

Shri H. N. Mukerjee: Is it a fact that in spite of recommendations from the Commerce Ministry to the various Tea Associations with which European tea gardens are affiliated, the agency houses of these European tea gardens have declined to extend any support to Indian tea brokers and have pursued a policy detrimental to the growth of Indianisation of tea broking?

Shri R. K. Chaudhury: Is the hon. Minister aware that the average price of tea in the tea growing province such as Assam is much higher than the price of tea in the United Kingdom?

Shri Karmarkar: I have no information; I should like to find that out.

TRADE INTERESTS IN TEA

*1887. **Shri K. P. Tripathi:** Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to state:

(a) what percentage of the share holders of the trade interests mentioned in each of the following items are common:

- (1) British-owned tea plantations in India, and the tea brokers in India;
- (2) Tea-brokers in India and tea brokers in England;
- (3) British-owned tea plantations in India, tea brokers in India and tea brokers in England; and

(b) What percentage of the members of the Board of Directors of trade interests mentioned in each of the following items are common:

- (1) British-owned tea plantations in India, and the tea brokers in India;
- (2) Tea brokers in India and tea brokers in England;
- (3) British-owned tea plantations in India, British tea brokers in India and tea brokers in England?

The Deputy Minister of Commerce and Industry (Shri Karmarkar): (a) and (b). Precise information is not available. Compilation of the required information will involve reference being made to U.K. and various parts of the Country and will involve considerable expenditure, time and labour.

Shri K. P. Tripathi: Is the Government prepared to institute an enquiry into this very important matter in which interlocking devices are acting against the interests of the country?

Shri Karmarkar: Government does not consider it worthwhile to conduct an enquiry. We went into the matter very carefully and found that the labour involved is much greater than the results which would be achieved.

Shri A. C. Guha: Is it true that the tea broking agency in Calcutta is mostly European-controlled?

Shri Karmarkar: I should like to have notice of that question.

Shri H. N. Mukerjee: Is Government aware that British banks in Calcutta have hypothecated crops of several tea estates with a clear stipulation that the crops of such hypothecated tea estates are to be sold only through European tea-brokers?

Shri Karmarkar: I shall certainly find that out.

Shri Sarmah: What is the percentage of European owned tea in India?

Shri Karmarkar: At the moment I cannot say; but I shall find it out.

TEA PRICES

*1888. **Shri K. P. Tripathi:** Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to state:

(a) the present whole-sale and retail prices of tea (Indian) in London markets;

(b) similar figures for the last four years, month by month;

(c) the corresponding prices in India of exported and exportable tea; and

(d) the freight per pound of tea exported to London (year by year, since 1947)?

The Deputy Minister of Commerce and Industry (Shri Karmarkar): (a) to (d). A statement is laid on the Table of the House. [See Appendix IX, annexure No. 15.]

Shri K. P. Tripathi: Is it a fact, Sir, that the retail prices in London and Europe generally are steady and have not fallen in spite of the so-called slump in India?

Shri Karmarkar: I cannot say that off-hand. But I understand that the United Kingdom Government had abolished the subsidy on tea from the 15th June 1952 and as a result the maximum retail price of tea will be increased from 3s. 10d. to 4s. 8d. and from 3s. 4d. to 3s. 3-8d. for low price tea. Beyond that I have no information.

Shri K. P. Tripathi: Is it a fact that because the retail prices in Europe are