

Shri Dinesh Singh: We are not aware of any official of the Works, Housing and Supply Ministry being involved in this.

Shri Iqbal Singh: May I know whether most of the applications from Punjab are rejected and that is why they are compelled. . . .

Mr. Speaker: Why should he bring his State into such prominence in this case?

Shri Ansar Harvani: Is the Government aware that a number of travelling agencies dismissed some very important people involved in the forgery of passport and if so, against how many action has been taken?

Mr. Speaker: That he has already stated.

Dr. L. M. Singhvi: May I know to which countries these forged passports were generally made out?

Shri Dinesh Singh: They were generally made out to United Kingdom.

Shri Hem Barua: On a point of order. It appears that it was stated that Shri Phizo had a genuine passport. He did not have a genuine passport, he had an El Salvador Passport as the Prime Minister stated.

Mr. Speaker: Now we are considering the question of forged passport racket. It has never been alleged by anybody that he was one of them. If we were to go into each individual passport, whether the one shown by such and such a person was a forged one or not, we could not proceed. Next question.

Shri P. K. Deo: It is a matter of great concern to all of us.

Mr. Speaker: Certainly, to me much more than to the hon. Member.

Establishment of Staple Fibre Factories

*1009. **Shri D. C. Sharma:** Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to state:

(a) whether in view of the cotton shortage in the country Government

have been urged upon to establish a number of staple fibre factories; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

The Minister of International Trade in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (Shri Manubhai Shah): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The matter is under examination.

Shri D. C. Sharma: May I know since when this matter has been under consideration and whether it has been considered departmentally, by a committee, or a team of officials or experts? What kind of investigation is going on?

Shri Manubhai Shah: It is true that this matter has been too long under consideration. Unfortunately, we have not been able to secure the concurrence of the Planning Commission. But, in view of the acute shortage of cotton from year to year, we are pressing the matter further before the Planning Commission and we hope that the staple fibre industry would be allowed to extend further.

Shri D. C. Sharma: May I know the reason the Planning Commission has advanced for not fulfilling this very urgent need of the country?

Shri Manubhai Shah: The general belief was that artificial silk or fibre was something of a luxury which is not true. It is a basic fibre, which is a substitute for cotton. We may now be able to carry conviction with the Planning Commission and we hope the targets will be revised.

Shri Warior: May I know whether Government have any idea to utilize the plantain tree for this fibre?

Shri Manubhai Shah: Let us first get the target revised. Then we will look into the raw material.

Shri D. C. Sharma: May I know how long will it take for the Com-

merce and Industry Ministry to carry conviction with the Planning Commission? May I also know whether Planning Commission is allergic to conviction?

Shri Manubhai Shah: No, that is not the point.

Mr. Speaker: The latter part of the question need not be answered.

Shri Manubhai Shah: Sometimes facts prove or carry greater conviction than arguments. Last year there was a failure of monsoon and crop. That proved that the line taken by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry was correct and that may carry conviction.

Shri P. R. Ramakrishnan: What is the present production of staple fibre and what are the imports into the country?

Shri Manubhai Shah: About 79 million lbs. is the production which is much more than the target for the Third Plan. The import is about 150,000 bales.

Conference of Indian Envoys of West Asian Regions

***1010. Shri Inder J. Malhotra:** Will the Prime Minister be pleased to state:

(a) whether a conference of the Indian Envoys of West Asian regions is scheduled to be held soon; and

(b) whether such conference are called for some specific purpose or for routine discussions?

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of External Affairs (Shri Dinesh Singh): (a) Yes. On 30th and 31st May at Beirut.

(b) For the discussion of various problems connected with the region.

Shri Inder J. Malhotra: May I know whether any representatives of the External Affairs Ministry from Delhi would be participating in this Conference?

Shri Dinesh Singh: Yes, Sir.

Shri P. K. Deo: May I know whether the question of recognition of Israel would be taken up in this Conference?

Shri Dinesh Singh: No, Sir.

Shri Indrajit Gupta: May I know whether West Asia will include the independent Kingdom of Kuwait and whether any consideration will be given in that conference to the opening of a Consulate there?

Shri Dinesh Singh: No, Sir. This Conference will discuss general means by which India's relations with the countries of West Asia can be strengthened and other administrative problems of the Embassies.

Shri Indrajit Gupta: Is not the opening of a Consulate the strengthening of our relations? That is why I asked that question. It is one of the methods of strengthening our relations with a country. I want to know whether we are going to strengthen our relations with Kuwait, which is an independent country, by opening a Consulate there.

Shri Dinesh Singh: The opening of a Consulate is a decision to be taken by the Government of India here. This Conference will discuss the problems of the countries to which they are accredited.

Rajhara and Nandani Mines

***1012. Shri Daji:** Will the Minister of Labour and Employment be pleased to state:

(a) whether any complaints have been received about the non-enforcement of the provisions of the Mines Act at Rajhara and Nandani Mines in Madhya Pradesh; and

(b) if so, action taken by Government?

The Minister of Labour in the Ministry of Labour and Employment (Shri Hathi): (a) Yes.