

Shri Rameshwar Tantia: May I know whether Government have got any scheme to check blackmarketing in cement so that the consumers could get cement at fair prices?

Shri Manubhai Shah: The question contains so many suppositions.

Shri Ranga: There is no question of supposition. What steps are Government taking to control black-marketing in the distribution of cement?

Shri Manubhai Shah: With the easing of the supply position, it can be said that it will not be difficult for the civil population to get cement.

Shri Heda: May I know the factors that were taken into account at the time of fixation of the quota for the different States, whether it was on the basis of projects, or areas or constructional activities of Government, and whether any guidance in the shape of preference being given to co-operative societies or public institutions was given to the States?

Shri Manubhai Shah: As I have often repeated in the House, there are clearly laid-out priorities. National projects, the various public sector projects, railway constructions and the development projects of the State Governments take the first priority. Then, a considerable amount is released to the States for civil supply and for the public institutions. It is always recommended by the Central Government that as the position becomes easier, they should release more and more quotas to the public requirements of institutions and consumers.

Religious Shrines in Pakistan

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*290. { **Shri D. C. Sharma:**
Shri Vajpayee:
Shri Ajit Singh Sarhadi:
Shri Raghunath Singh:

Will the Prime Minister be pleased to state:

(a) whether any meeting of the Joint Committee set up for the pre-

paration of lists of Hindu and Sikh religious shrines in West Pakistan and the protection of the properties attached thereto and preservation of their religious sanctity has been convened; and

(b) if so, the decisions taken thereon?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of External Affairs (Shri Sadath Ali Khan): (a) Yes, Sir. A meeting was held at Karachi on the 24th and 25th January, 1958.

(b) The following tentative decisions were taken:

(i) The number of important shrines, the preservation and maintenance of which should be made the special responsibility of the Government should be limited to 200 in each country. The number is subject to revision at the time of finalisation of the lists of shrines.

(ii) Each country will be responsible for the preparation of the final list of shrines in the other country, which would be placed under the special care of the Government of that country. Each country would, however, furnish the other country with a list of important shrines in its own territory for purposes of check and comparison.

Shri D. C. Sharma: May I know the officials who took part in this discussion in this Joint Committee? Was this meeting at the Secretariat level or Ministerial level or some other level?

The Prime Minister and the Minister of External Affairs and Finance (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru): I am afraid I have not got that information; I shall gladly supply to the hon. Member after finding it out.

Shri D. C. Sharma: May I know if the decision with regard to the 200 places of religious worship that is

going to be taken will include also the protection of the properties and the preservation of the religious sanctity also? If so, what are the lines of approach to these two problems?

Mr. Speaker: The maintenance of the religious atmosphere, is it?

Shri D. C. Sharma: There are three points. First of all, there is protection. Then, there is protection of the properties of the shrines; and then there is the preservation of the religious sanctity. What steps are going to be taken?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Perhaps, my colleague, the Rehabilitation Minister, might be able to throw some light on this.

The Minister of Rehabilitation and Minority Affairs (Shri Mehr Chand Khanna): This question did come up for discussion during my last visit to Karachi. The discussion was, more or less, of an informal nature.

As far as we are concerned, you know we have released all the trust properties because the members of the minorities are still here. But, as regards Pakistan, the main difficulty is about Punjab, Bhawalpur etc, where practically all the Hindus and Sikhs have come away. But, as regards Sind, the viewpoint of my corresponding number in Pakistan was that this was a matter between the minorities there and the Government and they were looking into the question of release of some of these properties for the use of the minorities there.

Shri Raghunath Singh: According to the agreement, some selected areas were to be inspected in regard to shrines. What is the position now?

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: Presumably it is not going to be a question of selected areas. But, some important shrines on both sides are going to be selected; the number may be between 100 and 200.

Sardar Hukam Singh: What was the attitude of the Pakistan Government about the proposal that the large

amount of money collected by the Custodian-General there out of the incomes of those shrines should at least meet the expenses of those volunteers who are placed for the protection and maintenance of certain shrines there?

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: The position is that like us, they have also not declared these properties as evacuee properties. The viewpoint of the Government of Pakistan was rather definite that this was a matter entirely between the Government of Pakistan and the minorities there.

Sardar Hukam Singh: But, is this a fact that the whole income from these shrines is being collected by the Custodian-General in Pakistan? Has it been put to the Pakistan representative that that amount should at least be spent for the maintenance of those volunteers who are kept there in certain shrines; and they have allowed money sent from India to meet the expenses of the volunteers?

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: I will pass on this information to the Ministry of Home Affairs. I am only dealing with evacuee properties.

Shri Ajit Singh Sarhadi: May I just know whether any particular steps have been taken for the preservation of the sanctity of those places of worship, Hindu or Sikh, by the worship at those shrines which are in Punjab, Bhawalpur and the Frontier Province?

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: The whole question was not formally discussed. It was discussed only informally. Some particular things were discussed but not in detail.

Shri Raghunath Singh: It appears that a meeting is going to be held soon. May I know the agenda for that meeting?

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: There are quite a number of items which are going to be discussed in the next meeting of the Implementation Committee. But, as far as the question of shrines is concerned, I do not think it

has been included. But a meeting did take place between us and the Government of Pakistan regarding the shrines. And, as I have stated, the idea now is that instead of looking after all the shrines in India and Pakistan, some important and historic shrines should be taken into consideration and their sanctity protected.

Shri Ajit Singh Sarhadi: What are the items about the agreement made for the preservation of the sanctity of the religious places? There can be preservation only if worship is allowed there. I ask the question whether there was any talk about the preservation by allowing worship in the shrines that are left there.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: I have just answered this question that the number of shrines left by Hindus and Sikhs is very large and the idea was that instead of looking after all the shrines, and it may not be administratively convenient in places where there is no Hindu or Sikh population left, some 200 important shrines on both sides may be selected.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I am grateful to my colleague for having come to my rescue in this matter. The matter is, as the House knows, dealt with by a number of Ministries. My colleague's Ministry is responsible for rehabilitation; for evacuee property the Home Ministry is responsible and the External Affairs Ministry is responsible for dealing with Pakistan generally. Anyhow, the tentative agenda for the next meeting which is going to be held on the 24th and 25th of March is as follows:

(i) pooling of all income of the shrines in each country in a separate account and utilisation of funds in the account for the purpose of maintenance and repairs of the holy places;

(ii) the posting of khadims, sevadars and pujaris to look after the important shrines in the two countries and payment of their expenses from the income of the shrines; and

(iii) the liberalisation of travel and other facilities to pilgrims and pilgrim parties to the holy places in the two countries.

I think that answers a number of questions that may be asked.

Replantation of Tea

*291. **Dr. K. B. Menon:** Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to state:

(a) the amount of money spent annually on replantation of tea since 1947;

(b) the area covered by replantation during this period; and

(c) the total area which requires replantation at present?

The Minister of Commerce (Shri Kanungo): (a) The information is not available.

(b) A statement is laid on the Table of the Lok Sabha, [See Appendix II, annexure No. 47].

(c) In a tea garden all bushes would not be of the same age. While certain bushes may have to be replaced, the whole garden as such may not need replanting. It is not possible to give any precise indication of the area to be replanted.

Dr. K. B. Menon: About the recommendation of the Plantation Enquiry Committee, the Minister, speaking on a resolution, said that he proposed to set up a Directorate of Production. May I know whether he has taken any steps in this direction?

Shri Kanungo: We are trying to recruit a Director of Production.

Dr. K. B. Menon: May I know whether the attention of the Minister has been drawn to the debate in the Kerala State Assembly about the alleged fragmentation and piecemeal sale of foreign-owned plantations and has he any information on the subject?