

(b) and (c). Seed materials have been imported since 1953 and the plants out of these are under field observation at the Research Station. It is too early to assess results or define suitable areas, where they could be grown.

Dr. Rama Rao: Since there seems to be a fair chance of developing this variety of coffee, have the Government tasted this variety?

Shri Karmarkar: The very testing is going on. We have planted them. As my hon. friend knows, coffee requires a little time to grow on an economic basis and a few years have to elapse. Therefore, we have planted these varieties and are testing them at our research station at Balehonnur—not tasting but testing.

Dr. Rama Rao: I wanted to know whether Government have tasted this coffee to see whether it is good coffee or not.

Shri Karmarkar: Government have not done so; I do not know whether my esteemed colleague has done so.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Next question. Shri Ibrahim. I think the hon. Member is absent.

COFFEE BOARD

***221. Shri Ibrahim:** Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to state the number of registered Coffee Planters who are members of the Coffee Board and who own estates to the extent of (i) 5 acres and less, (ii) between 5 and 50 acres and (iii) 100 acres and above?

The Minister of Commerce (Shri Karmarkar): A statement is laid on the Table of the Lok Sabha. [See Appendix II, annexure No. 11.]

An Hon. Member: The questioner namely Shri Ibrahim, is absent. But the answer has been read out.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Very well: it has been read already.

FORWARD TRADING IN COTTON

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

(a) whether Government have studied the reactions of their action in suspending hedge trading in cotton on the forward market as well as on the industry and supply;

(b) whether they feel that there is need for the change in the policy; and

(c) if so, what is it?

The Minister of Commerce and Industry and Iron and Steel (Shri T. T. Krishnamachari): (a) to (c). The Forward Markets Commission were compelled to take the action that they did to safeguard the interests of all concerned. The decision of the East India Cotton Association in accordance with the advice given to them by the Forward Markets Commission is challenged in a Court of Law. Government do not think that there is any need for change in the policy.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: Government have suspended forward trading in cotton to safeguard the interests of all concerned. May I know whether the ceiling prices of cotton had been reached at that time? May I know also in what way the interests of cotton-growers were safeguarded by suspending forward trading in cotton?

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: In the case of standard varieties of cotton, the floor is Rs. 495; that is for Jarilla; and the ceiling is about Rs. 800. So, the margin is a very big margin. The prices which were ruling at the time the Forward Markets Commission took action were well above Rs. 700, and Government are of the view that an increase of 40 per cent. on the floor price was a good enough safeguard for the grower.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: My question was to what extent the growers have been hit on account of the suspension of trading. What was the floor price of cotton in Amraoti or other cotton-growing centres at that time, and what is the price now?