

Shri Dabhi : May I know if it is a fact that even when prohibition was imposed in Bombay State, the Central Government did not want prohibition to be imposed there upon the Defence Services ?

Dr. Katju : I want notice of that question.

Shri A. M. Thomas : May I know whether the Defence Section intends to fall in line with the Delhi Government in this matter ?

Dr. Katju : Every Government, for that matter.

POPPY CULTIVATION

***291. Sardar Hukam Singh :** Will the Minister of Finance be pleased to state the decrease in the area under poppy cultivation during 1955 in pursuance of the recommendations of the International Convention on Opium ?

The Minister of Revenue and Defence Expenditure (Shri A. C. Guha) :

The various international conventions on opium do not impose any area limitation on opium cultivation ; they only demand gradual curtailment in, and ultimate stoppage of, use of opium except for medical and scientific purposes. That obligation, India has been fulfilling scrupulously. We have been regulating acreage of opium according to our requirements for exports and internal consumption as permitted by the international conventions.

Sardar Hukam Singh : May I know whether the other countries which were a party to that international convention have also introduced measures to bring down their cultivation of opium ?

Shri A. C. Guha : I think the other countries which were a party to that convention must have taken similar measures. It is the obligation for the curtailment of internal non-medical use and also export of opium for illicit purposes.

Shrimati Khongmen : May I ask whether the Government is in a position to state whether public consumption of opium in the country is on the decrease with the restriction of opium cultivation ?

Shri A. C. Guha : Consumption of opium in the country is going down year by year and by 1959 we expect that the non-medical use of opium will be completely stopped. That is the programme according to which we are working.

Shrimati Ita Palchoudhury : If poppy seed is an exportable commodity, even if opium is not manufactured, could we not cultivate the seed, export it and earn currency.

Shri A. C. Guha : I have no idea about poppy seed being exported.

श्रीमती कमलेन्द्रमति शाह : क्या सरकार को मालूम है कि कई ऐसे स्थान भी हैं कि जहाँ पर दाल या तरकारी न मिलने के कारण लोगों के पास अफीम दाना ही ऐसी चीज रह जाती है जिसको कि वे काम में ला सकते हैं ? क्या ऐसे स्थानों के लोग यदि यह गारंटी दे दें कि वे अफीम नहीं निकालेंगे, सरकार उनको पोपी सीड कल्टीवेट करने की इजाजत देगी ?

श्री ए० सी० गुहा : कई जिलों में जहाँ पोपी सीड अनाज के तौर पर इस्तेमाल होता है, स्टेट गवर्नमेंट्स इसे चास करने के लाइसेंस देती हैं।

Shri Kasliwal : In reply to another question last year, the hon. Minister was pleased to say that last year the total area under opium cultivation was 40,000 acres. May I know what area is proposed to be placed under cultivation this year ?

Shri A. C. Guha : That will depend on our estimate of the requirements. We have also to keep some reserve stock and we have to meet the export demands. We always regulate our acreage according to the requirements.

Sardar Hukam Singh : The total production of opium has fallen by 40 per cent during 1954. Could that progress in the decline of production be maintained during 1955 as well ?

Shri A. C. Guha : As I have stated, production depends only on these two or rather three factors—the reserve stock, requirements of internal consumption mostly for medicinal purposes and export. Every year we prepare an estimate of these three items and then we regulate production accordingly.

Dr. Rama Rao : Instead of making efforts to reduce the production of opium, may I know what steps the Government are taking to divert this opium for the manufacture of medicinal products as recommended by the Pharmaceutical Enquiry Committee?

Shri A. C. Guha : As far as possible, we utilise opium for medicinal purposes but that would depend on the demand. We keep sufficient stock of opium for medicinal and scientific purposes.

ANDAMAN ISLANDS

***292. Shri Ibrahim :** Will the Minister of Home Affairs be pleased to state the progress achieved so far in increasing the number of ships available for transport from the mainland to the different parts of the Andaman Islands?

The Minister in the Ministry of Home Affairs (Shri Datar) : Government have decided to acquire a second vessel for the Andamans mainland Service. Efforts are being made to purchase a suitable vessel as early as possible for running this service with two vessels.

Shri S. C. Samanta : May I know whether the route will be changed, that is, whether from Calcutta to Port Blair and from Madras to Port Blair, there will be an intermediate station so that the Long Island and North Island people may be benefited?

Shri Datar : That is the objective we have kept in view. At present, our services run about 12 trips from Calcutta to the mainland and 6 trips to Madras. There is a certain inconvenience felt by the passengers at Madras. Therefore, the Government are taking up this question and will solve it as early as possible.

Shri M. L. Dwivedi : Last year, the Minister was pleased to give an assurance to the effect that in addition to these ships, there shall be arrangements for air lift to passengers to Andamans. May I know whether that arrangement has come into effect?

Shri Datar : That question is under consideration by the Ministry of Communications.

ESTATE DUTY

***293. Shri N. B. Chowdhury :** Will the Minister of Finance be pleased to state :

(a) the extent of assessable property owned by United Kingdom citizens in India under the scope of Estate Duty Act at present; and

(b) the similar extent of assessable property owned by Indian citizens in the United Kingdom?

The Minister of Revenue and Civil Expenditure (Shri M. C. Shah) : (a) and (b). The information called for is not available.

Shri N. B. Chowdhury : May I know whether the Government have taken any steps to ascertain this information?

Shri M. C. Shah : It is not possible to collect all this information regarding all the assets of the foreigners, movable and immovable. There are movables. We cannot get this information at a reasonable cost.

Shri N. B. Chowdhury : Am I to take it from the answer of the hon. Minister that on estate duty will be levied on the assets of foreigners in India?

Shri M. C. Shah : The assets left by foreigners in India at the time of their demise will be assessable to estate duty: movable as well as immovable.

Dr. Rama Rao : The hon. Minister said that he has no information. Is it that the Government have entered into an agreement without proper information?

Shri M. C. Shah : We are negotiating an agreement to avoid double taxation in estate duty, with the U.K.

Shri U. M. Trivedi : May I know if some big dignitaries in India have increased their assets in the U.K. during the last three years?