

possible competition from the African countries; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

**The Minister of Commerce (Shri Manubhai Shah):** (a) No, Sir, not yet.

(b) Does not arise.

**Shri Warrior:** May I know whether Government have taken any steps to ascertain from the African countries what sort of mechanisation they are adopting?

**Shri Manubhai Shah:** We have seen also the set-up of the factory in Tanganyika. It is a completely mechanised unit, and we are studying it, and very soon we are contemplating to establish a cashew board which will also put up such mechanised factories for cashew processing.

**Shri Warrior:** In view of the fact that we are short of raw nuts here, may I know what special steps Government are taking to see that we are self-sufficient in the raw material itself?

**Shri Manubhai Shah:** This is a very vital question. Today we are getting more than 2 lakhs tonnes of raw nuts from East Africa, Tanganyika and those areas. We are, therefore, having a special project to produce more than 3 lakhs tonnes of raw nuts in the Fourth Plan, and I have already indicated that the establishment of the cashew board is under consideration.

**Shri Vasudevan Nair:** Government have a scheme in the Fourth Plan to produce 3 lakhs tonnes. May I know whether Government are proposing to enter into some long-term contract with Tanganyika and Kenya so that we may be assured of the supply of raw nuts at least for the coming five years till we attain self-sufficiency?

**Shri Manubhai Shah:** We have made several attempts, but the very country which produces raw nuts would naturally be reluctant to enter

into any long-term commitment to supply raw materials to us in preference to setting up their own factories.

**Shri Shivaji Rao S. Deshmukh:** In view of the fact that Westerns have literally gone crazy for bottled cashew-nuts in the form of wine, what does the hon. Minister propose to do in that regard?

**Shri Manubhai Shah:** We have contemplated one alcoholic factory based on cashew fruit which is rejected after the nut is taken out, and some progress will be made in that direction.

#### Office of Tea Board in Calcutta

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\*822-A. { Shri Yashpal Singh:  
Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath:  
Shri S. M. Banerjee:

Will the Minister of Commerce be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Office of the Tea Board in Calcutta has been closed with effect from the 1st September, 1965; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

**The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Commerce (Shri S. V. Ramaswamy):** (a) and (b). In consultation with the West Bengal Government, the office of the Tea Board was closed on the 1st September, 1965 due to continued indiscipline and deplorable behaviour of some of the 478 employees of the Tea Board. In this connection, a copy of the Statement issued by Shri P. C. Sen, Hon'ble Chief Minister of West Bengal, on Tuesday, the 7th September, 1965 is laid on the Table of the House. The House will observe from the statement that some of the employees had resorted to gross misconduct and indiscipline.

The office of the Tea Board had however re-opened on Monday, the 20th September, 1965, as a result of the settlement arrived at through the good offices of the Labour Commis-

sioner of the West Bengal Government. The settlement stipulates that 10 persons are suspended and charge-sheeted for gross misconduct and indiscipline. 455 out of 478 employees have reported on duty and are regularly working since 20th September and 13 persons are on leave. The Board offices are working in a normal manner.

#### STATEMENT

"On the afternoon of 31st of last month a large number of employees of the Tea Board at Calcutta, indulged in gross misconduct and undisciplined behaviour invading in a body the Board room where an important meeting attended by outsiders was in progress and interrupting official work. They prevented the Chairman and other senior officials of the Board from leaving the room and shouted abuses, slogans etc. In these compelling circumstances the Government of India in consultation with me have closed the office until further orders.

The Tea Board is an office of national importance and it is a matter of great regret that the employees should have indulged in such misconduct and behaviour which forced the Government of India to close down the office. However, the country, threatened by aggression from Pakistan, is now facing a very serious situation. It is unfortunate that in these circumstances the Tea Board office in Calcutta has to be kept closed because of undisciplined and deplorable behaviour on the part of some members of the staff. I would like to urge the saner elements amongst the Tea Board employees to disown this misconduct and give suitable guarantees for the future good behaviour so that conditions conducive to the reopening of the Tea Board Office can be brought about."

**Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath:** We could not hear the answer properly. How many were charge-sheeted?

**Shri S. V. Ramaswamy:** Ten.

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**Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath:** For what?

**Shri S. V. Ramaswamy:** For gross indiscipline and misbehaviour.

**श्री यशपाल सिंह :** क्या यह सही है कि हड़ताल बहुत थोड़े कर्मचारियों ने की थी और तनख्वाह सब की राकची गई और यही कारण दफ्तर बन्द करने का हुआ ?

**Shri S. V. Ramaswamy:** It started that way, but 300 people rushed into the Board's office when a meeting was going on and threatened violence to the chairman, deputy chairman, the secretary and all the officers.

**श्री यशपाल सिंह :** क्या यह सही है कि जब दफ्तर बन्द किया गया और बाद में खोला गया, इस बीच में देश को लाखों रुपयों का नुकसान हुआ; यदि हाँ, तो यह कमी कहा से पूरी की जायेगी ?

**श्री मनुभाई शाह :** कोई नुकसान नहीं हुआ ।

**Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath:** The statement laid on the Table says that at the time when the country is threatened by aggression from Pakistan, it is a matter of great regret that the employees should have indulged in such misconduct and misbehaviour which forced the Government of India to close down that office. May I know whether those employees who indulged in such misbehaviour belonged to a union of which the secretary was or is the secretary of the West Bengal Congress Committee, and if so, whether the Hon. Minister is in a position to firmly and categorically state that in the case of those employees who have been charge-sheeted for misconduct, indiscipline and misbehaviour, the cases against them will not be hushed up owing to pressure from above.

**The Minister of Commerce (Shri Manubhai Shah):** There is no ques-

tion of hushing up, because the Chief Minister of West Bengal who belongs to this party is a party to the settlement.

**Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath:** The first part of my question has not been answered, namely whether these employees belong to a union of which the secretary was or is the secretary of the West Bengal Congress Committee.

**Shri Manubhai Shah:** The first part of the question would not arise whether a particular trade union belongs to one party or the other. Those who commit such gross misconduct and carry on such acts of indiscipline have got to be punished.

**Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath:** But is it admitted that the Secretary of this Union was the secretary of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee?

**Mr. Speaker:** Has he any information about that?

**Shri Manubhai Shah:** No, Sir.

**Shri S. M. Banerjee:** The hon. Deputy Minister stated that because of the good offices of the Labour Commissioner, this matter was settled and the office has started functioning from 20th September, 1965. I would like to know the terms of settlement, and whether a no-victimisation assurance has been given to the employees.

**Shri S. V. Ramaswamy:** The office was opened on the 20th September on the employees executing bonds expressing regret for past behaviour and guaranteeing future good conduct. Out of 478 members of the staff, 10 have been suspended and charge-sheeted. This was agreed upon. Of the remaining 468, 455 have reported after giving the undertaking referred to above, 12 have applied for leave, and one is absent.

**Mr. Speaker:** Would there be no victimisation?

**Shri S. V. Ramaswamy:** Victimisation means doing something beyond what is necessary. Whatever is necessary will be done.

**Shri A. P. Sharma:** Is Government aware that in spite of the fact that there was a registered trade union functioning amongst the Tea Board employees, certain other elements of rival trade unions like the AITUC branch of West Bengal instigated them, and if so, what action is Government proposing to take against them?

**Shri Manubhai Shah:** That would hardly arise.

**Shri P. C. Borooah:** May I know whether it is a fact that in spite of the provocations, the Chairman of the Tea Board was very considerate to the employees and in fact he raised the emoluments in certain cases, and that with the help of some of the executive trade court members, he tried his best to solve the problem?

**Shri Manubhai Shah:** I am glad at the tribute paid to the Chairman.

**Shri Priya Gupta:** May I know if the period for which the establishment was closed is, according to the decision of the Labour Commissioner, a lock-out or a strike or a lay-off?

**Shri Manubhai Shah:** It was a lock-out declared by the Central Government. There is no question of any decision.

**Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhury:** Was there any representation earlier from the side of the employees about certain standing grievances which led to this incident?

**Shri Manubhai Shah:** Those grievances are natural in any establishment, and I can assure the hon. Members that all such legitimate grievances will be continuously looked into. Here was a gross misconduct on which neither the Central Govern-

ment nor the Tea Board could do anything. Therefore, the West Bengal Government intervened and brought about a settlement.

**Dr. Ranen Sen:** Is it a fact that the whole trouble started with the employees demand for bonus which was rejected by the authorities of the Tea Board there, and if so, what is the ultimate outcome of this dispute on the question of bonus?

**Shri S. V. Ramaswamy:** With regard to this bonus for Puja the rule says Rs. 75 per head, but they demanded Rs. 200. About 300 employees broke into the room when a meeting was going on and demanded a decision immediately that Rs. 200 would be granted. In fact, the officers were wrongfully restrained in that room till about 8 p.m.

**Shri Indrajit Gupta:** The question is about the outcome of the dispute about bonus. Has any bonus been agreed upon or not?

**Shri Manubhai Shah:** The demand for Puja allowance is regulated by a rule passed by Parliament. We are helpless in the matter. After this indiscipline it becomes difficult to do anything. But certainly when there is a proper representation in this regard in the future, we should consider all aspects.

11.00 hrs.

#### SHORT NOTICE QUESTION

The Muir Mills Ltd., Kanpur

S.N.Q. 12. { **Shri S. M. Banerjee:**  
**Shri Daji:**

Will the Minister of Commerce be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that lock-out still continues in the Muir Mills Ltd., Kanpur;

(b) if so, whether the mill-owners have demanded a rehabilitation loan of Rs. 40 lakhs from the Government;

(c) if so, the reaction of Government thereto;

(d) whether the loan has been sanctioned;

(e) if so, on what conditions; and

(f) whether the employers have decided to re-open the mills?

**The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Commerce (Shri S. V. Ramaswamy):** (a) and (b). Yes, Sir.

(c) to (f). The request for financial assistance is under consideration.

**Shri S. M. Banerjee:** I would like to know whether this mill is likely to start within this month or next month at least so that the 6000 employees may be taken back?

**The Minister of Commerce (Shri Manubhai Shah):** We hope it will start next month.

**Shri S. M. Banerjee:** I would like to know whether some directors will be appointed by Government after giving this loan or it will be kept entirely in their hands.

**Shri S. V. Ramaswamy:** Two from the Central Government and one from the State.

**Shri Daji:** Even before the reopening of the mills will Government do something immediately to see that the 6000 workers who have not been paid their wages are given their wages and are not allowed to starve on the streets?

**Shri Manubhai Shah:** As far as the present conditions are concerned, the mill is under such financial stringency. I cannot promise anything at the moment. But we shall see to it that as soon as it starts, all these dues are settled.

श्री हुकम चन्द कदवाय : हम मिल के बन्द होने का कारण क्या था ? क्या बन्द-इतिहासी के कारण यह बन्द हुई या और किसी कारण से ?