

Shri K. D. Malaviya: The Degree College, Almora, had suffered from losses due to accidental fire, and it got 2,572 dollars.

Prof. D. C. Sharma: May I know what is meant by "educational improvement".

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I will not take notice of the question. Hon. Member must look on all sides. I have called another hon. Member.

पंडित सी० एन० मालवीय : क्या यह रियायत सिर्फ़ यू० एन० ओ० के लिये ही है या और भी किसी दूसरे मुल्क की सरकार के लिये है जो गवर्नमेंट आफ इंडिया से फ्रेंडली टर्मज पर है ?

बी के० डी० मालवीय : यूनेस्को संस्था के जो सदस्य हैं उन सब के लिये यह सहायता को योजना बनाई गई है ।

पंडित सी० एन० मालवीय : क्या इसका यह मतलब समझा जाये कि हिन्दुस्तान की हुकूमत से जो दूसरे मुल्क की हुकूमतें बोस्ती रखती हैं वह भी अपनी एजेन्सी हिन्दुस्तान में कायम कर के बंटवा सकती हैं ?

बी के० डी० मालवीय : यह प्रश्न तो इस से सम्बन्धित नहीं है । यूनेस्को एक अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय संस्था है, उस के कुछ सदस्य हैं । उन सदस्यों की सहायता के लिये इस अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय संस्था ने योजना बनाई है ।

Shri B. S. Murthy: May I know whether there are any conditions that the institutions which receive these gifts have to abide by? If so, what are the conditions?

Shri K. D. Malaviya: There is no particular condition, as far as I am aware.

BLIND PEOPLE

*1104. **Sardar Hukam Singh:** Will the Minister of Home Affairs be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has the largest number of blind people of any country in the world; and

(b) whether their number has been assessed separately in the last census?

The Deputy Minister of Home Affairs (Shri Datar): (a) and (b). Information regarding the number of blind people in India was not collected at the 1951 Census and, therefore, it is not possible to make a comparison with other countries of the world.

Sardar Hukam Singh: Is the Government aware that there are special legislative measures in other countries like the U.S.A. and the U.K. for the benefit of the blind?

Shri Datar: We are not aware.

Sardar Hukam Singh: Does the Government propose to take up any legislation for the benefit of the blind, so that they might not entirely depend upon the charity of the people?

Shri Datar: Government is not blind to the interests of the blind, and therefore they are taking necessary measures whenever required.

Sardar Hukam Singh: Does the Government propose to make any assessment of those who are wholly blind or partially blind?

Shri Datar: We are taking necessary steps to look after the interests of the wholly and partially blind.

Dr. N. B. Khare: Including themselves?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: There is no use asking such a general question as that and answering in a general manner like that.

Shri Chattopadhyaya: May I know whether those who are politically blind are covered under the head of wholly blind or partially blind?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The hon. Member may answer it himself.

Shri Matthen: The hon. Minister stated that he is not aware of the amenities granted by the U.K. and the U.S.A. Will he be pleased to make inquiries?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: That was not on amenities, but on the question of any special legislation, set on foot.

Dr. Suresh Chandra: Benefits to the blind.

Shri Matthen: Will the hon. Minister be pleased to make inquiries and try to take the necessary steps?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: These are all suggestions for action.

Shrimati A. Kale: Is the Government aware that in the Bombay Child Welfare Conference, a doctor from Calcutta has given the figure of the blind people to the tune of 20 lakhs? Is it a true figure?

Shri Datar: I might invite the attention of the hon. Member to the fact that in Whittaker's Almanac in 1952 the figure has been given for blind persons as 20 lakhs. That figure is entirely wrong. In view of the fact that according to the 1931 census in India, there were only 6 lakhs of blind people, it is almost impossible to believe that in the course of about 20 years, the number has increased from 6 to 20 lakhs?

Shrimati A. Kale: Would the hon. Minister repudiate that figure?

Shri Datar: The answer given is itself a repudiation.

Shri Namdhari: Does this number include those anti-social elements which are mentally blind?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Order, order. Next question.

SILVER REFINERY

*1105. **Dr. Ram Subhag Singh:** Will the Minister of Finance be pleased to state

(a) when the silver refinery in Calcutta is expected to come into existence; and

(b) whether it is a fact that electrolytic copper will also be produced in that refinery as a by-product?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance (Shri B. R. Bhagat): (a) The silver refinery at Calcutta is expected to start functioning by the end of 1954-55.

(b) Yes, Sir.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: May I know what would be the estimated cost for setting up that refinery?

Shri B. R. Bhagat: It is about Rs. 88 lakhs.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: May I know whether this silver refinery will also be used for extracting silver from quaternary coins?

Shri B. R. Bhagat: It is specially for that purpose.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: What quantity of silver is expected to be extracted from this refinery?

Shri B. R. Bhagat: About 250 million ounces of refined silver.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: If I remember right, in reply to a question by Mr. Tyagi where the refined silver will be kept, Dr. John Mathai replied that it will be kept by the Government. May I know whether that policy is still followed?

Shri B. R. Bhagat: The policy is being followed. But we have an obligation to pay silver to the United States of America, for what we got under the Lend-Lease Agreement during the war, and I think that does not apply to this case.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: How much of silver do we owe to the United States?

Shri B. R. Bhagat: 226 million ounces of silver.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: What part of the liability falls on Pakistan?

Shri B. R. Bhagat: Pakistan's liability is about 53 million ounces.

Sardar Hukam Singh: May I know whether any special officer has been despatched to foreign countries for negotiations on the purchase of the machinery and plant for this refinery?

Shri B. R. Bhagat: Yes.

Sardar Hukam Singh: Which country is it?

Shri B. R. Bhagat: Germany.

Sardar Hukam Singh: Was there any special necessity for sending a special officer to that country, instead of negotiating and finalising the purchase through our delegation which is there?

Shri B. R. Bhagat: The work being of a very technical nature, it was considered desirable to send a special officer for finalising the specification and designs and particularly so when the special process that is being employed here is cheaper and as a result of these negotiations, the cost per pound of silver extracted is very much less than that which operates in England and other countries.

Sardar Hukam Singh: May I know the expenses incurred by our country in sending this special officer?

Shri B. R. Bhagat: I am afraid I cannot give that figure just now.

Shri B. S. Murthy: May I know whether after the negotiations any agreement has been arrived at, and whether any German expert is coming over here to instal the machinery?

Shri B. R. Bhagat: As I said the refinery will start functioning in 1954-55.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: His question was whether it is expected to have any expert from Germany to set it up.