

Shri A. P. Jain: There is no question of discrimination. In fact the Punjabi refugees have benefited more than the Sindhi refugees. Every landowner and every tenant in the Punjab has been given lands in Punjab and PEPSU on a quasi-permanent basis or otherwise by allotment.

Dr. Suresh Chandra: May I know whether Government have received any representations from the Sindhis themselves that they do not want land to be allotted there?

Shri A. P. Jain: We have not yet received any representation. On the other hand, there is a demand by the Sindhis that people from North West Frontier Province and the Bahawalpuris should be allotted lands.

COST OF LIVING INDEX

*2045. **Dr. Amin:** (a) Will the Minister of Finance be pleased to state how the figures for the Cost of Living Index are worked out?

(b) Is it a fact that the prices of consumers' goods have gone down recently?

(c) If so, what are the reasons which keep the Cost of Living Index so high in spite of the prices of consumers' goods going down?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance (Shri B. R. Bhagat): (a) The cost of living index is prepared with reference to changes in the cost of purchasing of representative collection of consumer goods as compared with the cost in a defined base period.

(b) Yes, Sir. Generally, the prices of a number of consumers' goods have registered a downward tendency since the middle of 1952.

(c) In 15 out of 16 industrial centres for which the Labour Bureau issues cost of Living Indices, there has been a downward trend since June-July, 1952. In other industrial centres for which State Governments issue their own indices, some centres have occasionally shown an upward movement. These are attributable partly to the composition of these indices and partly to local conditions. The All India Average Working Class cost of living index combining 24 different indices, in keeping with the downward trend of prices of consumers' goods, shows, on the whole, a declining trend since the peak attained in the last quarter of 1951.

Shri Nanadas: May I know what steps have Government taken to work out figures for the cost of living index of agricultural labourers and to publish them?

Shri B. R. Bhagat: This refers to the cost of living in the urban areas, and labour industrial centres.

Shri Nanadas: Cost of living.....

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: That is irrelevant.

Dr. Amin: May I know whether these figures of cost of living give the correct indication regarding the trend of the prices?

Shri B. R. Bhagat: I think so.

Shri Altekar: May I know whether the house rent is taken into consideration in arriving at the cost of living index?

Shri B. R. Bhagat: House rent is one of the considerations.

Shri L. N. Mishra: May I know the industrial centres where the cost of living was the highest in the year 1952?

Shri B. R. Bhagat: Cost of living has been highest in cities like Bombay, Sholapur and Kanpur.

Shri Raghavaiah: May I know whether the cost of living index has fallen to such a stage as to be on a par with the purchasing power of the common man which has fallen * * * ?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I will omit the latter part. It is not a matter for argument. Hon. Members are not expected to give their opinions here. They are only asked to put questions.

Shri Raghavaiah: I shall amend the question May I know whether the cost of living index is on a par with the purchasing power of the common man?

Shri B. R. Bhagat: As I have stated, there is already a general downward trend in the cost of living. I do not know what the hon. Member means by saying "on a par". I think that since July 1952, there is a continuing downward trend and I think the purchasing capacity and the prices are synchronising.