

विचारों को देने के लिये उपयुक्त समय पर विचार किया जायेगा ।

### Tobacco

568. Shri Barman: Will the Minister of Finance be pleased to state:

(a) the wholesale prices of flue-cured and Hookah tobaccos in the years 1954-55, 1955-56 and 1956-57;

(b) the rates of duty as percentage of the wholesale prices of corresponding years; and

(c) the total production of both varieties in these years?

The Minister of Finance (Shri T. T. Krishnamachari): (a) and (b). As there are wide variations in the wholesale prices of various qualities and types of flue-cured and hookah tobaccos from place to place and from time to time it is not practicable to compile detailed statistics of the movement of prices of all these varieties. It is also, therefore, not possible to work out the incidence of the excise duty on all such varieties as a percentage of the wholesale price

A statement containing the average price as well as the rates of duty and their incidence expressed as a percentage, for certain selected varieties of flue-cured and hookah tobaccos in the Guntur and Calcutta markets respectively, is laid on the Table of Lok Sabha. [See Appendix II, annexure No. 108]

(c) Separate figures for the production of hookah tobacco as such are not available, but the total production of Virginia flue-cured and Indian air-cured types of tobacco during the years of 1954-55 and 1955-56 and the estimated production for the year 1956-57 are contained in a statement which is laid on the Table of Lok Sabha. [See Appendix II, annexure No. 108].

569. Shri B. S. Murthy: Will the Minister of Education and Scientific Research be pleased to state:

(a) the names of States where primary education has been made compulsory; and

(b) the amount of Central grant asked for in this regard by these States during 1957-58].

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research (Dr. K. L. Shrimall): (a) and (b). A statement is laid on the Table of Lok Sabha. [See Appendix II, annexure No. 109].

### STATEMENT RE IMPENDING STOPPAGES OF WORK IN CERTAIN ESSENTIAL SERVICES

The Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru): Mr. Speaker, Government and I am sure this House are deeply concerned about notices and news of impending stoppages of work in various essential services in the country. This matter has come before the House in different forms on several occasions during the last two weeks or more. I should like to keep the House informed of recent developments and what the Government have done in this matter and propose to do.

While it is the duty of the Government to take necessary powers to maintain essential services and take steps to that end, it is equally their concern to deal with the problems that have arisen, taking into account all the aspects involved and the demands of the workers affected.

During the last three weeks or more, I have myself been intimately connected with this matter, and so have indeed my other colleagues in Government. On the 26th July I met a deputation from the National Federation of Posts and Telegraphs Employees. My colleagues, the Ministers of Labour and Communications,

[Shri Jawaharlal Nehru]

were also with me. We had long and friendly talks in the course of which I explained to the deputation more fully our ideas about the proposed Pay Commission. The question of interim relief was then raised and the deputation was informed that this would also be referred to the proposed Pay Commission.

I came away from this meeting feeling that an atmosphere of friendly co-operation had been created and the proposed strike would not take place. I was therefore much surprised and distressed to learn the next morning that the strike decision had been confirmed by the Committee of P. & T. Federation.

On the 3rd August, the terms of reference of this Commission were announced in the House by the Finance Minister. These terms were to form part of the subsequent notification to be issued by the Government of India.

On the 5th August, I made a broadcast to the country in the course of which I spoke about the Pay Commission and referred to their function. In particular I stated that the question of interim relief would be referred to the Commission.

I was informed later that some representatives of the P. & T. Federation wanted to meet me again to seek some clarification. I met them on the late afternoon of the 6th August and had a long talk with them. The principal subject discussed was that of interim relief and I explained again that this would be referred to the Commission. Thereupon I was pressed for some immediate grant of relief. I pointed out that as this matter was being referred to the Pay Commission, it would neither be desirable nor possible for us to accept any such proposal of immediate relief. This would naturally affect many others, apart from the P. & T. people.

The question of a dateline or time-limit being fixed for the Commission

to present their interim proposals had also been raised. I made it clear that in our opinion this would not be proper nor suited to the dignity of the high-level Commission that we were appointing.

Thus, Government already announced that a high-powered Commission with an eminent Judge of the Supreme Court as Chairman will be appointed soon. In the notification appointing this Commission, reference will be made to the question of interim relief being considered by them and they may make interim reports. I have no doubt that the Commission will consider with care and expedition all problems brought to their notice.

It will appear that Government are well seized of these problems and have made it clear as to how they should be met. It is in the interest of the workers themselves as well as the country as a whole that there should be no stoppage of work in our essential services and that these problems should be dealt with by peaceful approaches and methods of conciliation to which Government are committed.

If, however, there is a stoppage of work in these essential services, then it is the duty of Government to see that the essential services are maintained, and we seek the co-operation of the public in this matter.

In view of the re-affirmation of the strike threat, in spite of the efforts that Government have made, Government have been compelled to advise the President to issue an Ordinance on the lines of the Essential Services Maintenance Bill passed by the Lok Sabha on the 6th August. I trust, however, that there will be no stoppage of work and that it will not be necessary, therefore, for this Ordinance to come into operation.