

(c) what is the opinion of the Fuel Research Institute and how far that opinion has prevailed with the Government of India?

The Minister of Production (Shri K. C. Reddy): (a) The hon. Member is presumably referring to the raising of metallurgical coal. In pursuance of Government's policy to conserve this coal, the question is being examined whether certain restrictions in raising this coal should be imposed, but no such restrictions have yet been imposed.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The opinion of the Fuel Research Institute may be summarised as follows:

"Procedure for restriction of output of Selected Grade Coking Coals requires review. Compulsory Sand Stowing in the mines and Washing of Coal are probably the best measures and adequate in themselves for some years ahead. New and improved methods of carbonisation and of furnace practice are necessary as a long term policy".

An article embodying the above views published in the Fuel Research Institute Bulletin for March 1952 is being considered.

Pandit Munishwar Datt Upadhyay: May I know the stock of coal at the end of May 1952?

Shri K. C. Reddy: I gave the figure the other day on the floor of the House—about 3 million and odd tons.

Shri A. C. Guha: May I know what arrangement the Government has made for washing coal in order to improve its quality?

Shri K. C. Reddy: The Tatas have established a plant and the establishment of another plant is under way.

Shri Velayudhan: May I know whether the statement of a railway official the other day that our resources of metallurgical coal will only last for about sixty years is correct?

Shri K. C. Reddy: That question has already been answered several times in the House.

Pandit Munishwar Datt Upadhyay: What would be the effect on our exports of the easing of the supply of coal in European countries?

Shri K. C. Reddy: I cannot give a definite answer straightaway.

PRICE OF TEA

***1886. Shri K. P. Tripathi:** Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to state:

(a) the average price per pound obtained for tea on 1951-52 and 1950-51 crops; and

(b) whether there is collusive bidding in Calcutta auctions?

The Deputy Minister of Commerce and Industry (Shri Karmarkar): (a) The average auction prices of tea per lb. in 1951-52 and 1950-51 at Calcutta and Cochin are as follows:

| | Calcutta | Cochin | |
|---------|------------|--------------|------------|
| | Export Tea | Internal Tea | Export Tea |
| | Rs. A. P. | Rs. A. P. | Rs. A. P. |
| 1951-52 | 1- 12 -6 | 1- 6- 8 | 1- 10-0 |
| 1950-51 | 2- 1-0 | 1- 9- 5 | 1- 14-3 |

(b) The Government have no information.

Shri K. P. Tripathi: Have the Government any intention of trying to obtain information as to the method by which collusive bidding is carried on in Calcutta?

Shri Karmarkar: Yes, Sir, I understand that the rules of association of the Calcutta Traders' Association which carries on the auction provide against collusive bidding. The sellers can withdraw lots of tea offered for sale if the bids are below the reserve or offset prices.

Shri K. P. Tripathi: Is it a fact that if three persons are bidding, one person points his finger to the other two and the other two become silent, and thus collusive bidding is going on?

Mr. Speaker: It is a matter of opinion.

Shri R. K. Chaudhury: May I know what is the average price of tea for retail sale in our country during the corresponding period this year?

Shri Karmarkar: I want notice.

Shri K. K. Basu: Who has the controlling voice in these Calcutta auctions?

Shri Karmarkar: I have no answer for that.

Shri K. P. Tripathi: Is it a fact that the market is gradually improving?

Shri Karmarkar: I want notice.

Shri H. N. Mukerjee: Is it a fact that in spite of recommendations from the Commerce Ministry to the various Tea Associations with which European tea gardens are affiliated, the agency houses of these European tea gardens have declined to extend any support to Indian tea brokers and have pursued a policy detrimental to the growth of Indianisation of tea broking?

Shri R. K. Chaudhury: Is the hon. Minister aware that the average price of tea in the tea growing province such as Assam is much higher than the price of tea in the United Kingdom?

Shri Karmarkar: I have no information; I should like to find that out.

TRADE INTERESTS IN TEA

*1887. **Shri K. P. Tripathi:** Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to state:

(a) what percentage of the share holders of the trade interests mentioned in each of the following items are common:

- (1) British-owned tea plantations in India, and the tea brokers in India;
- (2) Tea-brokers in India and tea brokers in England;
- (3) British-owned tea plantations in India, tea brokers in India and tea brokers in England; and

(b) What percentage of the members of the Board of Directors of trade interests mentioned in each of the following items are common:

- (1) British-owned tea plantations in India, and the tea brokers in India;
- (2) Tea brokers in India and tea brokers in England;
- (3) British-owned tea plantations in India, British tea brokers in India and tea brokers in England?

The Deputy Minister of Commerce and Industry (Shri Karmarkar): (a) and (b). Precise information is not available. Compilation of the required information will involve reference being made to U.K. and various parts of the Country and will involve considerable expenditure, time and labour.

Shri K. P. Tripathi: Is the Government prepared to institute an enquiry into this very important matter in which interlocking devices are acting against the interests of the country?

Shri Karmarkar: Government does not consider it worthwhile to conduct an enquiry. We went into the matter very carefully and found that the labour involved is much greater than the results which would be achieved.

Shri A. C. Guha: Is it true that the tea broking agency in Calcutta is mostly European-controlled?

Shri Karmarkar: I should like to have notice of that question.

Shri H. N. Mukerjee: Is Government aware that British banks in Calcutta have hypothecated crops of several tea estates with a clear stipulation that the crops of such hypothecated tea estates are to be sold only through European tea-brokers?

Shri Karmarkar: I shall certainly find that out.

Shri Sarmah: What is the percentage of European owned tea in India?

Shri Karmarkar: At the moment I cannot say; but I shall find it out.

TEA PRICES

*1888. **Shri K. P. Tripathi:** Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to state:

(a) the present whole-sale and retail prices of tea (Indian) in London markets;

(b) similar figures for the last four years, month by month;

(c) the corresponding prices in India of exported and exportable tea; and

(d) the freight per pound of tea exported to London (year by year, since 1947)?

The Deputy Minister of Commerce and Industry (Shri Karmarkar): (a) to (d). A statement is laid on the Table of the House. [See Appendix IX, annexure No. 15.]

Shri K. P. Tripathi: Is it a fact, Sir, that the retail prices in London and Europe generally are steady and have not fallen in spite of the so-called slump in India?

Shri Karmarkar: I cannot say that off-hand. But I understand that the United Kingdom Government had abolished the subsidy on tea from the 15th June 1952 and as a result the maximum retail price of tea will be increased from 3s. 10d. to 4s. 8d. and from 3s. 4d. to 3s. 3-8d. for low price tea. Beyond that I have no information.

Shri K. P. Tripathi: Is it a fact that because the retail prices in Europe are