

(c) What was the reduction in the cost of tea per pound produced in 1953-54 as a result thereof?

The Minister of Commerce (Shri Karmarkar): (a) and (c). Precise information is not available.

(b) Governments of Assam and West Bengal permitted tea planters to discontinue temporarily the concessional supply of food-grains to the tea garden labourers.

Shri K. P. Tripathi: May I know if it has come to the notice of the Government that statements were made by the Chairman of the Indian Tea Association in 1952 that they were suffering from slump and now they are suffering from profit inflation and they want to be saved from both and therefore they want that wages should not be increased?

Shri Karmarkar: Government's attention was not drawn, but I find that wages have been restored in respect of compensation for the food concessions.

Shri K. P. Tripathi: Is it a fact that there are many gardens in which it has not been restored?

Shri Karmarkar: I would like to have the information. I find that workers in the West Bengal gardens are paid cash allowance at the rates specified.

Shri K. P. Tripathi: Is it a fact that the Rao Committee reported that the average cost of production was Re. 1 to Rs. 1-4-0, whereas the cost of production now is much less than that?

Shri Karmarkar: There was a broad estimate by that Committee regarding the cost of production. They gave figures for 1952—annas 18 to 22 for North India and annas 16 to 20 for South India.

Shri T. K. Chaudhuri: May I know what has happened to the proposal of the Government to appoint an expert committee for enquiry into the cost structure of the tea industry, which was hanging in the balance for the last more than a year?

Shri Karmarkar: I would like to have notice.

PROTECTIVE DUTY ON ALLOY

***1204. Shrimati Ila Palchoudhury:** (a) Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to state whether any protective duty is being levied by Government on imports of alloy and special steels from foreign countries?

(b) If so, what is the rate of such duty?

(c) What are the countries from which imports are at present being made?

(d) What is the total quantity of alloy and special steel imported into India during the last three years?

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

(b) 31½ per cent. *ad valorem* for British manufacture and 44-1/10 per cent. *ad valorem* for non-British manufacture.

(c) U.K., Japan, France, Sweden, Germany, U.S.A., Austria, Canada, Holland and Belgium.

(d) 12,838·81 tons.

Shrimati Ila Palchoudhury: Since Tatas do not manufacture this steel, may I know why such high duty is levied on these steels?

Shri Karmarkar: Sir, it is a protective duty in order to protect the indigenous industry.

Shri T. N. Singh: What are the concerns in India which are manufacturing special steels and alloys for whom protection is being given?

Shri Karmarkar: The larger manufacturers are Tata Iron and Steel Company with a production of 1,130 to 1,210 tons; Mukund Iron and Steel Works, Bombay with a production of 1,000 tons; Metal and Steel Factory (who manufacture primarily for their own use) with a production of 2,400 tons. These are the larger units. There are some other smaller units also.