

Port during the seven months following devaluation of the rupee has shown a decline compared with the five months preceding devaluation;

(b) whether this fall in traffic was due to lower exports or lower imports, or both, and of which principal commodities;

(c) whether the Calcutta Port authorities have been given permission to raise their port charges in order to maintain their revenues; and

(d) the probable long-term effects of such a decision?

The Minister of Transport and Shipping (Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) One effect would be the stabilisation of the financial position of the Calcutta Port Commissioners and their consequent ability to operate at their existing level of efficiency. As far as the long term effects are concerned, no serious consequences are anticipated. The position will, however, be kept under review.

Consumer and Department Stores

*252. Shri M. N. Naghnoor: Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) whether the organisation of 'Consumer Stores' and 'Department Stores' has helped to reduce the market rates of commodities;

(b) the action taken to ensure twenty per cent of production of consumer goods for distribution through the consumer co-operatives; and

(c) whether Government have taken any action to launch a programme of manufacture/processing of consumer articles to ensure quality goods at fair prices to the consumers?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Community, Development and Cooperation (Shri

Annasahib Shinde): (a) The wholesale consumer stores and department stores have definitely exercised a restraining influence on the retail distributive trade.

(b) There was no intention to distribute 20 per cent of the production of consumer goods through the consumer cooperatives. The objective of the consumer cooperatives is to capture 20 per cent of the retail trade in areas served by them by the end of the Fourth Plan with a view to making an impact on prices.

(c) With a view to reducing their dependence on private manufacturers and to ensure reasonable prices, the Government have decided to assist consumer cooperatives to set up manufacturing and processing units for various consumer commodities.

Supply of Foodgrains to Gujarat

*253. Shri Indulal Yajnik: Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had agreed to secure the necessary stocks of cereals and other foodgrains for Gujarat from other States before the Gujarat State was persuaded to lift the ban on the export of edible oil;

(b) whether Government had succeeded in securing such foodgrains for Gujarat from other States; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Community Development and Cooperation (Shri Annasahib Shinde): (a) Gujarat is deficit in foodgrains and are receiving supplies from Central Government. No assurance was, however, given to the State Government to secure any stocks of foodgrains from other States for persuading them to lift the ban on the export of edible oil.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.