

certain traders to raise the prices of some essential commodities like woollen goods, text-books etc; and

(b) if so, the steps, if any, taken by Government to check such rise of prices?

The Minister of Commerce (Shri Kanungo): (a) No, abnormal increase in the prices of these goods has come to notice.

(b) Does not arise.

Shri Sadhan Gupta: Has it been brought to the attention of the Government that paper manufacturers are already refusing to allow discounts on paper used for printing text-books so that the prices of text-books is bound to go up if the discount is refused, and the discount is being refused on the ground that import of paper is going to be restricted?

Shri Kanungo: I take that information and I will check on it.

स्वेज नहर से गुजरने वाले भारतीय जहाज

*१०. श्री रघुनाथ सिंह: क्या प्रधान मंत्री यह बताते की कृपा करेंगे कि स्वेज नहर से गुजरने वाले भारतीय जहाजों का पय-कर सीधे मिश्र को दिया जाता है अथवा इस सम्बन्ध में कोई और प्रबन्ध किया गया है ?

बैरोसिक कार्य उपमंत्री (श्रीमती लक्ष्मी मेनन): स्वेज नहर से गुजरने वाले भारतीय जहाजों का पय-कर (टोल) सीधे मिश्र को दिया जाता है। इस सम्बन्ध में कोई दूसरा प्रबन्ध नहीं किया गया है।

An Hon. Member: It may be read in English also, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: Yes, the English version may also be read.

Shrimati Lakshmi Menon: The toll on Indian ships passing through the Suez Canal is paid direct to Egypt. No alternative arrangement has been made in this connection?

Shri Raghunath Singh: Yesterday, in the House of Commons a statement was made that U.K. was going to pay the Suez tolls in sterling. May

I know what will be our mode of payment?

Shrimati Lakshmi Menon: The mode of payment has been laid down that the companies can pay to any bank which has been approved by the Suez Canal authorities.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member wants to know the mode of payment, whether in sterling or in rupees.

Shri Raghunath Singh: I want to know in what currency the payment will be made.

Shrimati Lakshmi Menon: Sterling.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Prime Minister.

Shri Raghunath Singh: Why not we use our rupees?

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members have both ears and eyes; I have called the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru): I am afraid I cannot give a precise answer how we have paid it, but we have many transactions with the Egyptian Government in rupees. I cannot say how this particular sum has been paid by the companies. These are private companies which pay. It may have been paid on sterling or in rupees. Anyhow, it is a matter of arrangement with the Egyptian Government. We continue dealing with them as we have done in the past.

Shri Raghunath Singh: As our information is that a Rupee Bank has been opened in Egypt, why should not we pay the tolls in rupees?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: There is no question of "why", Sir. It is an arrangement with the Egyptian Government that we do these things and, as I said, in many matters the Egyptian Government does accept rupee payment. I cannot say exactly what has been done in this particular matter.

Shri Biren Roy: Why should not we suggest to the Egyptian Government to take the tolls direct in rupees instead of in any other foreign

currency and thus save our foreign exchange?

Mr. Speaker: That is a suggestion for action.

Shri Sadhan Gupta: As we understand from Press reports Egypt is insisting on payment in dollars in respect of Suez Canal tolls, has any understanding been reached with Egypt that in the case of our country the payment will be made either in rupee or in any other soft currency?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I have just said, Sir, that I am not acquainted as to how this matter has been paid or whether any special understanding has been reached. No question has arisen. We have been carrying on in the old way. But, as, perhaps the House knows, we have given certain credits in rupees to the Egyptian Government our dealings are by and large in rupees. About this particular matter I do not know.

Government of India Press in Kerala

+
*11. { **Shri A. M. Thomas:**
Shri K. K. Warrior:

Will the Minister of Works, Housing and Supply be pleased to state:

(a) whether the work in connection with the starting of the Government of India Press in Kerala has commenced;

(b) when it is expected to be completed; and

(c) what the employment potential of the Press is?

The Minister of Works, Housing and Supply (Shri K. C. Reddy): (a) No Sir; steps have however, been taken to acquire the land.

(b) By the end of the Second Five Year Plan.

(c) As at present conceived, about 400 persons are expected to be employed in the Press when it gets into production.

Shri A. M. Thomas: The original idea was to locate one press, of a particular size, in the South. May I enquire whether the decision has been subsequently revised and there has been a proposal to locate two presses in the South and if so, of what size?

Shri K. C. Reddy: My information is that it was decided to start two presses in the South, one at Coimbatore and the other in Kerala. I do not know to what the hon. Member referred to.

Shri A. M. Thomas: The two presses referred were meant by me. Will they be started simultaneously or will they be started one after the other?

Shri K. C. Reddy: The intention is to start them simultaneously. One press is meant for printing forms and the other press is for printing books.

Shri Punnoose: May I know what will be the estimated amount for the press that is going to be started in Kerala?

Shri K. C. Reddy: The press to be started in Kerala is for printing forms and the estimate for the construction of the press would be about Rs. 45 lakhs for the buildings and about Rs. 26 lakhs for equipment.

Shrimati Parvathi Krishnan: May I know what would be the estimate for the press to be started in Coimbatore?

Shri K. C. Reddy: I have no information at present with me about that.

Seizure of Passport by Pakistan

*13. **Pandit D. N. Tiwary:** Will the Prime Minister be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Pakistan Government has seized all the passports within the ten mile border belt between Tripura and East-Pakistan;

(b) if so, whether Government are aware of the hardships of the people of that belt and the losses occurring due to this arbitrary action of the Pakistan Government;