

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

steady and the prices in India have been made to fall on account of the slump, the margin of profit enjoyed by the European interests has increased.

Shri Karmarkar: I should like to find that out.

Shri R. K. Chaudhury: Is the hon. Minister now in a position to answer my question, namely, that the retail price of tea in India is much higher than the retail price of tea in the United Kingdom?

Shri Karmarkar: I should still like to have notice.

Shri A. C. Guha: May I know if Government have received any complaints that the conditions under which Indian tea is auctioned in London are not favourable and are discriminatory?

Shri Karmarkar: I have no ready information on that point. I shall find out if there are any complaints received.

Mr. Speaker: The questions are more or less in the nature of giving information, rather than asking for information.

Shri A. C. Guha: We simply draw pointed attention to certain state of affairs.

Shri Sarmah: Will Government be pleased to instruct the Tea Enquiry Committee to go into this alleged matter of collusive bidding in Calcutta?

Shri Karmarkar: I said I shall try to find out.

The Minister of Finance (Shri C. D. Deshmukh): Sometimes these representations are addressed to the Finance Ministry. About two days ago I received a representation in which it is alleged that by some arrangement of sales in England an attempt is made to transfer the burden of the subsidy from England to India. I have sent that representation to the Commerce and Industry Ministry for investigation and I shall have a chance of asking the official committee to enquire into this particular allegation.

ACCIDENT IN SINGARENI COLLIERIES

***1889. Shri Vittal Rao:** Will the Minister of Labour be pleased to state:

(a) the causes of the accident that occurred in the Singareni Collieries, Kothagudium on 2nd June, 1952;

(b) how many were injured and the number died subsequently;

(c) whether any enquiry, official or non-official, was held; and

(d) if the answer to part (c) above be in the affirmative, what are its findings?

The Minister of Labour (Shri V. V. Giri): (a) The accident occurred as a result of a cage filled with men striking against the pit bottom.

(b) Twenty-four persons were injured. No report has been received of any person having died subsequently.

(c) An enquiry was held by a Junior Inspector of Mines.

(d) *Prima facie* it appears the winding engine driver caused the accident either wilfully or by negligence. The matter is however under investigation.

Shri Vittal Rao: May I know the circumstances under which the carrying capacity of the cage was exceeded?

Shri V. V. Giri: Those circumstances are being investigated. The general rule seems to be that ten alone should get into the cage; but 25 got into it.

Shri Vittal Rao: Are Government aware that this is the second accident within the course of two months?

Shri V. V. Giri: I take the information from the hon. Member.

Dr. Jaisoorya: Did I hear the hon. Minister to say that a Junior Inspector of Mines is investigating into the matter?

Shri V. V. Giri: Yes.

Dr. Jaisoorya: Why?

Shri V. V. Giri: Because he alone was available.

Shri Vittal Rao: Was the winding engine driver technically qualified for the job, or was he promoted to this job on account of his anti-trade union activities?

Shri V. V. Giri: He was technically qualified.

Shri Sarangadhar Das: May I know if adequate compensation has been given to the injured persons in accordance with the Workmen's Compensation Act?

Shri V. V. Giri: Yes, of course.

JUTE PLANTS

***1891. Shri L. N. Mishra:** Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to state:

(a) the results that the substitution of the old jute plants by modern ones