

have the necessary staff and has it opened necessary purchase centres and got necessary funds in order that the farmer is in a position to offer his jute?

MR. SPEAKER : That is all right.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : I am told that the purchase is done jointly by the local State cooperatives and the JCI, and there are enough centres available in Bengal.

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN : What about Bihar ?

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : In Bihar also, they are available.

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN : Mr. Speaker, I hope the Prime Minister will investigate into the matter and find out the average distance between each traditional hut and the JCI purchase centre. It is at least 40 to 50 kms. away. (*Interruptions*).

MR. SPEAKER : That is all.

SHRI SARAT DEB : Sir, I want to draw the attention of the hon. Prime Minister to the State of Orissa that there is no possibility of the Jute Corporation buying from the State Cooperative Societies. Will the Prime Minister kindly take some necessary steps to make this Jute Corporation buy from the State Cooperative Societies ?

SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN : If it is a matter of buying jute from the growers in Orissa, that can be looked into.

Seizure of Goods at Trivandrum Airport

*23. SHRI T. BASHEER : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the broad particulars of goods seized by the customs authorities from the passengers at Trivandrum Airport during the last three years ;

(b) the amount realised by the sale of confiscated items during the above period ; and

(c) the value of goods lying undisposed of ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY) : (a) to (c). A statement is given below.

STATEMENT

(a) : The details of the goods seized by the Customs authorities from passengers at Trivandrum Airport during the last three years 1983, 1984 and 1985 are furnished below :

(Value ; Rs. In lakhs)

| Name of the commodity seized | Year | | |
|------------------------------|------|--------|--------|
| | 1983 | 1984 | 1985 |
| Gold | 30 | 71.58 | 270.55 |
| Textiles | 105 | 56.05 | 21.81 |
| Watches | 18 | 7.69 | 3.39 |
| Indian and foreign currency | 3 | 4.47 | 8.92 |
| Miscellaneous baggage goods | 59 | 46.02 | 65.43 |
| Total | 215 | 185.81 | 370.10 |

(b) : The total amount realised by way of sale of confiscated goods at Trivandrum Airport during the above period is furnished below :

| Year | (Rs. in lakhs) Amount realised |
|------|-----------------------------------|
| 1983 | 49 |
| 1984 | 47.44 |
| 1985 | 165.80 |

(These figures do not include the value of gold deposited in the Mint during the above period).

(c) : The total value of seized/confiscated goods held in stock at Trivandrum Airport as on 30.6.1986 is Rs. 3.10 crores*

*Figures are Provisional.

SHRI T. BASHEER : Sir, I have gone through the statement laid on the Table of the House and I am happy that goods seized by the Customs authorities at Trivandrum Airport had increased. But I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to the fact that there are a lot of complaints from the passengers, especially the people who are working in the Gulf countries and who are working abroad. When these people visit their motherland after four or five years, they are unnecessarily harassed by the Customs Authorities and the fact is there is rampant corruption in this sector. I would like to say that this 'unnecessary harassment and the rampant corruption are sides of the same coin. I would like to know whether the Government is aware of this state of affairs prevailing in this sector and, if so, what steps Government proposes to take effectively to stop this corruption and unnecessary harassment to the passengers especially our workers abroad.

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY : I share the concern of the hon. Member. Wherever there is corruption, we have to identify those black-sheep and stern action should be taken. The hon. Member is aware of the fact that Government of India has already taken action against corruption, and, in fact, the houses of these corrupt officials have been raided. Whenever it is found that they are living beyond their means, there also action is being taken. We will not spare any person. At the same time, particularly in Trivandrum airport, in order to minimise the harassment to these passengers, we have taken steps. Public Relations Officers are also posted and they are to find out and assist the passengers and important provisions of Baggage Rules are displayed on the Notice Board.

We have taken all these measures. I am conscious of the fact that when the Department is taking action, it is a difficult task even for the officials also to perform their job and it is for the officials also to collect the revenue. Whenever there is violation of the rules, it is for them not to spare anybody. So, we have to strike a balance. Here we have to take action against the black-sheep and we have to allow these officers also to function without any fear and without any interference.

SHRI T. BASHEER : My second question would be during the last Session our hon. Minister said here that there is a proposal under Government consideration to liberalise the Baggage Rules. Thousands of our people are working abroad especially in Gulf countries. They deserve this. I strongly feel that there should be liberalisation of Baggage Rules, especially in case of passengers coming on transfer of residence. I would like to know from the hon. Minister what steps have been to liberalise the Baggage Rules. If you have taken steps, when will these come into effect ?

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY : The provisions are there. Facilities are given to the people who are coming after their termination of their services abroad.

The persons are also permitted to bring in household goods of the value of Rs. 5,000/- from abroad when they come, in the first instance, if they have stayed there for more than one year and if they have used the articles for six months.

In the case of persons who were staying abroad for more than two years and coming back to India for permanent residence, they are eligible for bringing the household articles which they have used for more than one year. No duty will be imposed to such people.

Only refrigerator and air-conditioner and deep-freeze which are used for cold-storage,—they have to pay some duty.

The hon. Member has made some suggestions and we are taking note of these suggestions and we are considering those suggestions also.

SHRI T. BASHEER : What is the assurance of the hon. Minister ?

MR. SPEAKER : No. Next question.

SHRI AMITABH BACHCHAN : When these workers return after one year of service from abroad, the free baggage allowance is about Rs. 1200/-. May I suggest to the Hon. Minister that this allowance could possibly be increased to Rs 5000/-? Because these workers work very hard abroad facing a lot of difficulties. If they want to bring back to our country

each piece of their belongings, will the Minister consider allowing them ?

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY : It is true that free allowance for baggage is Rs. 1250/-. Upto Rs. 2000/- the duty is 170%. Beyond Rs. 2000/- it will be 240%. We have also to keep in mind our foreign exchange difficulties. If the Hon. Member compares with the free allowance of other developed countries, he will find that even in USA the free allowance is only upto \$ 100/-.

SHRI E. AYYAPU REDDY: Out of the total quantity of Rs. 370 lakhs of goods seized, Rs. 270/- lakhs of goods is gold. In 1984 it was Rs. 71 lakhs, in 1985 it was Rs. 270 lakhs and in 1983 it was Rs. 30 lakhs. Smuggling of gold into the country is estimated unofficially at 50 to 70 tonnes per year. In 1985 it is said to have crossed 185 tonnes. As a matter of fact, five passengers at Calcutta were found smuggling gold through swallowing it into their stomach ! Recently the *Hindu* has written that on account of disparity in the international price of gold, its smuggling has become a racket. Women are specially trained in Bombay for purposes of smuggling gold. In view of this, will the Government have a second look at the gold policy ?

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Why do you spoil the name of Bombay ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH): The Government has appointed a Committee to go into it and the Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank is the Chairman of this Committee. The Government will await the report of the Committee.

SHRI THAMPAN THOMAS : I would like to ask a question about the disposal of the items which are confiscated. The Customs authorities confiscate and themselves sell them through their retail shops. So, the person who confiscates becomes also. Therefore, they fix price on good items and sell them. My question is whether the Government will consider barring the Customs authorities from selling these things through their retail shops and entrust the entire thing to the Super Bazar, Primary Stores as an encour-

agement with a particular subsidy of 20% or 25% to support the cooperatives to run their business.

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY : It is a suggestion for action. We will look into it.

SHRI VAKKOM PURUSHOTHAMAN: Our poor people who are working in Gulf countries come to this country once in a year or two. They bring certain utensils for their use. They must be treated separate from the tourists. In the last session the Minister had promised to consider these cases separately. Will the Government take steps to increase the free allowance in the case of these persons alone, not for all passengers ?

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY : We have already stated that these people who stayed there and who on termination of their services come back for permanent settlement in India, can bring the household articles which have been used there for more than one-year. There is no limit except in those cases which I have stated. So, free allowance is there and it is not a case that we are not permitting.

SHRI VAKKOM PURUSHOTHAMAN : I was not asking about those who are finally coming to India. Those who are coming once in a year or two and bring some articles for their family members, why not they be treated separate from tourists, who bring things not only for their relatives but for selling also ?

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH : I am sorry. This could open up channel for everybody.

(Interruptions)

Restructuring of N.T.C.

*25. **SHRI SHARAD DIGHE :** Will the Minister of TEXTILE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the National Textile Corporation is proposed to be restructured ; and

(b) if so, the details thereof ?