

SHRI DINESH SINGH : In reply to an earlier question of pressure, I did try to explain that there is no question of pressure. It is a balanced trade. If we want to sell goods to the Soviet Union, we have to buy goods from them. Therefore, we shall have to arrive at a reasonable balance.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA ; May I know whether the question of sale of Russian aircraft was raised ?

MR. SPEAKER : Next question.

Cardamom Cultivation

*1378. **SHRI A. SREEDHARAN :** Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Cardamom Board has submitted a scheme for the development of cardamom cultivation ;

(b) if so, the main features thereof ;

(c) whether Government have approved the scheme ; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI DINESH SINGH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A statement is laid on the Table of the House. [*Placed in Library. See No. LT 992/68*].

(c) and (d). Out of the five schemes submitted by the Cardamom Board, three have been approved by Government and the remaining two are under examination.

SHRI A. SREEDHARAN : Cardamom has been, and continues to be, one of the traditional exports of our ancient country. Traders from the Middle East and South East Asia came to the shores of Kerala to purchase cardamom even during the early days of history.

According to the latest figures available, the area under cardamom cultivation is 54,395 hectares which approximately come to 1,60,000 acres, and the foreign exchange earned is to the tune of Rs. 267.07 lakhs in 1962-63 and Rs. 319.98 lakhs in 1963-64. According to the scheme, it is proposed only to rejuvenate the existing cardamom plantations. But if we undertake to expand cardamom plantations, if the 56,000 hectares

could be expanded to 1,00,000 hectares, our foreign exchange earnings would go up by 100 per cent. Have Government under consideration any proposal to undertake extensive cardamom cultivation in the States of Kerala, Mysore and Madras by setting up a body like a Cardamom Plantations Corporations ?

SHRI DINESH SINGH : May I say that instead of thinking in terms of increasing the area under cardamom plantation, it will be far more useful if we think in terms of increasing the yield per hectare of cardamom ? The area under cardamom plantation has been increasing. In 1961-62, it was 55,848 hectares ; in 1965-66, it went up to 73,088 hectares and again at 73,102 Hectares, while the production figure which was 3,205 in 1961-62 has come down to 2,700 in 1966. Therefore, it is not a question of increasing the area of cardamom, out of improving the yield. The suggestion has been made in that respect and we are looking into it.

SHRI A. SREEDHARAN : I am glad to that the Minister has at long last opened his eyes to the need for improving cardamom cultivation because the scheme was submitted by the Cardamom Board fairly long back. The scheme mainly visualises the eradication of the 'kutte' disease which is merrily eating up cardamom plantations. According to the statement laid on the Table, what Government propose to do is to fight this disease in 25,000 acres in 5 years, that means, approximately 5,000 acres a year arithmetically spoken. In view of the fact that this disease is widespread and widely prevalent, will Government revise the scheme and initiate proposals to fight it on a larger scale and in a more intensive way ?

SHRI DINESH SINGH : That is our endeavour, to fight it on a large scale as resources permit. It is a very expensive process and that is why we can only fight it in the areas where resources permit. But it will be our endeavour to go on increasing the measures to fight this disease.

SHRI K. LAKKAPPA : The statement laid on the Table discloses that only

24,000 acres of cardamom plantations are envisaged for replanting with high yielding healthy seedlings. I would like to have the breakup of this figure as between the three States. The climate of Mysore, Madras and Kerala is very congenial for growing cardamom. What steps have Government taken to implement the scheme and also to see that the cultivation of cardamom crop in these areas is increased progressively? Have they taken into account the recommendation of each of the State? What are the details of the recommendation made by each State and what is the breakup of the figure?

SHRI DINESH SINGH : So far as the breakup is concerned, it is our intention to apply the scheme to 12,000 acres in Kerala and 12,000 acres in Mysore and Madras.

SHRI K. LAKKAPPA : Has the Board received any recommendations from the various States, and has it recommended on those lines?

SHRI DINESH SINGH : I am not sure what the Board has received. I am going by the recommendation the Board has sent us.

SHRI DINKAR DESAI : The North Kanara district of Mysore State is a very favourable area for the cultivation of cardamom. But in view of the fact that 80 per cent of the total area there is covered by forest, will Government advise the Mysore Government to release at least 25,000 acres of forest land for the cultivation of cardamom?

SHRI DINESH SINGH : First of all, I cannot say offhand. ...

MR. SPEAKER : He cannot answer that. Shri Kandappan.

SHRI S. KANDAPPAN : While taking measures to improve the per acre yield of cardamom, I have seen reports in the press that there is a proposal to set up some cardamom plantations, particularly in the Kolli Hills in Tamil Nad in order to rehabilitate repatriates from Ceylon? Is there any concrete proposal before

Government, and have Government decided anything on that?

Secondly, with regard to the Cardamom Board, there was a consistent demand from the producers side and also from the Merchants' Guild that some representative of theirs should be associated with the Board. Have Government acted on that demand?

SHRI DINESH SINGH : Regarding the rehabilitation scheme, I do not have offhand any scheme with me. I shall have to find out from the State concerned.

As for the personnel of the Board, I shall consider the suggestion when the Board is reconstituted.

SHRI SREEKANTAN NAIR : Is the amount of Rs. 22.5 lakhs envisaged in the statement laid on the Table to be given as a loan or as a grant to be spent directly by the Board for eradicating the disease?

SHRI DINESH SINGH : No, there will have to be a scheme which will have to be implemented. Whether the Board will do it or the State Governments will implement, will have to be gone into.

Price of Imported Newsprint

*1380. **SHRI K. M. KOUSHIK :** Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the price of the newsprint, being imported, is contractual or varying :

(b) whether the price for the year is fixed by the State Trading Corporation, if contractual ; and

(c) whether there is any difference in the prices of the newsprint, apart from other incidental costs, if the newsprint is obtained through approved and registered importing agents?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI DINESH SINGH) : (a) The price of imported newsprint is contractual.

(b) The newsprint prices are negotiated by the State Trading Corporation with various supplying countries. The prices agreed to are uniformly applicable for the period of the contract.