

(b) whether Customs are one of such agencies;

(c) if so, under what provision of law Customs have been authorised to censor newspapers or news magazines;

(d) in how many cases, Customs have censored news magazines, etc. during the last one year; and

(e) details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTRY OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI H. K. L. BHAGAT) : (a) No central Government agency has been authorised to censor foreign news magazines.

(b) to (e) Do not arise. However, the Customs authorities can prohibit entry into India of foreign publications in accordance with the provisions contained in Section 11 of the Customs Act, 1962.

Changes in Labour Laws to Promote Industrial Relations

*968. SHRI MOHAMMAD ASRAR AHMAD : Will the Minister of LABOUR AND REHABILITATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is proposed to introduce any changes in the existing labour laws with a view to promote industrial relations;

(b) if so, the details of the same; and

(c) when the changes are proposed to be introduced?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL) : (a) The Government introduced four Industrial Relations Bills in the Parliament in the year 1981-82, namely, the Industrial Disputes (Amendment) Act, 1982. The Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Amendment Act, 1982. The Hospitals and Other Institutions (Settlement of Disputes) Bill, 1982 and the Trade Union (Amendment) Bill, 1982. Out of these, the first two Bills have been passed by the Parliament

whereas the others are likely to be considered in the near future. The Government had, in addition to enacting these laws for improving the industrial relations situation, also called the National Labour Conference in September, 1982. The conference made certain recommendations regarding further amendments in Industrial Relations Laws and also set up a separate committee to go into this question.

(b) Some of the more important recommendations made by the National Labour Conference and its committee relate to the setting up of Industrial Relations Commissions, recognition of a Negotiating Agent for collective bargaining, verification of membership of trade unions, a code of conduct for trade unions and holding of a strike ballot before calling for a strike among other suggestions.

(c) These recommendations are still being considered in consultation with State Governments and other interests concerned.

Demand and Availability of Soda Ash

*969. SHRI BHIKU RAM JAIN : Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILISERS be pleased to lay a statement showing :

(a) what is the demand and availability of soda ash;

(b) the number of units manufacturing soda ash in the country and the production capacity of these units, separately;

(c) the steps proposed to increase the production of soda ash to meet the requirement of households and chemical industry; and

(d) whether a meeting of the manufacturers and consumers of soda ash was held in April this year; if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILISERS (SHRI VASANT SATHE) : (a) The data of indigenous production of soda ash, estimated demand, imports during the years 1978-79, 1979-80, 1980-81, 1981-82 and 1982-83 are furnished below :

(FIGURES IN LAKH TONNES)

Years	Estimated Demand	Production	Imports	Total availability
1978-79	6.00	5.81	0.234	6.044
1979-80	6.20	5.56	1.35	6.91
1980-81	6.30	5.63	1.16	6.79
1981-82	6.80	6.32	0.49	6.81
1982-83	7.30	6.35	(upto Sept. '81) Not available	(upto Sept. '81) Not available

Note :- Import Statistics are compiled and published by the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics, Calcutta. There is usually a time lag in compilation and publication of data. Import statistics for the period subsequent to September, 1981 are not yet ready. Once the data are compiled, they would be published in the Monthly

Statistics of Foreign Trade of India (Vol. II) copies of which would be available in the Parliament Library.

(b) There are five companies engaged in the manufacture of soda ash. The details of installed capacity of each company are indicated below :

Name of the Company	Annual installed capacity (in tonnes)
1. M/s Tata Chemicals Limited, Mithapur, Gujarat	3,60,000
2. M/s Saurashtra Chemicals, Porbandar, Gujarat	2,30,000
3. M/s Dhrangadhra Chemical Works, Dhrangadhra, Gujarat	65,000
4. M/s Hari Fertilizers Limited, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh	39,600
5. M/s Tuticorin Alkali Chemicals and Fertilizers Limited, Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu	66,000
	Total : 7,60,600

(c) Additional capacity of 10.40 lakh tonnes has been approved by the Government to augment indigenous capacity. Production of the existing units is being monitored to ensure optimum utilisation of the installed capacity.

(d) The Government had recently convened a joint meeting of indigenous soda ash

manufacturers and representatives of various soda ash consumers interests to discuss various issues regarding production, distribution, pricing and import of soda ash. It is proposed to set up a High Powered Committee under the Chairmanship of the Minister of State of Chemicals and Fertilizers to examine the various suggestions made by the participants with a view to taking necessary action.