

(ii) The Communications Ministry and the Central Government do not attach any value to this Committee and do not take any notice of the Committee's recommendations or suggestions;

(c) The memorandum has been received recently. Due note would be taken of the points made in the memorandum. Re-constitution of the Telephone Advisory Committee for Calcutta Telephone District is under examination and the same would be constituted in due course.

Sub-committees on soda ash

677. SHRI NEPALDEV BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state;

(a) whether it is a fact that a High Powered Committee on Soda Ash, headed by Shri Rama Chandra Rath, Minister of State for Chemicals, at its meeting held on 19th July, 1983 decided to form two Sub-Committees;

(b) whether the two Sub-Committees have been formed;

(c) if not, what is the reason therefor;

(d) whether it is also a fact that Consumer Associations have represented to Government repeatedly regarding the delay in forming the two Sub-Committees; and

(e) if so, what action has been taken on these representations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI R. C. RATH): (a) to (e) The All India Silicate Manufacturers' Association had represented for early formation of the two Sub-Committees. The two Sub-Committees of the High Powered Committee on Soda Ash have since been constituted on 1st March, 1984 after due consideration with regard to the composition and terms of reference

High Power Committee on Soda Ash

678. SHRI NEPALDEV BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state;

(a) whether it is a fact that a High Powered Committee on Soda Ash headed by Shri Rama Chandra Rath, Minister of State for Chemicals has been appointed;

(b) whether it is a fact that this Committee will go into all aspects of soda ash including production, distribution, pricing, import policy, import duty etc.;

(c) whether it is a fact that when Consumer Associations represented to Government for reduction of price/import duty of soda ash, they were informed that such questions will be examined by the High Powered Committee;

(d) whether it is also a fact that producers of soda ash have increased the price; and

(e) if so, why Government have not advised the producers to maintain status quo on prices pending consideration of the whole issue by the High Powered Committee?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI R. C. RATH):

(a) to (c) Yes, Sir.

(d) and (e) At present, there is no statutory control on the price of Soda Ash. However, the prices of the producers are being informally monitored. Recently when the manufacturers informed about the increase in prices in the wake of factors like, increase in the price of coal, railway freight, cost of bagging, the matter was reviewed to assess primarily whether the increase in price was commensurate with the increase in prices of these factors. The producers have also been asked to re-examine whether the quantum of increase was justified.