

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: May I know whether the production of these sheets has increased in recent years?

Shri Karmarkar: I am afraid this question is not relevant to the main question.

Shri S. C. Samanta: May I know whether there has been an increased demand for these sheets in the country?

Shri Karmarkar: Very respectfully, I should like to ask for notice.

COIR PRODUCED IN AMINDIVI ISLANDS

*1042. **Shri P. T. Chacko:** Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that coir produced in the Amindivi Islands is not permitted to be sold in the open markets;

(b) whether the Port Officer, Mangalore, is purchasing the entire coir produced in these islands at a low price and selling them in the market making huge profits to Government; and

(c) if so, whether Government are aware that the working of this coir monopoly system is causing great hardship to the poor islanders?

The Deputy Minister of Commerce and Industry (Shri Karmarkar): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The purchase and disposal of coir in Amindivi Islands has been a Government monopoly for several decades.

(c) The Government of India have had no complaints against the system.

Shri P. T. Chacko: May I know whether the Port Officer, Mangalore, is purchasing the coir on an exchange system paying rice in exchange for coir?

Shri Karmarkar: That is exactly the fact, Sir.

Shri P. T. Chacko: There is a report in *The Hindu*, dated the 28th March 1952, stating that the rate of exchange worked out in 1951-52 as Rs. 95 worth of rice for one candy of coir worth about Rs. 350. May I know whether this is a fact?

Shri Karmarkar: I should like to see the particular report from *The Hindu*. But I am sure that since 1923 onwards, the payment is made fully in rice at the rate of 84 lbs. of rice for 98 lbs. of coir. That is my information.

Shri P. T. Chacko: What is the price of rice per seer at Madras?

Shri Karmarkar: I should like to have notice.

Shri P. T. Chacko: May I know whether it is a fact that the Government profited to the extent of about Rs. 497,000 in 1951-52 from this monopoly system?

Shri Karmarkar: The exact amount is Rs. 497,971.

Shri P. T. Chacko: May I know whether any portion of this amount is expended for the welfare and benefit of the Amindivi islanders?

Shri Karmarkar: Apart from the profit or loss of this transaction, the idea behind this transaction is that it has been continued for a long time, and has on the whole worked to the benefit of the particular islanders. We have not led them into the hands of the local exploiters.

Shri P. T. Chacko: Have the Government considered the desirability of stopping this very inequitable system of monopoly?

Shri Karmarkar: Firstly it is not inequitable, and secondly, representations have been made by interested parties to change the system, but we have not found ourselves agreeable to this.

Shri S. C. Samanta: May I know whether Government have received any request from the Indian Central Coconut Committee to bring the coir industry of this island also under the control of the Committee?

Shri Karmarkar: I should like to have notice.

Shri Jasani: May I know how much the profit was annually?

Shri Karmarkar: Sir, the amount has varied from year to year. In 1940-41, the loss was about Rs. 25,000, and in 1950-51 the profit was Rs. 497,971.

Shri Jasani: Is it not a fact that there is no free trade between these islanders and the mainland?

Shri Karmarkar: In respect of the other commodities I have no information. But it is a fact that they are trading in rice as against this coir.

Shri Kelappan: Are the Government aware that all trade in the island is under the monopoly of certain hereditary chiefs?

Shri Karmarkar: I should like to inquire into the matter.

Shri Pecker Saheb: May I know what is the provision under law under which this monopoly is exercised by the Government?

Shri Karmarkar: I shall go into the history of the matter and then let the hon. Member know about it.

Shri B. Shiva Rao: May I know whether there has recently been a report by the Special Officer of Madras Government, in regard to the conditions in these islands, including the question under discussion now?

Shri Karmarkar: Yes, Sir. That is partly true. The Special Inspection Officer, it appears, has made a report on the question of free trade which will be further examined by the State Government, with reference to the suggestion made by him.

Shri B. Shiva Rao: May I ask whether before any final action is taken a copy of the report will be placed on the Table of this House?

Shri Karmarkar: We shall consider the question.

FOOD MATERIALS (IMPORT & EXPORT)

*1043. **Shri P. T. Chacko:** Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to state:

(a) the total value of food materials imported in the year 1951-52; and

(b) whether food materials were exported from India in the year 1951-52 and, if so, the total value of such exports?

The Deputy Minister of Commerce and Industry (Shri Karmarkar): (a) Rs. 258.46 crores of which Rs. 230 crores represent foodgrains.

(b) No foodgrains are exported. The total value of other food articles in 1951-52 was Rs. 146 crores of which Rs. 93 crores represent tea, Rs. 30 crores represent spices and about Rs. 9 crores represent cashew nuts.

Shri P. T. Chacko: May I know what percentage share of the import trade was accounted for by these food imports?

Shri Karmarkar: What percentage these foodgrains would form of the total import? Well, I should like to have notice. But I am informed it is about 20 per cent, Sir.

IMPORTS FROM BRITAIN

*1044. **Dr. Ram Subhag Singh:** Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to state:

(a) the total amount of imports made by Britain from India during the first quarter of this calendar year; and

(b) the total amount of Indian purchases of British goods during the corresponding period?

The Deputy Minister of Commerce and Industry (Shri Karmarkar): (a) Rs. 37.9 crores.

(b) Rs. 45.3 crores.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: May I know, Sir, whether the import and export position of our country was more favourable in the corresponding period last year?

Shri Karmarkar: In respect of the United Kingdom? So far as I could say offhand, last year it had been adverse to us.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: May I know, Sir, what were the chief items because of which the import and export position of our country became favourable this year?

Shri Karmarkar: The items are about the same, but the quantities vary.

Shrimati A. Kale: May I know the names of the articles imported so far?

Shri Karmarkar: The items are about 52 in number, but I could mention some—bobbins, soda bicarbonate, cutlery, hardware, etc.

COTTON (EXPORT)

*1045. **Dr. Ram Subhag Singh:** Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to state:

(a) the total quantity of cotton so far exported from this country during this calendar year; and

(b) what were the varieties of cotton thus exported?

The Deputy Minister of Commerce and Industry (Shri Karmarkar): (a) and (b). A statement is laid on the Table of the House. [See Appendix V, annexure No. 41].

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: May I know, Sir, what is the total number of bales that is intended to be exported?

Shri Karmarkar: Well, Sir, the plan is to export, I think, round about 300,000 bales.

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: Is there any intention to increase this quota of export since the prices have fallen because of this non-usable cotton being still in the market?