

Committee has done some good work, though, of course, it has not been able to complete the work.

AN HON. MEMBER: It has taken three years.

SHRI SHIV SHANKAR.- I am sorry for it. Still we have got to sometimes give the necessary time. May I say this much? In fact, the Bhagwati Committee had observed like this:

“इसके पूर्व की स्थाई रूप से किसी अन्तिम निष्कर्ष पर पहुँचा जा सके, अनेक प्रकार के अध्ययन करने होंगे। समुचित चित्र तैयार करने से पूर्व ज्ञान की अनेक शाखाओं से समन्वय स्थापित करना होगा।”

It is because of certain observations that were made by the Bhagwati Committee that the matter had to be referred to the Inter-departmental Committee and I am quite confident, Sir., that the matter would be resolved at the earliest. I am after it and my officers have also taken it seriously. Therefore, I am confident that this matter can be resolved at the earliest.

MR. CHAIRMAN: After this, there is very little to ask, really speaking. Otherwise this will go on. We will pass on to the next question. I disallow any further questions. (Interruptions) I am sorry. This has been discussed thread-bare. Questions have been asked. There has been enough material. The assurance is that the Government is seized of the matter and is going to proceed.

SHRI MANUBHAI PATEL: I have a question regarding the fundamental basis of the philosophy they are following.

MR. CHAIRMAN: At some other time. We will now go on to the third question. I have allowed enough supplementary on this. Question No. 3.

Production of Sulphuric Acid by M/S. Hindustan Copper Limited, Khetri

*3. SHRIMATI PRATIMA BOSE:

SHRIMATI LEELA DAMODARA MENON:†

Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Hindustan Copper Limited, Khetri (Rajasthan) has started commercial production of Sulphuric Acid as a basic industrial raw-material; if so, what is its installed capacity and actual production;

(b) what are the norms and conditions laid down by Hindustan Copper Limited for distribution/market ing of Sulphuric Acid;

(c) whether it is also a fact that Hindustan Copper Limited are supplying the material to the Co-operative Sector for fair distribution and to curb spurt in prices of essential raw materials;

(d) if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(e) if the answer to part (c) above be in the negative, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE, STEEL AND MINES AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (e) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) The Sulphuric Acid Plant at the Khetri Copper Complex (Rajasthan) of Hindustan Copper Limited, has been in operation since October, 1975, utilising the sulphur gas arising in copper production. Installed

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shrimati Leela Damodara Menon.

capacity of the plant is 1,82,000 tonnes per annum. The Sulphuric acid produced at Khetri is meant for captive use for production of single superphosphate and triple superphosphate. Sales of sulphuric acid from Khetri are made only during short periods when the fertilizer plant is not in operation, due to break-down/maintenance shut-down etc., and only that quantity is sold which is surplus to the storage capacity at the project. Actual production and sales of sulphuric acid during the last two years and current year have been as follows:—

| (Unit : Tonnes) | | | |
|---------------------------|------------|-------|--|
| Year | Production | Sales | |
| 1977-78 | 21,345 | 4,144 | |
| 1978-79 | 18,918 | Nil | |
| 1979-80 Up to Dec. 79) | 11,422 | 1,923 | |

(b) to (e) Since sale of sulphuric acid produced at Khetri is only that quantity which is rendered surplus due to shut-down of fertilizer plant, the quantity available for sale and the periods of availability are both uncertain. As such, whenever surplus acid is available at Khetri, it is sold in the northern region after inviting offers through advertisement in newspapers. During 1978-79 and in 1979-80 upto October, 1979, there was no sale. Sales were effected in November, 1979 and December, 1979. In response to the Press Notification issued by Hindustan Copper Limited in November, 1979, no request for purchase of acid was received by the company from any unit belonging to co-operative sector. No long-term commitments are entered into by the company for sale of the acid from Khetri with any category of buyers including those in the co-operative sector. However, a request was received from a firm in co-operative sector towards end of December, 1979 for advising Hindustan Copper Limited

to supply 200 tonnes of sulphuric acid per month from Khetri. This has been referred to Hindustan Copper Limited recently.

SHRIMATI LEELA DAMODARA MENON: Sir, from the statement do I understand that the Khetri plant has a capacity of 1,82,000 tonnes per annum and that the total production is only less than 20,000 tonnes in the whole country. Is there under-utilisation of the plant?..

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Sir, it is not the production of the whole country; it is production in relation to that particular plant. So far as capacity utilisation is concerned, if the hon. Member goes through the text of the statement, she will find that whatever sulphuric acid is produced at the Khetri plant it is mainly for their captive utilisation for producing a particular type of fertiliser there. Therefore, whatever is available for them which they cannot utilise when the fertiliser plant is not in operation either for maintenance or shut-down for a limited period whatever is available to them and which they cannot keep in storage, they sell it in the market. So far as capacity utilisation is concerned, there has been under-utilisation of capacity mainly because of certain technical reasons and those technical reasons are now taken care of and as a result of that, Sir, the production has started improving. And I will give certain figures for the consideration of the hon. lady Member. For instance in April, 1979 the production was of the order of 1,972 tonnes but in December, 1979 the production has gone up to 3,441 tonnes.

SHRIMATI LEELA DAMODARA MENON: There is under-utilisation of the plant, as he has said. I would like to know whether whatever is the excess from the Khetri plant is distributed and sold in the northern region only. I would also like to know whether the Government is aware that with regard to our ferti-

User plants, not only with regard to sulphuric acid but with regard to other items also, in the matter of distribution programmes, the public sector is reluctant to utilise co-operatives and they would rather do it through individual distributor who are powerful and whose way of selling them in the blackmarket has been a scandal in the country.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is about co-operative_s and not individuals.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Sir, so far as the question of co-operatives is concerned, in the main text of my reply I have already indicated that when the particular company issued an advertisement in the newspapers, after November there was no response from the co-operative sector. Only one co-operative unit, that is, Bharat Co-operative, New Delhi, wanted to have a quantum of 200 tonnes, and that too they made an appeal to the Government and we have sent it to the concerned authority and it is under their consideration. So far as distribution is concerned, we provide to these customers, actual users. In the first category come public sector undertakings and Government departments. They use it for their own purposes. Then, actual users_B who are DGTD registered firms. Actual users-cum-trader_A come within the third category. So far as co-operatives are concerned, I have already stated that they can also come in response to the advertisements when these are issued.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think that is quite enough.

SHRI R. R. MORARKA: No, Sir. I want to put a question.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: AH right. One question more.

SHRI R. R. MORARKA: Sir, is it not a fact that out of the production in this plant, at Khetri, as well as the stores, items are stolen and pilfered in conspiracy with the high-ups there and that is the main reason why low production is shown and this project incurs heavy losses? Is it also not a fact that recently the General Manager of this plant has been arrested by the CBI there?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Sir, I have no such information. The hon. Member has provided me with some information.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You look into it. *(Interruptions)*. We had a lot of discussion and there is a lot to get through.

SHRI DHARAMCHAND JAIN: Sir, when Mr. Morarka wanted to ask a question, you allowed him. I was the first man wanting to ask a question. If you allow this sort of discrimination, it is not proper. I am afraid this is not the way you are going to protect the Members.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There is no subject on which I cannot ask a hundred questions, if I were sitting with you. But a hundred questions need not be asked. I will have to use a little discretion in the matter because I must have the matter cleared and not just have it debated upon.

Please go on with Question No. 4.

Preference to persons from a particular community is filling the vacancies of Judges in the High Courts and the Supreme Court

♦4 SHRI BISHAMBHAR NATH PANDE; Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state;

(a) whether it is a fact that several vacancies of Judges in the various High Courts and the Supreme Court were filled during 1978-79;