotton and create an artificial scarcity, will the Government take steps to ban forward trading of cotton as a measure to overcome the recent crisis?

Shri Dinesh Singh: I have already answered that.

Shri V. V. Menon: In view of the fact that the workers are being compelled to forgo half their wages one day in a week, without any fault of their own, may I know whether the Government will consider the payment of full day's wages to the workers when they are laid off?

Shri Dinesh Singh: When the Bill is considered, the hon. Member will have an opportunity to discuss this matter.

Shri Umanath: The question is there; he can reply straightaway. Bill is a different thing.

Shrimati Suseela Gopalan: The cotton crisis is becoming almost perpetual in this country and Government have failed to rationalise the supply of cotton, despite repeated warnings. May I know whether Government will introduce full State trading of cotton to ensure adequate supply of cotton to all the textile mills?

Shri Dinesh Singh: As far as the question of cotton is concerned, as I have mentioned, the main difficulty is that we are short of cotton; because of drought and other conditions, the expected crop has failed and we are really short of cotton. So far as distribution is concerned, I have already mentioned the measures that Government have in view and are implementing—requisitioning and supplying at a ceiling.

Shri S. S. Kothari: Could we link up the foreign exchange earned by mills with the exchange made available to them to import cotton, so that they could be encouraged to earn their own exchange? Could we consider some such incentive scheme?

Shri Dinesh Singh: We had a similar incentive scheme and I do not think that we did very well. If the industry is willing to export and really earn foreign exchange, I am willing to consider this.

Shri N. Dandekar: Is it not a fact that the textile industry and the workers and the cotton trade and cotton growers have all been caught in a vicious circle of Government's making by control prices which have no relationship one to the other? Textile control prices and cotton control prices—these two—do not tally with the result that we have got into a state of utter confusion? Secondly, therefore, when are Government going to rethink the whole of their policy of controls in relation to textile cotton and things of that kind?

Shri Dinesh Singh: No, Sir. I am sorry I cannot agree with the views of the hon. Member. Fixing of price of cloth to be supplied to an average citizen was necessary because the prices were rising very high, and as it is, we have a sector of decontrolled cloth where the prices are fairly high. It is necessary for us to maintain this control, so that an average man can buy cloth at reasonable price. If we control the price of cotton, we have to control the price of cloth and vice versa. On the other hand, I would say that these controls have worked very well.

Shri K. N. Pandey: Is it a fact that the cotton requisitioned is not of a good quality and, therefore, there is a reluctance on the part of the employers to purchase cotton from the requisitioned stock?

Shri Dinesh Singh: What we requisition is whatever is available here. We do not requisition good or bad, like that. Whatever is available, we requisition.

श्री हुकम चन्द कडवाय: अध्यक्ष महोदय, कपड़ा उद्योग, — मड़ा उद्योग के मजदूर तथा व्यापारी वे सभी संकट में फंसे हुए हैं क्योंकि इस सीजन में कपास बहुत कम पैदा हुई है, ऐसी परिस्थिति में यदि कोई रुई का व्यापारी तीन लाख रुपये की रुई को भाग लगाकर बीजे से 24 लाख रुपये का क्लेम ले, तो क्या सरकार उसके बारे में जांच करायेगी और उसकी जांच करवा कर सभा पटल पर रखेगी ?

श्री दिनेश सिंह : इस के कहने की क्या जरूरत है । जाहिर है कि कोई भी सरकार हो, इस की जांच करायेगी ।

श्री हुकम चन्द कडवाय : उज्जैन में ऐसा किया गया है, एक व्यापारी ने तीन लाख रुपये की रुई में भाग लगा कर लाखों रुपये का क्लेम लिया है, मैं इस के प्रमाण दे सकता हूँ । अब आप इस में क्या कार्यवाही करने जा रहे हैं, क्या उसकी जांच करायेगे और उसके खिलाफ क्या कार्यवाही की है ?

श्री दिनेश सिंह : अगर आप प्रमाण देंगे, तो जरूर करायेगे ।

Shri S. R. Damani: May I know whether a large quantity of cotton is being held up at the producing centres, and if so, the quantity distributed and the action that will be taken to release it to the industry?

Shri Dinesh Singh: I shall be very glad if the hon. Member would give me specific information on the subject.

Shri S. Kundu: On a point of order. We seek the intervention of the Speaker to elicit a correct and precise answer to our questions. A question put by my hon. friend here was whether in view of the crisis in cotton trade that is faced by the textile mills, the hon. Minister is going to rationise the cotton trade and is going to introduce State trading in cotton. No specific answer had been given to this question and the question was evaded. I seek your protection and help to get a precise answer to this.

श्री सम्बुल गली बर : क्या बचीर ग्राहक फरमायेंगे कि उनकी नोटिस में ऐसी शिकायतें आई हैं कि जिन मिलों को मिल-मालिकों ने बन्द किया है और मजदूरों को परेशानी हो रही है, उन्होंने जान-बूझ कर अपनी जरूरियात का स्टॉक पहले नहीं किया, अगर यह सही है तो क्या कारण सरकार ने उन के खिलाफ कोई एक्शन लेने का फैसला किया है ? क्या सरकार यह भी बतायेगी कि अब

बहु कहती है कि रुई की फसल कम हुई है—
तो कितने परसेन्ट कम हुई है और क्या सरकार
रुई की एक्सपोर्ट पर इस वफा पाबन्दी लगा-
वेगी ?

شری عبدالغنی در - کہا وزیر
صاحب فرمائیں کہ انکی نوٹس میں
ایسی شکایتیں آئی ہیں کہ جن
ملوں کو مل سالوں نے بلند کیا ہے
اور مزدوروں کو پریشانی ہو رہی ہے
انہوں نے جائیداد پر اپنی ضروریات
کا سٹاک پہلے نہیں کیا - اگر یہ
صدمہ ہے تو کیا سرکار نے ان کے خلاف
کوئی ایکشن لینے کا فیصلہ کیا ہے -
کیا سرکار یہ بھی بات چیت کے جب وہ
کہتی ہے کہ روٹی کی فصل کم ہوئی
ہے تو کتنے پرسنٹ کم ہوئی ہے اور
کیا سرکار روٹی کی ایکسپورٹ پر اس
دفعہ پابندی لگائیگی -

श्री विनेश सिंह : अध्यक्ष महोदय, पिछले
साल एक लाख बेल एक्सपोर्ट किया था,
हम जो काटन बाहर से मंगाते हैं, उसकी
जरूरत को देखते हुए यह एक्सपोर्ट बहुत
कम है, क्योंकि बाहर की रुई का हम ज्यादा
अच्छी तरह से उपयोग कर सकते हैं। जहां
तक सदस्य महोदय के प्रश्न के हमारे हिस्से
का ताल्लुक है, अगर वह किसी खास मिन
के बारे में पूछें तो मालूम कर के बता सकूंगा . .

श्री बसुल कानी दर : जो मिलें बन्द
हुई हैं और जो मजदूर परेशान हुए हैं, उनकी
बाबत पूछता हूं, वे हजारों नहीं बल्कि बन्द
हैं।

شری عبدالغنی در - جو ملین
بلند ہوئی ہیں اور مزدور پریشان

ہوئے ہیں انکی بابت پوچھتا ہوں -
وہ ہزاروں نہیں بلکہ چند ہیں -

श्री विनेश सिंह : बन्द भी नहीं है, 28
हैं। उन के बारे में जिस दिन बन्द हुई,
उस दिन कितनी रुई थी, कितनी नहीं थी,
यह कहना तो इस वक्त मुमकिन नहीं होगा।

श्री रामाबतार शास्त्री : रुई की कमी
की वजह से बन्द हुई है, इस के बारे में साफ
जवाब माना चाहिये। बिहार की कौटन
मिलें रुई की कमी की वजह से बन्द हैं
(व्यवधान)

Mr. Speaker: Shri P. G. Sen

Prof. R. K. Amin: You may look
towards this side also.

Mr. Speaker: Shri N. Dandekar was
from the hon. Member's side. Shri
S. S. Kothari was also from his side,
and so was Shri Hukam Chand
Kachhavaia. I resent this kind of re-
mark. These three Members were all
from the hon. Member's side. If any
hon. Member wants to put a question
let him stand. I shall not be able to
call everyone of the Members who
stand up; I shall be able to call only
two or three of them. I do see every
Member who stands up but I cannot
call everybody who has been standing.
So, let not such remarks be passed. If
they want to stand, let them stand;
I do not mind it, but let them not
pass such remarks.

Shri P. G. Sen: May I know whe-
ther the import of cotton from the
UAR and the Sudan are under contem-
plation in exchange for other commo-
dities that those countries require from
India?

Shri Dinesh Singh: Yes, we are pro-
posing to import 1,70,000 bales from
the UAR and 1 lakh bales from the
Sudan under the present arrangement.
We are also exploring the possibility
of importing even more cotton from
these countries.

भी समावतार शास्त्री : अध्यक्ष महोदय, बिहार में केवल दो ही कोटन मिलें हैं— एक गया में और दूसरी फूलवारी-शरीफ, पटना में ये दोनों रुई की वजह से बन्द हैं। फूलवारी-शरीफ की मिल तां 9 नवम्बर, 65 से बन्द है—दो साल हो जायेंगे। क्या सरकार उन भारखानों को रुई सलाई करके उन्हें खुलवाने की कोशिश करेगी ताकि हजारों मजदूरों को काम मिल सके जो कि इस समय बेकार हैं ?

श्री विनेश सिंह : यह जो कारखाने बन्द हुए हैं यह खाली रुई की कमी की वजह से बन्द हुए हैं ऐसी स्थिति नहीं है। कुछ इन के इन्-जामात की शलती थी। कुछ वहां पर उन के पास पैसे की भी कमी थी सब वजहों को मिला कर यह बंद हुई है। अब एक, एक के लिये देखना पड़ेगा कि वहां क्या कठिनाई हुई है (व्यवधान)

एक माननीय सदस्य : क्या सरकार इस तरह से बन्द होने वाली मिलों को अपने हाथ में ले लेगी ? (व्यवधान)

Mr. Speaker: Order, Order. I have called Shri Manubhai Patel.

Shri Manubhai Patel: Due to price control and movement ban, so many cotton bales which are already sold are not lifted by the mills. Out of 7 lakh cotton bales sold in Gujarat, only 2,35,000 bales are allowed to be lifted. Will Government allow these 5 lakh bales which are already sold to be lifted the earliest possible time before the monsoon?

Shri Dinesh Singh: Certainly if cotton has been purchased and if it is within the two-month restriction, the mills will certainly be allowed to move it.

Import of Sulphur through S.T.C.

*324. Shri Madhu Limaye: Will the Minister of Commerce be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the criticism of the contract entered into by the State Trading Corporation with an American firm without any status and standing in the credit and banking circles in U.S.A. for the supply of over 3 lakh tons of sulphur; and

(b) if so, the nature of the criticism and the action taken against the U.S. firm and officials of the State Trading Corporation?

The Minister of Commerce (Shri Dinesh Singh): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A statement is placed on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

The criticism mainly related to non-fractification of contract and the losses alleged to have arisen out of it. The State Trading Corporation cancelled the contract as soon as it found that the party was not in a position to fulfil the contract. A negotiated settlement has been reached by STC with the firm by which the firm has agreed to pay Rs. 75,000 which would adequately cover the expenditure incurred by STC on account of this deal. No further action is, therefore, considered necessary.

श्री मधु लिमये : अध्यक्ष महोदय पहली बेरी यह शिकायत है कि जो जानकारी भ्रान्ति चाहिये थी वह सही नहीं है। केवल यह जो देका या करार हुआ था उसके अनुसार कार्य नहीं हुआ इतना ही आरोप नहीं था। उस पर पिछले सत्र में काफी बहस हो चुकी है और पुराने व्यापार मंत्री ने मेरे ऊपर बहुत ही गन्दे किस्म के आरोप लगाये थे। यह मैं 21 नवम्बर की कार्यवाही से पढ़ रहा हूँ अब मैं सदन में नहीं था :

"vicious attacks, baseless and wanton allegations, wild allegations".