

Mr. Speaker: All except West Bengal, which has not made education free for Scheduled Castes.

Dr. K. L. Shrimali: I have already answered it.

Excise Duty on Tobacco

*1598. **Shri K. U. Parmar:** Will the Minister of Finance be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that nearly 1 lakh maunds of inferior grade tobacco of 1952-53 crop has remained duty un-paid (unsold) in C. Ex. Baroda Collectorate so far due to heavy rate of excise duties;

(b) whether any requests have been received from tobacco merchants or their associations to reduce the rate of duty on such inferior crop of 1952-53; and

(c) if so, the action taken thereon?

The Deputy Minister of Finance (Shri B. R. Bhagat): (a) The reason for non-disposal of nearly 1 lakh maunds of tobacco of 1952-53 crop in the Baroda Collectorate of Central Excise is not the heavy rate of duty but the inferior quality of these stocks which were not cleared even at the concessional rate of duty which remained in force for about 1-3/4 years.

(b) and (c). Yes, Sir. They are under consideration of Government.

Shri Fatehsinh Ghodasar: May I know whether Government have received any petition from growers requesting Government not to give any concession in the rate of duty on the 1952-53 tobacco? If so, what action do Government propose to take in the matter?

Shri B. R. Bhagat: I could not follow the question. So far as representations are concerned, we received representations from merchants which the Government considered and said that in view of the fact that only a very little amount out of the 320 million lbs. of tobacco which were given concessions of reduced taxation

—only 8 million lbs.—are left and as it is the considered opinion of Government that no concession in taxation would enable the holders of the stock to dispose them of because they are of inferior quality and good quality tobacco of later years has flooded the market, we reject the applications. But, we have received representations from two hon. Members of this House to which, as I said, we are giving further consideration.

Shri C. D. Pande: Has Government received any representation this year that owing to the faulty interpretation of the excise duties, crops were burnt in Farrukhabad and Bareilly districts?

Shri B. R. Bhagat: This refers to U.P. to which, I think, the hon. Finance Minister also replied that in certain cases we have taken the hardships caused by change in the specification of the duty into account and we have given concessions in some cases.

Shri Ranga: What happens to this 8 million lbs. of stuff which is placed at the disposal of the Collectorate? If the merchants or the growers themselves are unable to pay the duty and are unable to sell it, would the Government exonerate them from payment and themselves take possession of the stuff and dispose it of or burn it or throw it in the sea?

The Minister of Finance (Shri T. T. Krishnamachari): The hon. Member is not aware of the circumstances in regard to the particular matter raised by an hon. Member opposite. It happens to deal with certain stocks of tobacco in the Collectorate of Baroda and these stocks go up to 1952-53. The bulk of these stocks have been cleared by concessions given from time to time and a small residue is left. Naturally, the question now remains whether they want to destroy it or they want to pay the duty and sell it. It is generally believed that these stocks are not saleable. I do not see what Government could do in this particular matter. In fact, I think, if anything, the Government was at

fault in going on reducing the duties from time to time in which case it happened that the middlemen got the advantage. And the Committee that went into this matter has recommended that Government should not reduce the duties in future.

Shri Yajnik: I have not been able to clearly follow everything what the hon. Minister said. May I take it as a definite fact that no further exemption will be given to the 1952-53 tobacco?

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: That is near enough correct.

श्रीमती बरिबेन पटेल : मैं पूछना चाहती हूँ कि गुंतूर का मामला जिस तरह से हल किया गया इसी तरह यह मामला कब तक हल होने वाला है ?

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: If a question has to be settled in the categorical terms mentioned by the hon. Member opposite, I think, nothing further needs to be done.

Symposium at Central Leather Institute, Madras

*1599. **Shri Subodh Hasda:** Will the Minister of Education and Scientific Research be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the governing body of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research held a symposium at the Central Leather Institute, Madras on the 28th March, 1957;

(b) if so, what was the object of the symposium; and

(c) the number of delegates who participated in the symposium?

The Deputy Minister of Education and Scientific Research (Shri M. M. Das): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The object was to discuss scientific and technical questions relating to curing and preservation of raw hides and skins.

(c) Over 270 delegates participated in the Symposium.

Shri Subodh Hasda: May I know whether the symposium made any recommendation and, if so, what it is?

Shri M. M. Das: We do not know whether this symposium made any recommendation but the symposium set up the Indian Hides and Skins Improvement Society to guide the Government and the public on the various means and methods to improve the quality of raw hides and skins.

Shri Subodh Hasda: May I know what was the expenditure on this symposium and who bore the expenditure?

Shri M. M. Das: The total expenditure was Rs. 55.00 and it was borne by the Central Leather Institute of Madras.

Shri Subodh Hasda: May I know whether any technical session was held at that symposium and, if so, whether any foreign experts were invited?

Shri M. M. Das: That information is not at my disposal. |

Inter-State Sales Tax

*1600. **Shri S. M. Banerjee:** Will the Minister of Finance be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to suspend the recent orders regarding imposition of Inter-State Sales-Tax pending finalisation of question of amalgamation of Sales Tax with excise duty;

(b) whether the question of uniform application of Sales Tax in the country is also being considered; and

(c) whether the State Governments have agreed to exempt food-stuff from Sales Tax?

The Deputy Minister of Finance (Shri B. K. Bhagat): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Uniform rates of sales tax for certain relatively less essential goods and goods having large value in small bulk are under consideration.