

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : In the statement it is stated that one of the measures taken to maximise exports is to increase the area under the cultivation of raw jute. May I know from the Minister whether recently the Government has decided to ask the raw jute cultivators to increase their cultivation by about 25 per cent and, if so, in view of the fact that the anticipated jute crop this year is going to be a very good one, what measures will the government take to guard against a glut of raw jute which may lead to a serious fall in prices and thereby harm the interests of the cultivators.

SHRI L. N. MISHRA : Till now we have experienced shortage of jute. The trends of the world jute market show that there would not be a glut of jute in the world market. In fact, we will have a bigger demand from the market. We will see to it that there is no glut and the growers do not suffer. As the hon. Member knows, we have set up the Jute Corporation and it will be the main function of the Jute Corporation to make purchase of jute. So, whenever there is any fall in price of jute the Corporation will enter the market and make purchases from the jute growers.

Drop in Indian Share of Tea Trade in British Market

*365. **SHRI SAROJ MUKHERJEE :** Will the Minister of FOREIGN TRADE be pleased to state :

(a) the causes for a drop of 16 per cent Indian share of tea trade in the British market in the past 30 years ;

(b) whether African share of tea has increased from 3.8 to 21.2 per cent under similar conditions ; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE (SHRI A. C. GEORGE) : (a) to (c). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) The decline in India's share of tea in the British market is due to the gradual

inroads made by Ceylon, Africa and other teas.

(b) The share of African teas in the British market has gone up from 4.6% in 1940 to 21.3% in 1970.

(c) (i) Emergence of African countries as new tea producing countries and their steady increase in production with a much lower cost of production compared to India ;

(ii) African tea is cheaper than Indian Tea.

(iii) Because of low internal consumption in East African countries, they are exporting as much as they can irrespective of any price consideration. On the other hand high internal consumption in India which accounts for 50% of the total crop makes Indian tea dearer.

(iv) The seasonal pattern of production in India as against year round production in East Africa together with advantages of a shorter lead.

SHRI SAROJ MUKHERJEE : The hon. Minister has evaded the real question. He has accepted that India's share of tea in the British market has declined but he has not mentioned the percentage. My question was whether there is a drop of 16 per cent in the share of Indian tea in the British market in the past few years and he has evaded the question by simply saying that there is a decline. Nor has he mentioned in his reply what steps he is going to take to rectify the position. He has simply referred to the inroads made by Ceylon, African and other teas. Our tea used to have a very good market in the world and we used to earn quite a big amount of foreign exchange which we badly need for building up our economy. Now this Ministry is not doing what it should do to compete with other countries in the world tea market. He has not said anything about them.

MR. SPEAKER : Let him come to the question.

SHRI SAROJ MUKHERJEE : Why is it that the Ministry has not taken any measures to compete with the other countries in the world tea market so that the decline in our share can be checked? It is not as if remedies are not there to this situation. The remedies are there but the Government have not taken them. Will the Minister tell us what he has done to increase the production of tea in our country? He has mentioned here that internal consumption of tea has increased. It is good. But what steps has he taken to increase production of tea for export?

SHRI A. C. GEORGE : The question is specifically about the export to UK. We have said that there is keep competition from African tea where the cost of production is low and the internal consumption is also low: so, they are in a better position to export. They only method to counter this is to reduce the cost of our tea production and to make promotional programmes. We are making real headway in our promotional programmes and, at the same time, to reduce the cost of production we are allowing liberal grants for replantation and improved methods of production.

SHRI SAROJ MUKHERJEE : My second question is with regard to the measures for competing in world market. Yesterday he said that in the export of textiles we are being handicapped because of the British moves. Here again, today in tea we are finding that because of British moves our export of tea is also declining. People will think that this Ministry has taken up the job of liquidating foreign trade. We need foreign exchange so much and in textiles, tea, everything, our exports are declining. What is the Ministry doing to compete with other countries? Will the Minister tell us what measures have been taken regarding it?

THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN TRADE (SHRI L. N. MISHRA) : The performance of the Foreign Trade Ministry, if you will permit me to say, this year has been perhaps a record one. We had increased our exports more than our target; that is, instead of 7 per cent we reached

8½ per cent. Therefore, it is not fair to say that we are liquidating foreign trade.

About tea, the hon. Member may care to go through the papers if he has any. Year before last was a very bad year for tea. Last year was a much better year. As you know, there is an organisation, called the FAO, which looks into world contracts of tea. Of course, we have lost some percentage of the market in the UK. But, as my colleague pointed out, this is mainly because of cheaper variety of tea coming from African countries and also from Ceylon. But the export of tea from our country this year has been better. There is every reason to say that our performance has been satisfactory.

SHRI S. M. KRISHNA : United Kingdom is a small country. So, may I suggest to the Government that if they are contemplating to explore the possibilities of exporting our tea to the other countries, probably there would be lesser competition from African and other tea producing nations? I would like to know if the Government have any specific programme to explore the possibilities of exporting tea to countries other than the United Kingdom.

SHRI L. N. MISHRA : Today we export a good quantity of tea to USA. Recently, in the new trade pact we have a provision for exporting tea to USSR. We are exporting tea to a number of countries. UK is one of the buyers—of course, it is the main buyer—of our tea.

MR. SPEAKER : The question relates to the British market only.

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH : In view of the fact that the African countries as well as Ceylon are having keen competition with our country, may I know whether Government can initiate discussions with these countries to have a consortium of tea producing countries so that they may not cut at each other and also hit the trade?

MR. SPEAKER : This is too farfetched a question.

SHRI PILOO MODY : They want to form cartels, a monopoly.

SHRI L. N. MISHRA : There is a committee set up by the FAO which

regularises export and also the quantity of export from each country. Recently, we had a meeting of this committee in India and some decisions have been taken. As you know, two years back a decision was taken to withdraw 90 million lbs. of tea in the world market because there was a glut in the market of tea. This year, I say, the allotment is not unfavourable to us.

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी : क्या यह सच है कि ब्रिटेन के बाजार में चाय का सारा व्यापार मुट्ठी भर लोगों के हाथ में केन्द्रित है और उस की नीलामी इस ढंग से की जाती है कि भारत को उस का उचित हिस्सा नहीं मिलता ? क्या मंत्रालय ने इस दृष्टिकोण पर भी विचार किया है ?

श्री एल. एन. मिश्र : यह बात सही है और इसकी कहानी 110 वर्ष पुरानी है। बिलायत के कुछ लोगों के हाथ में यह चीज दे दी गई थी। हाल ही में हम लोगों ने यह निर्णय किया है कि चाय की पैकेजिंग हम करेंगे। आप जानते हैं कि यहाँ से बल्क में चाय भेजी जाती है। लन्दन में उन के पैकेट बना कर बेचे जाते हैं। इस से हमें बहुत नुकसान होता है हम ने एक कारपोरेशन बनाने का विचार किया है और यह पैकेजिंग हम अपने यहाँ करेंगे। इस से बिलायत के बाजार में जिन लोगों के हाथ में यह काम है उन की मोनोपोली नहीं रहेगी।

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : When are you going to do it ? For the last two years we are hearing it.

SHRI L. N. MISHRA : I have not been here for two years.

SHRI PRABODH CHANDRA : Is the Minister aware of the fact that there have been consistent complaints about the quality of tea that has been exported ?

SHRI L. N. MISHRA : I have not received any complaint as regards the quality. As the hon. Member knows, we have pre-shipment inspection and we have strengthened that organisation. So far as

the quality of our tea is concerned, we have not received any complaint from the UK.

Declaration of Birth Anniversary of Dr. Ambedkar as Public Holiday

* 368. **SHRI S. M. BANERJEE :** Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether several organisations in the country have demanded public holiday on the birth Anniversary of Late Dr. B. R. Ambedkar ; and

(b) if so, the reasons for not declaring this as a public holiday ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA) : (a) and (b). The period of our struggle for national revival and freedom produced men and women of eminence in diverse fields of politics, art, literature, religion, etc. Dr. B R Ambedkar was one of them. Government feel that a more creative and constructive way of honouring the memory of these great men and women should be found rather than declaring public holidays. In our country the number of such holidays is already large, even though, in pursuance of the recommendations of the Second Pay Commission, the number of public holidays was reduced from 23 to 16 in 1960. Government also feel that when our country ought to make every effort to develop and to face the present difficulties, increasing public holidays would not be the best way of honouring the great men of the past or of promoting national interests.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE : Before I put my question I may make it clear that my questions are not invariably meant for Central Government employees. Always the hon. Minister gets the idea that I ask only about Central Government employees. I may clarify that it should cover all employees, whether working in the public sector or in the private sector. The Pay Commission does not apply to the private sector. That should be clear.

Now I wish to know from the hon. Minister whether it is a fact that for the last so many years two demands have been made by the Republican Party and those