

(b) the total quantity of urea and ammonium phosphate to be imported from Poland under this agreement?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI A. C. GEORGE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Negotiations between the Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation of India Ltd. and Polish Foreign Trade enterprise for procurement of fertilizers against 1974 Trade Protocol are in progress, and a contract has not been concluded as yet.

Burden on Tea Traders

3348. SHRI RAMKANWAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the tea traders have often complained of heavy taxation;

(b) whether as a result of heavy taxation there has not been much incentive in export of tea;

(c) how do prices of Indian tea compare in the world market; and

(d) whether there are any proposals to reduce the burden on tea industry so that exports of tea can be boosted?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI A. C. GEORGE): (a) There have been representations from time to time from the tea industry and trade regarding fiscal levies on tea.

(b) No, Sir. Export duty on tea was abolished with effect from 1st March 1970 with a view to promoting exports. At the same time the rates of zonal excise duty on tea were enhanced and rebate of excise duty on exports varying with prices of tea was introduced.

(c) The average prices of Indian tea, tea of Kenya and Sri Lanka and all teas in London auctions during 1972

and 1973 are as under:—

<i>Figures are in new pence per kg.</i>		
	1972	1973
India . . .	43.70	45.42
Sri Lanka . . .	45.47	45.42
Kenya . . .	43.56	44.32
All teas . . .	42.24	43.29

(d) The question of revising central excise duty on tea in the context of boosting tea export is under constant review of the Government.

Import of Newsprint

3349. SHRI C. JANARDHANAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have banned import of newsprint; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI A. C. GEORGE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Decline in the Export of Coir and Coir Products

3350. SHRI C. JANARDHANAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the export of coir and coir products has declined during the first half of the current year compared to the corresponding period of last year; and

(b) if so, the extent thereof and reasons therefor?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI A. C. GEORGE): (a) and (b) Export

of coir products during April-September, 1973 and corresponding period of 1972 is indicated below:—

April-September, 1972 21,196
tonnes valued at Rs. 6.28 crores.

April-September, 1973 19,151
tonnes valued at Rs. 6.25 crores.

The decline in the export of coir products was mainly due to labour strike which paralysed the Cochin port during the month of June. There has also been decline in the export of coir yarn to U.K. mainly because of stiff competition from the mechanised coir industry recently set up in Sri Lanka.

Special scheme of State Bank of India, Kuttanad, Kerala regarding Financial Assistance to Farmers

3351. SHRI C. JANARDHANAN. Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Bank of India has taken up a special scheme aiming at helping farmers in Kuttanad, Kerala State and

(b) if so, the salient features and objectives of the scheme?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YESHWANTRAO CHAVAN)

(a) Yes Sir.

(b) The State Bank of India has undertaken to finance the Kuttanad Development Project, prepared by the State Government of Kerala, to be implemented through Kerala Land Development Corporation, to overcome the problems of high floods during monsoon and salinity during summer, affecting rice cultivation in the area. The project envisages construction of permanent submersible bunds of about 2000 kms of which about 370 kms involving an outlay of Rs. 375 lakhs are proposed to be constructed in the first phase during 1973-74 and 1974-75. Under the project, besides term loan to be given to the Kerala Land Development Corporation, the farmers will also be grant-

ed assistance by the Bank on the usual terms for meeting their crop loan requirements. The bank propose to open 6 Agricultural Development Branches in Kuttanad area of which two at Edathua and Changanacherry have already been opened. After the implementation of the project, production is expected to increase by 149 lakh tonnes of paddy valued at Rs 10 crores and about Rs. 60 lakhs worth of coconuts every year. The project is also expected to provide employment to about 5000 masons and 10,000 unskilled workers.

Conveyance allowance for Engineers and Doctors

3352 SHRI SHANKAR DEV: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state.

(a) whether motor car conveyance allowances for engineers and doctors have not been revised since 1965 in spite of steep rise in the cost of petrol cars and spares, and

(b) when Government propose to revise the rates to mitigate the hardships of engineers and doctors on field duties?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI K. R. GANE' H) (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The question of revision of rates is under examination.

Motor car Conveyance Allowance

3353 SHRI SHANKAR DEV: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state

(a) whether the motor car conveyance allowances recommended by the Third Pay Commission in their report are purely ad hoc and without any rational basis and

(b) whether in view of the steep increase in petrol prices Government propose to revise the Third Pay Commission's recommendation in this regard?