

Ban on the Import of Caustic Soda and Soda Ash

2519. SHRIMATI BHAVNA KARDAM DAVE : Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Govt. are aware that the required quantity of Salt as raw material is available in plenty in the country for the production of Caustic Soda and Soda Ash;

(b) if so, whether the Govt. propose to impose ban on the imports; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (DR. A.K. PATEL) : (a) Yes, Sir. Adequate quantity of salt as raw material for the production of Caustic Soda and Soda Ash is available in the country.

(b) and (c) Caustic Soda and Soda Ash are basic chemicals finding use in a host of industries. As such, Government do not propose to impose ban on the imports. Also imports of these chemicals are quite small as compared to the domestic production and consumption.

Consumer Movement

2520. SHRI K. C. KONDAIAH :

SHRI R. S. GAVAI :

SHRI K. S. RAO :

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal for amending Consumer Protection Act, 1998 is pending with the Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Consumer awareness has lost its momentum during the last year and the current year;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor;

(e) the steps taken to safeguard the interest of the consumers;

(f) whether any directives has been issued to the State Government in this regard; and

(g) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the State Governments in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF

FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYA PAL SINGH YADAV) : (a) and (b) Some proposals for amending the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 are under consideration of the Government with a view to making the Act more effective and purposetul.

(c) to (e) Consumer awareness is gaining momentum as a result of the continuous efforts by the Government, voluntary consumer organisations, consumer activists and others working in the field of consumer welfare. The Government has taken a number of steps for creating consumer awareness which include, among others, publicity through audio-visual/print media, encouraging voluntary consumer organisations/NGOs to propagate the message of consumer welfare in rural and urban areas as well as to make the consumers aware of their rights and responsibilities.

(f) and (g) The State Governments are advised, from time to time, to strengthen the consumer courts by ensuring that the vacant posts are filled up timely and are provided with adequate infrastructure. They have also been asked to encourage the formulation of voluntary consumer organisations especially in the rural and backward areas and to give publicity to consumer related matters in regional languages etc. The reaction of State Governments has been positive.

Problem at Ports in Handling Imported Urea and Fertilizer

2521. SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL : Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether ports are facing problems in handling of cargo in the import of urea and other fertilizers;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government have any plans to formulate new policies to solve the problems being faced by the Government in the handling of imported fertilizers; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (DR. A. K. PATEL) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The imports of urea are made on Government account. DAP and MOP are the decontrolled fertilizers which are imported. Their imports have been decanalised and are made on private trade account. The choice of ports for urea imports is made looking to the distribution of demand of different States of the country. However, the importers of DAP and MOP choose ports of discharge according to their commercial convenience. When the vessels arrive in a bunch, they have to some-