

(a) whether it is a fact that severe artificial shortage of soda ash existed from early 1978 till early 1981;

(b) what were the total opening stocks of soda ash of the four indigenous units for the years 1978 to 1982 as also figures of yearly production, imports, projected demand, excess availability over demand, year-wise;

(c) whether it is a fact that the availability of soda ash eased from early 1981 through continued imports;

(d) whether it is also a fact that indigenous manufacturers increased their prices of soda ash from Rs. 900/- to Rs. 2,250/- per tonne through frequent price hikes during the period from March, 1979 to July, 1980; and

(e) if so, what are the details of price hikes by each manufacture?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAMA CHANDRA RATH): (a) Soda Ash' was in short supply since early 1978. However, its availability has been comfortable since latter half of 1980, together from indigenous production and imports through Open General Licence.

(b) The opening stocks of soda ash as on 1.1.1978, 1.1.1979, 1.1.1980, 1.1.1981 and 1.1.1982 of the four indigenous manufacturers are indicated in the Statement. See Appendix CXXIV Annexure [No. 35]. The data of indigenous production of soda 1978-79, 1979-80, 1980-81 and 1981-82, and its estimated demand for the years data of imports for the years 1978-79, 1979-80 and 1980-81 (upto January 1981) and the total availability of Soda Ash during these years, are furnished in the Statements. [See Appendix CXXIV, Annexure No. 36.] Import statistics for the period subsequent to January 1981 are not yet ready. The 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 these data. Once the data are compiled, they would be published in the Monthly Statistics of the

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Foreign Trade of India, Volume-II, the copies of which would be available in the Parliament Library.

(c) Import of Soda Ash was allowed under Open General Licence (OGL) with effect from 14.1.1979 and this measure contributed to the comfortable indigenous availability of soda ash.

(d) and (e). The ex-works prices excluding sales tax of Soda Ash manufactured by M/s. Tata Chemicals Limited, M/s. Saurashtra Chemicals and M/s. Dhran gadhra Chemical Works during the period from 1.3.1979 to 31.7.1980 are furnished in the Statement. The basic ex-works prices of soda ash of M/s. Hari Fertilizers (formerly M/s. New Central Jute Mills) excluding excise duty, sales tax, packing/branding charges, cost of bags etc. during the period 1.3.1979 to 31.7.1980 are also furnished in the Statement. [See Appendix CXXIV, Annexure No. 37].

Price of Soda Ash Imported by CPC

485. DR. BHAI MAHAVIR:

SHRI JAGANNATHRAO JOSHI:

SHRI SHRIDHAR WASUDEO DHABE;

SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) the date from which price of soda ash imported by CPC has been lowered to Rs. 1800/- per tonne ex-Kandla;

(b) the need of calling for tenders by advertisements when CPC did not find it feasible to reduce the price of Rs. 2250/-per tonne ex-Kandla as was conveyed to All India Silicate Manufacturers Association by CPC in April, 1982;

(c) the date when Government concluded that soda ash was not saleable at Rs 2250/-per tonne ex-Kandla;

(d) whether it is also a fact that over 50 per cent of stock value of Rs. 1.86 crore, has been eroded by godown rent, interest, insurance and administrative charges;

(e) whether Government have pinpointed the responsibility of this bungling; and

ff) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAMA CHANDRA RATH): (a) 28th June/1982.

(b) The All India Silicate Manufacturers' Association (AISMA) had" offered to fake the stock from State Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals Corporation of India (now Chemical Division of State Trading Corporation of India) but the prices and other terms and conditions offered by AISMA were not acceptable to STC. The revised price was communicated to the STC by the Government on 28th June, 1982. The STC notified tenders in the second week of July, 1982.

(c) 28th June, 1982.

(d) Upto March, 1982 an expenditure of Rs. 51.31 lakh was incurred on godown rent, interest, insurance and administrative expenses.

(e) and (f). The decision to import soda ash through STC was taken with a view to augmenting the availability of soda ash.

Creation of artificial scarcity of soda ash

, 486. DR. BHAI MAHAVIR:

SHRI SHRIDHAR WASUDEO DHABE:

SHRI LAKHAN SINGH:

SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY;

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news item published in the Telegraph, Calcutta, dated the 2nd September, 1982 to the effect that Tata Chemicals had halved its output of soda ash;

- (b) if so, what are the details in this regard;

(c) whether it is not an attempt to bring about an artificial scarcity of the article; and

(d) whether Government have advised producers to reduce their prices to March, 1979 level and produce to full capacity so that imports are rendered unnecessary?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAMA CHANDRA RATH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The total production of Soda Ash by M/s. Tata Chemicals Limited during the period from January to August, 1982 was 2,41,557 tonnes as against 2,58,726 tonnes in the corresponding period of 1981. The production of the period from January to August, 1982 is 17,169 tonnes less than that of the corresponding period of 1981.

(e) This Ministry has not received any complaint/report about shortage of soda ash. There is no scarcity of soda ash due to both indigenous production and its import under Open General Licence.

"(d) No, Sir.

Production of household remedies by foreign companies

487. DR. JOSEPH LEON D'SOUZA: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 2524 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 9th August, 1982 and state:

(a) what steps have been taken to restrict the foreign companies' production for household remedies upto the licensed capacities and what is the connection between Regularisation and non-implementation of the decision of the New Drug Policy approved by Government;

(b) whether there is a prohibition on expansion or regularisation of capacities of household remedies in New Drug Policy for foreign companies; and

(c) if so, what action has been taken to implement the decision of Government?