

(b) if so, what are the names of such firms and the States in which they are located; and

(c) whether any of such firms have actually started works for the manufacture and if so, with what results?

The Minister of Commerce and Industry (Shri T. T. Krishnamachari):

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Messrs. Micanite and Mica Products Ltd. in Madras, and Messrs. Hirjee Mills Ltd., in Bihar.

(c) None of them have started production.

Shri S. C. Samanta: May I know whether it is due to the fact that there is lack of systematic mining and there is also lack of supervision of the processing work that there is less export?

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: I would not say that the cause and effect can be related in that precise manner. There have been complaints in regard to quality. Whether the quality deficiency is due to what the hon. Member says or not, is a matter of opinion. But the whole matter has been dealt with by the Mica Enquiry Committee, and they have made certain remarks particularly in regard to the difficulties of standardisation.

Shri S. C. Samanta: May I know whether any research work is going on in the National Physical Laboratory or in any other research station in India?

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: I should like to have notice.

Shri N. P. Sinha: May I know if Government have considered the recommendations of the Mica Enquiry Committee so far as the export of mica from India and the import, in turn, of micanite are concerned?

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: As I said, the recommendations of the Mica Enquiry Committee have been many, and these are being considered by Government from time to time. I cannot say that Government have applied their minds to the problem in that narrow perspective which the hon. Member indicates in his question.

Shri Kelappan: What steps do Government propose to take to maintain the quality of our mica exports?

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: I have answered this question more than once on the floor of the House. The Indian Standards Institution has prescribed certain standards, and the International Standards Institution also

has prescribed certain draft standards. These standards are being considered. If the draft standards of the International Standards Institution are approved finally, and if the member-countries agree to the draft standards as approved, then we shall perhaps insist upon the quality being maintained. In any event, even now the provisions of the existing legislation will be attracted if sub-standard quality is exported.

Shri Ramachandra Reddi: May I know whether Government propose to give any financial or technical assistance for micanite production?

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: Government cannot go about voluntarily offering assistance. If there is any specific demand made, it will be examined, consistent with Government's obligations and financial resources.

RESTRICTIONS ON COAL PRODUCTION

*1834. **Dr. Ram Subhag Singh:** Will the Minister of Production be pleased to state whether any restrictions exist on the coal out-put of those collieries which carry out stowing operations?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Production (Shri R. G. Dubey): Restrictions on output have been imposed in the case of all collieries producing metallurgical coal, but in fixing the production ceilings for such collieries the quantities produced by stowing operations will be exempted from any restriction in production.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: May I know what has been the effect of these restrictive measures on the coal industry as a whole, and what is the purpose behind this relaxation, which the hon. Parliamentary Secretary just now referred to?

Shri R. G. Dubey: So far as my knowledge goes, there has not been any adverse effect on the production of coal, and the intention behind this relaxation is this. For example, out of 83 collieries, 28 collieries have taken to stowing operations and they have installed certain stowing plants and incurred certain costs. In this case, if we do not give any relaxation, it will naturally affect their working capacity and their economic position.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: Do Government contemplate to enable the collieries to instal sand stowing plants which have been recognised as the most effective?

Shri R. G. Dubey: Yes, that is the intention of Government, and that is why this concession has been given

specifically to those colliery owners who are installing these plants. The Coal Board has been given discretion to examine each individual case and grant the necessary concession.

Shrimati Tarkeshward Sinha: How much financial assistance is being given to the collieries for carrying out the voluntary stowing programme?

Shri R. G. Dubey: It was calculated some time back that the cost of the stowing operations would be Rs. 2 per ton and Government will give assistance to the extent of one-fourth.

PRODUCTION OF COAL BY RAILWAY COLLIERIES

*1836. **Shri N. P. Sinha:** Will the Minister of Production be pleased to state whether the present production of coal in Railway Collieries will be able to meet the demands of Government fully?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Production (Shri E. G. Dubey): It is presumed that what the Hon'ble member wants to know is whether the present production from the Railway Collieries will be able to meet the full requirements of Government Railways. If so, the answer is "no".

Shri N. P. Sinha: Is it true that the Government has to depend upon private collieries for supply of coal for its traffic requirements, if so why pegging on production is being introduced in government collieries which result in retrenchments?

Shri R. G. Dubey: Pegging is done with a view to secure the maximum extraction of coal. So far as the present position is concerned, it is not harmful in any way.

The Minister of Production (Shri K. C. Reddy): May I add that the pegging policy is followed to conserve the better types of coal, the metallurgical coal. It is not proper to mix up that policy with the over-all production of coal.

COAL FOR COOKING

*1837. **Shri M. L. Dwivedi:** (a) Will the Minister of Production be pleased to state what is the attitude of Government with regard to the popularisation of the use of soft coke for domestic purposes by rural population and thus save waste of cow-dung which is a good manure?

(b) Have any steps been taken so far in this direction?

(c) If so, where and with what success?

(d) Is the scheme likely to be expanded?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Production (Shri R. G. Dubey): (a) The Government are fully in favour of the popularisation and extended use of soft coke as a domestic fuel in rural areas. The only factor that limits such use of soft coke is the lack of adequate transport facilities.

(b) and (c). The Soft Coke Cess Committee constituted by the Government to popularise the use of soft coke helped to raise the despatches from 754,000 tons in 1928 to 963,000 tons in 1940.

(d) The Planning Commission have suggested that a target of an additional one million tons of soft coke should be set for distribution in the rural areas. A proposal for reviving the Soft Coke Cess Committee is also under the examination of the Commission. The Government will consider this proposal in due course.

Shri M. L. Dwivedi: May I know if, as a result of the popularisation scheme of coal in the rural areas and for domestic purposes, any actual benefit has been taken by the rural areas and, if so, to what extent have the villages benefited?

Shri R. G. Dubey: Looking to the figures, it is clear. In the year 1949 the despatches were 8,91,119 tons whereas in 1952 it was 11,50,765 tons. This shows that there was progressive increase in the demand for soft coke.

Shri M. L. Dwivedi: May I know if by the approach of the Production Ministry to the Railway Ministry any appreciable result has been achieved in getting more wagons available for the supply of coal to rural areas?

Shri R. G. Dubey: Yes, that is what we are doing. In the year 1952 consumers were received from the consumers of this soft coke. Before that there was no priority for this particular variety of coal. From the year 1952, there was an up-grading of this soft coke and subsequently the priority was changed from I to G.

Shri M. L. Dwivedi: What is the increased number of wagons which are now available for this purpose?

Shri R. G. Dubey: It is not possible to give that.