

comes forward to buy the jute, fixing of prices at the moment may adversely affect the interests of the jute grower.

Shri Barman: It has been appearing in the columns of newspapers from time to time that large scale smuggling or unauthorised import of Pakistan jute is going on in the Khulna and 24-Parganas border. In view of that, has Government taken any steps to stop such illegal smuggling of jute which is depressing price here?

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: The information that Government have in their possession does not bear out the statement of the hon. Member.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: The hon. Minister has stated that the Fatka market is going to be closed. In view of that, how far it is calculated that the price will go up? What will be the price of jute now, and how will it compare with the economic price? I am asking this question because we know that the price that is being given to the cultivators is far below what they have to spend.

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: The second part of the question deals with the question of the economic price, and the economic price is a matter of comparison between it and the price of other articles. At the present moment, if the price of rice is taken as the basis, then the economic price for the standard quality jute produced in India, called the "bottoms", might be somewhere in the region of Rs. 23-24 in Calcutta. But it is a matter on which I cannot say anything with authority. So far as my expectations in regard to an improvement of the position by reason of the closing down of the Fatka market are concerned, we do expect that conditions will materially improve. If the prices of manufactured goods reach the position that was obtaining before this hectic activity, say, in the case of hessian in 1948-49, then automatically the price for raw jute may rise to Rs. 27, and that will be, I should think, under present conditions an economic price.

Shri L. N. Mishra: From the statement of the hon. Minister it appears that Bihar jute growers have to pay exorbitant transport charges. May I know therefore whether there is any proposal to end this transport problem of the Bihar growers?

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: I have already explained in my statement that we do realise that Bihar jute growers in outlying areas have to pay something like Rs. 7 a maund for transport to Calcutta. It is a physical problem. We have to consider two issues: either to discourage outlying areas from growing jute, or to find out if we can give some other facilities. The problem is being examined.

Shri L. N. Mishra: Do Government propose to set up some jute mills in Bihar as suggested by the Government of Bihar?

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: We are dealing with an extremely narrow problem. At the moment, we are trying to help the people that have grown jute. The long range problem of setting up mills in various parts of India is a different thing altogether. I am afraid I cannot say anything at this moment on this particular subject.

Shri B. S. Murthy: May I know whether Government are contemplating the fixation of floor prices for raw jute so that the growers will get a modicum of economic price.

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: I have already answered the question. I have said that we find that at the present moment the fixation of a price will not benefit the people on whose behalf we want to fix the price.

Dr. Lanka Sundaram: The hon. Minister made a reference to Mesta and Bimli jute. May I know whether Government are aware that as a result of the precipitate collapse of the price of this particular quality of jute, hundreds of thousands of families, mostly in the Vishakapatnam and Srikakulam districts are facing ruin and if so, whether Government propose to take any steps to stabilise the price of this particular variety?

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: I may take the information from the hon. Member in regard to hundreds of thousands of families facing distress, but I might at once tell the House that people do not regard either Mesta or Bimli as jute. It is only used as an adulterant and in fact it is because of this problem of Mesta and Bimli that we have to allow superior quality jute to be imported from Pakistan, so that these varieties can be mixed with the superior quality jute. So, one of the things that we are considering is whether we should not discourage the production of what are called jute adulterants, e.g. Mesta and Bimli.

Shri S. C. Samanta: The hon. Minister said that import of jute from Pakistan is not the cause of falling prices, because only half the target of imports has been allowed. May I know whether our target of production in India has increased and if so, whether Government have taken into further consideration the target which they settled beforehand and have they come to a conclusion about the floor price of raw jute?

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: Sir, there are a number of issues involved. I do not know if I would be able to answer satisfactorily all the points of my hon. friend. The present season's production including Mesta and Bimli is expected to be in the region of 44 lakhs of bales, and on the basis of last year's consumption, i.e. for the twelve months ending the 30th June 1952, the mills consumed 61 lakh bales. It, therefore, shows that even allowing for a carry-over of stocks with mills of about 9 lakh bales, there is a deficit, and the deficit has to be filled up or the mills should gradually curtail their working hours. The hon. Member can draw his own conclusions.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Next question. We have spent sixteen minutes over this one question.

ATTACK ON MANICKGANJ BY PAKISTANI Forces

II. Shri Barman: (a) Will the Prime Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that Pakistani Forces attacked Manickganj, a border village of Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal on 7th December, 1952?

(b) Did the forces use firearms, and if so, what are the casualties and damages done to any Indian nationals or properties?

(c) What are the ostensible causes of such aggression?

(d) What are the conditions of Indian nationals living in the Indian enclaves in Pakistan near about that place of incident?

(e) How many times has Jalpaiguri border been transgressed by Pakistan Forces up till now, and what are the damages committed by such transgressions up till now?

The Deputy Minister of External Affairs (Shri Anil K. Chanda): (a) and (b). On the 7th December 1952, about 25 Pakistani nationals trespassed into Indian territory and forcibly reaped paddy in Burirjote, Kotwali

P.S., Jalpaiguri District. On the arrival of a West Bengal patrol party, they retreated to Pakistan territory. Simultaneously, firing from Pakistani territory started and about 30 rounds were fired. The West Bengal patrol did not return the fire. There was no casualty or damage to property on our side.

(c) to (e). Information has been called for and when received will be laid on the Table of the House.

Shri Barman: What is the interval of time between the entry of Pakistan forces and the arrival of our forces on the scene?

Shri Anil K. Chanda: As I said before, we have not got detailed information, but I should think that since there was a patrol party in the neighbourhood our Police must have arrived on the scene before long.

Shri Barman: What are the nearest military or police outposts on either side of the border?

Shri Anil K. Chanda: I have not got this information with me here, but as I said, the detailed information will be placed on the Table of the House when it is received from the West Bengal Government.

Shri Barman: In view of the fact that an India-Pakistan Conference is going to be held on the 20th inst., may I ask the hon. Minister to consider the desirability of having some police outposts in the enclaves in view of the difficulties experienced there?

The Prime Minister (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru): As I stated the other day, the position of these enclaves both in the Indian territory and in Pakistan territory is extraordinarily difficult. They are completely surrounding by the other territory. It is difficult enough to send supplies, etc., to keep the police party there. I suppose a police party occasionally goes. But even that police party is surrounded by foreign territory while coming and going. The only real solution is, as a result of cordial adjustment, to put an end to the enclaves. In any event, the Conference to which the hon. Member referred, is one of officials to deal with the passport situation. These other matters are dealt with normally by East Bengal and West Bengal officials in conference locally.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF LABOUR COMMISSIONER DELHI

III. Shri N. P. Sinha: (a) Will the Minister of Labour be pleased to state whether the attention of Government

has been drawn to the remarks made in a judgment by the Supreme Court of India delivered the other day against the "Callous indifference or utter inefficiency and slackness apparently prevailing in the office of the Chief Labour Commissioner, New Delhi" in an appeal preferred by the Industrial Colliery, Dhanbad, against the decision of the Central Government Industrial Tribunal, Dhanbad.

(b) If so, do Government propose to make a statement regarding this dispute.

(c) What steps, if any, are proposed to be taken against those concerned.

The Deputy Minister of Labour (Shri Abid Ali): (a) Government have seen press reports of the judgment referred to by the hon. Members.

(b) It appears that the Regional Labour Commissioner Dhanbad held conciliation proceedings on the 22nd October 1949 and submitted a report which reached the Chief Labour Commissioner on the 25th October 1949. The report was, however, not transmitted to the Central Government until the 18th November 1949. Meanwhile on the 7th November 1949, the workers went on strike, apparently under the impression that seven days had elapsed after receipt of the report of the Conciliation Officer by Government. The Industrial Tribunal and the Supreme Court have held that as the report was, in fact, not received by Government until the 18th November 1949, the strike was illegal.

Two factors appear to have been responsible for falsifying the belief of the workers that they were going on a legal strike after the expiry of the prohibitory period mentioned in section 22(1) (d), namely,

(1) that the Regional Labour Commissioner submitted his report to Government through the Chief Labour Commissioner and not direct, and

(2) that there was then no provision, either statutory or administrative, for informing the parties of the date of receipt of the conciliation report by the appropriate Government. Soon after the present case came to the notice of the Government these defects were rectified. Necessary instructions were issued through their letter No L.R. 1(93) dated the 22nd December 1949, a copy of which is placed on the Table of the House. [See Appendix VIII, annexure No. 14.]

Under those instructions, the Conciliation Officer is required to submit his report to the appropriate Government direct within two days of the

completion of the enquiry, copies thereof being sent simultaneously to the parties concerned, and the appropriate Government is required to inform the parties concerned, of the date on which it receives the report of the Conciliation officer. Since the issue of those instructions, no inconvenience has been reported from any quarters. As, however, there is a lacuna in the Act in that no provision exists for enabling an interested party to know the date on which a conciliation proceeding is to be deemed to have concluded, it is proposed to make suitable changes in the law when the Act is next amended.

(c) The Chief Labour Commissioner did not apparently expect such an urgent and statutory report to pass through him and had not made any special arrangements for dealing with them. It may also be mentioned that the Chief Labour Commissioner had returned from leave only on the 25th October 1949, i.e. the very date of receipt of the Regional Labour Commissioner's report, and had to deal with much accumulated work. Government do not, therefore, consider any special action necessary beyond drawing the attention of the Chief Labour Commissioner to the need for expeditious disposal of work.

Shri N. P. Sinha: May I know if seven hundred or more employees will have to face and bear the consequences of an illegal strike which became technically illegal, under most unfortunate circumstances?

Shri Abid Ali: It is a fact that they went on strike which has been held to be illegal.

Shri N. P. Sinha: Section 26 of the Industrial Disputes Act provides for illegal strikes or lock-outs, one month's imprisonment or fine or both. May I know whether they are going to be prosecuted because the strike has been technically illegal?

Shri Abid Ali: No, Sir, there is no such possibility.

Shri A. N. Vidyalkar: In view of the following remarks of the Supreme Court Judge that this hardship had been thrown upon the employees for no fault of their own, what special steps are Government going to take to save the workers from bearing the consequences of the illegal strike?

Shri Abid Ali: No action has been, or is proposed to be taken against the workers for having gone on strike.