

USSR decided to opt out of the Calcutta Auctions on 16th and 17th June, 1980.

(c) The absence of Soviet buyers resulted in some losses to the producers as the teas normally purchased by USSR were mostly withdrawn from sale No. 25 and those which were sold fetched lower prices due to lack of competition. The situation, however normalised from sale No. 26 held on 23/24th June 1980 when Soviet buyers resumed buying tea from Calcutta Auctions.

Shifting of Head Office of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant

*600. SHRI P. RAJAGOPAL NAIDU: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the head office of the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant is at Delhi; and

(b) whether there is any proposal to shift it to Visakhapatnam?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE, AND STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b). Visakhapatnam Steel Project (VSP) is a unit of Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) which has its Corporate Office at Delhi. The office of the General Manager, VSP was shifted to Visakhapatnam in September, 1975. Since then the Project Office has been functioning at Visakhapatnam.

Displaced persons around Bokaro Steel Ltd.

*601. SHRI A. K. ROY: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether he is aware of the movement of the persons displaced in the process of making colonies and factories for the Bokaro Steel Plant

around that Plant resulting in several arrests this month;

(b) if so, facts thereof in detail; and

(c) what are the demands of the displaced persons and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c). According to information received from the Bokaro Steel Plant, it appears that 72 persons who were trying to obstruct the construction activities on the road from Sector IV to Sector VIII were arrested by the local authorities between the 18th June and 20th June, 1980. They have all since been released on bail. The situation is reported to be peaceful. It is not known whether the arrested were displaced persons or not. Though no demands have been placed before the Plant Management, it appears that the agitation was launched on the said dates to seek fulfilment of the following main grievances:—

(a) All those displaced families who have not been benefited so far by the existing policy to offer employment opportunity to one person per family, should be offered employment in the company on priority basis.

(b) In the second phase, all such displaced person whose entire village would be demolished, should be given an additional employment per family and accordingly the existing employment policy regarding the displaced persons should be suitably modified.

(c) They claimed that earlier they were informed that their homestead land would not be acquired and even though subsequently their homestead land was acquired but their objections were not referred to appropriate authority. They further

claimed that when their land is being vacated now it should be done on the basis of new land acquisition proceedings and they should be entitled to have adequate employment opportunities.

Efforts are being made to collect more details regarding the grievances of the displaced persons and such further action as may be warranted will be taken.

Tax-free and upward Revision of City Compensatory Allowance

*602. SHRI CHINTAMANI JENA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the rate of City Compensatory Allowance to Central Government employees was fixed more than a decade ago and has remained unchanged and restricted to the maximum extent of Rs. 75.00 p.m.; and

(b) in view of enormous increase in the cost of living in metropolitan cities, whether Government propose to revise it upward and also make it tax-free?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN): (a) and (b). The existing rates of Compensatory (City) Allowance payable to the Central Government employees which are subject to a maximum of Rs. 75 in A class cities, are based on the recommendations of the Third Pay Commission and have been in force since 1st November 1973. A demand made by the Staff Side in the National Council (Joint Consultative Machinery) for upward revision of the rates of the allowance was remitted to a Committee of the Council whose formal report is awaited. No proposal is, however, at present under consideration for making the allowance tax-free.

Cocoa Growers in Kerala

*603. SHRI K. KUNHAMBU:
SHRI P. J. KURIEN:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that due to the import of cocoa on a large scale, cocoa growers in Kerala are facing a crisis;

(b) what is the total demand of cocoa in the country and how much is produced in the country; and

(c) the steps taken to end the crisis?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) to (c). Government has received a representation that cocoa growers in Kerala are facing difficulties in disposing of their produce, and that import of cocoa beans should be stopped. The Government has carefully considered the situation. The total demand for cocoa in the country exceeds indigenous production, and, therefore, it is not possible to ban the import of this commodity. The requirement of the organised sector at the present level of capacity utilisation is estimated to be about 1600 tonnes. In addition, 300 to 400 tonnes is required by the units in the small scale sector. Thus, the total domestic demand is of the order of 2000 tonnes per annum. As against this, the present level of indigenous production is estimated to be about 1,000 tonnes. The gap between the total demand and indigenous production has to be met by imports from other countries.

2. However, Government has decided to regulate imports having regard to domestic production and demand. Import of cocoa beans and cocoa powder has, therefore, been canalised through STC with effect from 16th July, 1980. Henceforth, it will be possible to so regulate imports that the interests of indigenous growers are safeguarded.