

recent visit to Nagpur, I found that the model mill run by the National Textiles Corporation has reached such a position that in the next month the Mill Management will not be able to pay the wages to the workers of the mill.

I will only like to make this request to the Hon. Minister. Taking the situation of Maharashtra Textile Mills into consideration, will the Government of India review the situation of textile mills in Maharashtra and find out solutions to make the textile units profitable? Because cotton is the major crop in Maharashtra and these textile mills are based on that.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : Sir, responsibility regarding industrial relations and other matters come within the competence of the State Government. As I said, we do not leave it to the State Government to do everything. We have a fund of Rs. 750 crores for modernisation of these mills. Some State Governments like Maharashtra and Gujarat have worked out solutions for some of these mill.

In Maharashtra itself in the case of the Empress Mills in Nagpur—the Maharashtra Government had some negotiations with the labour and they have taken over that Mill. There are certain conditions on the basis of which, they seek to run it and they had asked for certain assistance from the Central Government which will be coming to them in a proper manner.

In Gujarat also, a very forward looking scheme was made in consultation again with labour when some mills were closed by consent and some labour were rationalised again by consent, so that whatever remains, becomes viable. So, responsibility of the State Government in this respect is very vital and the Central Government has and will continue to render all the assistance, including financial assistance to see that old industries like the textiles which can be made viable by assistance are made stronger and viable, so that, they may not be closed.

Illegal Bangladeshi immigrants and infiltrators

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*251. **DR. A. K. PATEL :**

SHRI C. JANGA REDDY :

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the estimated number of Bangladeshi illegal immigrants/infiltrators separately in Bihar, West Bengal, Assam, Orissa, Delhi, U.P., Madhya Pradesh and other States and Union Territories; and

(b) how many of them in each State and Union Territory have been able to become voters or ration-card holders?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) Despite various steps taken to prevent infiltration, the possibility of some Bangladeshi nationals infiltrating from across the border and migrating to interior States cannot be ruled out. The State Governments have been given standing instructions to expel/push back such infiltrants as soon as they are detected. The State Governments have also powers to take action against them under the Foreigners Act, 1946. No precise estimates of such persons are available.

(b) No person who is not a citizen of India can become a voter. As and when such persons are detected, their names are deleted from the voter's list. Citizenship is not a pre-requisite for a ration card.

DR. A. K. PATEL : The reply from the Hon. Home Minister is vague and I would say, incorrect. I have got some figures and details worked out by a voluntary body in West Bengal by name Suraksha Samiti, and I can give the figures district-wise. In 14 districts, more than 50 lakhs of people have infiltrated; and in spite of this, no steps are taken. The Hon. Minister has also tried to throw the responsibility on the State Government. Actually, this responsibility is on the Centre also. So, I would like to know from the Hon. Minister whether he is prepared to seal the borders to prevent infiltration.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : We are not denying the responsibility of the Centre. All that we wish to impress is that the State Governments have an equal responsi-

bility; and being the Government which is in the area and whose police is primarily responsible for identifying and expelling infiltrators, I think the State Government's responsibility cannot be under-stated or diminished in any manner whatsoever.

As far as sealing the border is concerned, it is a very attractive phrase; but what does sealing the border mean? Sealing the border can only mean increased vigilance on the border, strengthening the Border Security Force and taking all necessary steps to ensure that the infiltrators do not come into India in large numbers. We are doing just that; and we want greater cooperation from the State Governments.

DR. A. K. PATEL : My second question is this : the Hon. Minister has replied to part (b) of my question, saying that no person who is not a citizen of India can become a voter. It is a known fact that even a person who is not a citizen has become a member of the Assembly, and has also become a Minister. These are facts known to everybody. Therefore, I would like to know from the Hon. Minister whether he is prepared to expel those who are not citizens and have infiltrated.

I can give the data district-wise : in Calcutta more than 10 lakhs people have infiltrated; in Murshidabad 8 lakhs; in West Dinajpur 4 lakhs; in Howrah 2.25 lakhs; in Cooch Behar 1 lakh; in Birbhum 0.45 lakh; in Jalpaiguri 0.45 lakh; in Malda 7 lakhs; Hooghly 1.5 lakhs and so on. This was worked out by very eminent persons of West Bengal. Therefore, I would like to know whether the Minister would be prepared—if I give the exact list worked out by the Samiti—to expel them.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : I will certainly accept the figures given by the Hon. Member. He can kindly give them to me. We also have some information about the increase in the population in border districts of West Bengal. But figures are not people. We must identify people on the ground; and this identification can take place only if the State Government exerts its will and brings to bear a greater determination, and uses its machinery and the police to identify the infiltrators. If they are identified, certainly we will expel the infiltrators.

DR. A. K. PATEL : If Government machinery cannot identify these persons, there is this voluntary body which is prepared to assist the Government.

MR. SPEAKER : You have already put two questions, Dr. Patel.

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN : The figures that have just been related on the floor of the House come from voluntary bodies; and we are not aware of the machinery that they possess for collecting such figures. So, we can say that they are guesstimates at best. They cannot be very accurate. But there is a certain reason why these figures are being circulated. And these figures are making a political impact which needs to be looked into. This is a motivated campaign; that is why I would like to know from the Hon. Minister two things which can be quantified. First, the government does possess figures about the number of persons apprehended on the border who are either pushed back or are handed over to the State authorities, Police authorities for necessary action. These figures are collected month by month, year by year. Therefore, if these figures are taken as a whole, over a period of time, they can give us a fair idea of the level of infiltration. I wholly accept the view of the government that in a situation where the borders do not present any impassable obstacles infiltration cannot be ruled out; that is what the government has said; this is a reasonable assessment. But we would all like infiltrations to be controlled and monitored. Therefore, I would like to know from the Hon. Minister sector-wise because he has the figures, the Ministry has the figures of the persons apprehended; he in every sector of the border per km. per year. (*Interruptions*) I want to know the number of the persons apprehended per km. per year on every sector secondly. I also want to know the average distance between two consecutive border posts because sealing the border means exactly how close the posts are.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : It cannot be devied that there are a large number of illegal immigrants/infiltrators who come into India. Of course the estimates vary. I think the conclusions that are drawn from these estimates also vary depending on who is drawing these conclusions. But, then, I don't

think it will be right to under estimate the size of the problem. For example, in West Bengal, in the six years 1981 to 1985—1986 figures are only available upto October 1986—let me read the number of people who were detected and the number of people who were pushed back. In West Bengal, in 1981 10,168 people were detected and 10,314 were pushed back. There was a carry over from the previous year. In 1982, 9336 people were detected and 9551 were pushed back; in 1983, 14,455 people were detected and 13,514 were pushed back; in 1984, 14059 were detected and 12,580 were pushed back; in 1985 17,177 people were detected and 16,147 were pushed back; in 1986 upto October, 13,860 people were detected and 12,828 were pushed back.

But then we should not rush to the conclusion that these are exact figures of the infiltrators; these may be exact, as far as people who were pushed back are concerned. But I would say that these figures are understated because of lack of effective reporting and lack of identification. We are constantly strengthening the arrangement on the border; this cannot be done overnight. As the House has been told on several occasions, we are increasing the number of battalions of BSF. I don't think it would be in public interest to disclose the distance between one BSF post and another; it would not be possible to disclose it. *(Interruptions)* In certain areas the distance is very short; in certain areas the distance is long. I do not want this information to go to the people. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN : I have asked about the number of persons apprehended per km. per year. *(Interruptions)* It is a serious situation if the same level of infiltration takes place over 100 kms. then. If it takes place over 1,000 kms. then it is a different story.

MR. SPEAKER : Whatever it is, the infiltration should not take place; that is all.

(Translation)

SHRI MANKURAM SODI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the district of Bastar in Madhya Pradesh, there are about 1 lakh refugees from Bangladesh and moreover, the

relatives of these families are always visiting them. The relatives also want that they should be included in the list of refugees to get all the benefits. Although they are infiltrators, yet they settle there and subsequently demand facilities like ration cards, houses, land etc. Has the State Government made any complaints to the Centre in this regard ?

(English)

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : Sir, I do not think that the problem is so alarming in Madhya Pradesh, but since the Hon. Member has made a specific reference to certain problems there we will try to get more information about Madhya Pradesh, but as I said in answering another part of the question, we have issued instructions to all the State Governments to be vigilant to identify the infiltrators and to push them back. The Central Government on its part is always willing to render whatever assistance may be necessary to push back these infiltrators. This is a problem which could assume very alarming proportions in the near future and therefore I think we should be more vigilant and we should expel these infiltrators.

(Translation)

SHRI RAM NAGINA MISHRA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, lakhs of refugees from Pakistan are infiltrating through the border of Punjab and are going to West Bengal. They are also being issued ration cards. Is there any company which is operating to encourage such infiltration. If someone infiltrates into my house suddenly and I merely say that efforts are being made to check it, then it cannot be a proper reply. Will the Government take strong steps so that infiltration is stopped for ever ? It should be verified whether there is any person or company which is encouraging them to settle here ? You should enquire from the State Government as to how they have got ration cards, land, etc ?

(English)

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : We have no information about any gang which is operating to encourage infiltration. In fact, if you will kindly see the numbers, this infiltration cannot be done by a gang operat-

ing. It is because of the economic condition on either side of the border and as I said while we were discussing the Citizenship Act, India is still a land of great promise to people on the other side of the border, particularly Bangladesh, and that is why large numbers of people come into India, and therefore we are quite conscious about this problem and we have taken every step to ensure that the State Governments also fall in line with our thinking in pushing back the infiltrators.

As far as ration cards are concerned, it is for the State Governments to be more vigilant. We will once again impress upon the State Governments to be more careful in issuing ration cards.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : With reference to infiltration in West Bengal, I am sure, you will appreciate and the House will appreciate adhoc, the difficulties of identification as far as West Bengal is concerned. This is not the same as infiltration into Assam or Bihar or any other State, for the simple reason that the people who are choosing to cross and come over are also Bengalis, by ethnic origin, they look the same, they speak the same language and it is some times extremely difficult to identify the people. They are the same people who are on both sides of the border in every way, linguistic, ethnic and everything. This is one thing which makes it more difficult to identify.

The other point I wish to ask the Home Minister about is this. I had drawn the attention of the Home Minister some time ago to the condition of some of the border roads, roads along the border, particularly in my own constituency which is just opposite the Bangladeshi district of Khulna, infiltration is going on; everybody knows about it. It is mainly due, as Mr. Chidambaram has said, to the problem of poverty. Extremely poverty stricken people, who have got nothing there apparently, come across. But I had written to the Home Minister that the condition of some of the border roads was really deplor-

able. It is impossible for anybody to use those roads. Even the BSF people, I know; have complained to the Government that the condition of the border roads is such that they cannot even carry out effective patrolling and all that. But I regret to say that the Home Minister has replied to me—a couple of days ago I got his letter—as usual passing the buck on to the State Government saying that the maintenance of these roads is the job of the State Government. It is the international border of the country. It is not the border of Bengal. It is the border of India. Therefore, I would like to know whether the Central Government would be a little more up and doing at least about maintenance and construction of proper border roads.

SHRI P CHIDAMBARAM : I can only say that I entirely agree with the Hon. Member. We should do more about border roads. But while we do more about building border roads, I think, the State Government should do more about maintaining border roads.

Trade with EEC Countries

*255. **SHRI UTTAM RATHOD :**
PROF. RAMAKRISHNA
MORE :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) the comparative percentage of decline in India's trade with the European Economic Community (EEC) countries since 1984 and how does it account for in terms of foreign exchange earnings; and

(b) the areas where exports have been declining stating the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. SHIV SHANKER) : (a) and (b). A Statement is given below.