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Plea For Relief To Handloom Industry

NEW DELHI, May 10. (PTI).

THE Lok Sabha today resumed the debate on the General Budget, when most members voiced support to the Finance Minister's taxation proposals.

Mr. Amar Nath Vidyalkar (Cong.—Punjab) pleaded for relief to the handloom industry, particularly those units which dealt with woollen textiles and processed goods.

The imposition of 10-per cent excise duty had hit them hard. Many of the small units in Amritsar were today observing "hartal" as a protest, he said.

He accused the Communists and other Opposition parties of creating a psychology of "faithlessness and discontentment" among the people and said this came in the way of the people's participation in the development activities.

Dr. Punjab Rao Deshmukh (Cong.—M.P.) described the Budget as "bold" and said the House could not grudge fresh taxation as it had approved the Third Plan.

But, he said, there was a need for greater efficiency and austerity and stricter parliamentary control over expenditure. "The experience of the last 14 years shows that Parliament is entirely ineffective so far as financial control is concerned."

MINIMUM PRICES

The Public Accounts Committee, Dr. Deshmukh said, did post mortem and the Estimates Committee did post facto examination. The opinion of the common man was never taken into consideration before a scheme was formulated. He would therefore urge the revival of the Standing Finance Committee.

He welcomed the steps the Government had so far taken to support agricultural prices but said they should be faster. The Government should be sympathetic in fixing minimum prices.

Dr. Deshmukh demanded the appointment of a commission to investigate the rates of premia charged by the Life Insurance Corporation as they were, he said, "extraordinarily high." If the rates were lowered it would help the peasants to get insured.

Criticising the system of education in the country, he said basic education was now a thing only for the poorer sections. Multi-purpose schools were in a "mess" as they did not get proper financial assistance. "They are all experiments at the cost of the people."

Mr. Narendra Singh Mahida (Swat—Gujarat) generally wel-

comed the Budget proposals, but pleaded that the levies on tobacco and tea be withdrawn as they affected the common people. He said his party did not represent the rich and was not opposed to the aims of the ruling party.

It only differed on the methods employed. On the contrary, while calling for more sacrifices and simpler living from the people, the ruling party indulged in wasteful expenditure on luxuries and pomp. "The Congress talk of socialism is only a farce. If there is real socialism in the country many of those who occupy Treasury Benches now would not have been there," he said.

He also pleaded for high priority in the Plans for education and agriculture.

UNION TERRITORIES

Mr. Biren Dutta (Comm.—Tripura) wanted independent legislatures for the Union Territories in place of the Territorial Councils. The proposed enhancement of the powers of the Councils, he said, would not meet the situation. He complained that these territories, particularly Tripura, were badly neglected.

Mr. V. C. Parashar (Cong.—M.P.) said the Government should take immediate steps to provide drinking water in villages where people had to trudge six to eight miles to get a jar of water.

He suggested that the co-operative societies be entrusted with house-building activities to ease the housing shortage.

Mrs. Ramdulari Sinha (Cong.—Bihar) said it was very unfortunate that the Finance Minister had abolished the expenditure tax.

She said the new indirect taxes had put greater burdens on the people. She wondered how socialism could be brought about by these measures.

The provident fund scheme should be extended to all workers and an implementation committee set up in each Ministry to ensure that the Plan targets were being fulfilled. The Government should also take steps to hold the price line and introduce inland navigation.

Mr. S. M. Bannerji (Ind.—U.P.) said the Government had failed to take effective steps to collect arrears of income tax. This was a

serious lapse on its part which was encouraging tax evaders.

WEALTH DISTRIBUTION

Mr. F. H. Mohsin (Cong.—Mysore) said he was disappointed to see that the Budget had no features of socialism in it.

He, however, welcomed the abolition of the expenditure tax on the grounds that it would encourage richer people to spend more. This would lead to distribution of wealth instead of its concentration.

Mr. Mohsin said the Government's claim that the economic condition of the people had improved did not conform with reality.

Mr. L. M. Singhvi (Ind.—Rajasthan) characterised the Budget as a "rope trick" of the Finance Minister, who had neglected the common man and the middle class.

He also criticised the Government for its failure to solve the problems of unemployment and rising prices, and charged the public-sector undertakings with inefficiency and demanded an inquiry into their working.

Mr. Digambar Singh (Cong.—U.P.) said despite the two Plans, the lot of the common people, particularly those living in the villages, had not improved.

"You must abolish the capitalist class, otherwise they will gain the upper hand and bring about conditions in the country which will not be desirable. Capitalism is the root of all corruption in the country and once you do away with it a better atmosphere will prevail," he said.

HIGHER TAXATION

Mr. Prakash Vir Shastri (Ind.—U.P.) said the amount of taxes imposed in the first two years of the Third Plan showed that there would be higher taxation in future and the total tax effort in the Plan would exceed Rs. 1,100 crores envisaged earlier.

He said the scale of defence expenditure was necessary in the present circumstances but there should be economies in civil expenditure.

The tax collection machinery should be made more efficient. If the taxes already imposed were properly collected, there would be no need for additional taxation, he added. He also emphasised the need for reducing the election expenditure.

Mr. Chandramani Lal Choudhary (Cong.—Bihar) pleaded for increasing the defence expenditure. He asked for educational concessions for the children of low-paid Government servants.