

Shri Tulsidas: May I know from the hon. Minister whether, in view of the production of these different varieties of cloth in excess of the estimated demand, it is worth while continuing production control on these varieties?

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: It is a matter of opinion. Government seem to think in a different way from the hon. Member.

Shri Muniswamy: What are the countries which are importing Indian mill cloth in the place of handloom textiles imported previously, and what is the quantity in respect of each country?

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: I would require notice.

BISCUITS

*1420. **Shri Rishang Keishing:** Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to state:

(a) the annual requirement and production of biscuits in India;

(b) the annual import and export of biscuits and the countries from which the same is imported and also the countries, if any, to which the same is exported; and

(c) whether the Federation of Biscuit Manufacturers of India have sought any protection from the Government of India against foreign competition and if so, whether any steps have been taken in that direction?

The Minister of Commerce and Industry (Shri T. T. Krishnamachari): (a) and (b). A statement is laid on the Table of the House. [See Appendix IX, annexure No. 49.]

(c) No, Sir.

Shri Rishang Keishing: May I know whether it is a fact that the Biscuit industry in India, due to lack of market, produced only 12,000 tons last year as against a total production capacity of 38,000 tons a year, and if so, how the Government propose to help this industry in this respect?

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: Government is not in a position to ask the consumers to consume more biscuits. Apparently, production is more or less related to the consumption and demand. The capacity is undoubtedly 38,000 tons. The demand varies from 15 to 12,000 tons according to the purchasing capacity of the consumers.

Shri Rishang Keishing: May I know whether it is a fact that the Government have decided to allow the import of special biscuit and bread making machinery in order to enable the manufacturers to improve the quality of the product?

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: Yes, Sir. There was a time when new machinery was not allowed to be imported or installed. Government feel that that ban need no longer exist.

Shri M. D. Ramasami: May I know whether the restriction on the issue of licences for biscuit manufacturers in the Madras State still continues, and if so why?

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: I did mention that there was a ban some time back in regard to the import of new machinery for this purpose. Government see no reason to continue the ban now.

Seth Govind Das: By what time does the hon. Minister expect that there will be self-sufficiency in production and this country will not have to import biscuits?

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: At present, there does not seem to be any idea of encouraging imports except in order to maintain quality. I might mention to the hon. Member that we are giving a very small quota for import of biscuits. Even on this Government have put a high rate of duty. Recently, the duty has gone up by almost 100 per cent. If anybody wants quality biscuits and is prepared to pay the price, Government gets a revenue on the import of such biscuits. The whole idea is that quality should be maintained and that a leavening of quality biscuits should come in so that the consumer might express his satisfaction or otherwise of the local biscuits. It is not contemplated that any thing very much by way of quantity is likely to come in at the present prices.

ARRESTS ON WESTERN PAKISTAN BORDER

*1421. **Dr. Ram Subhag Singh:** Will the Prime Minister be pleased to state:

(a) the number of persons arrested so far on Western Pakistan border for infringing passport regulations since the introduction of passport system between India and Pakistan; and

(b) how many of cases of such persons have been disposed of?

The Deputy Minister of External Affairs (Shri Anil K. Chandra): (a) 977 on the East Punjab and Rajasthan border with West Pakistan. Informa-