

(b) whether Government have taken steps for the withdrawal of the surcharge. if so, what is the reaction of each shipping conference line thereto; and

(c) what is the annual saving that is likely to accrue to India by way of withdrawal of this surcharge?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI H. M. TRIVEDI): (a) and (b) Suez Canal has not yet been opened for maritime navigation. No clear indication is also available as to when and under what restrictions the canal would be opened.

No formal proposal has been received from any Conference regarding continuance of the surcharge after the Suez Canal is opened to shipping. However, the India-Pakistan-Bengladesh Conference, operating in the India-U.K.-Continent trade, indicated during discussions with the All India Shippers' Council that if the Conference vessels start using the Suez Canal, the Suez Canal Surcharge would require reconsideration.

(c) If the Suez Canal is reopened, there would be saving in voyage time for ships operating between India and the U.K./Continental Ports. However, no precise studies regarding the financial benefits, if any, are available.

Cashew factories in the country

746. SHRIMATI SUMITRA G. KULKARNI:

DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN.

SHRI MULKA GOVINDA REDDY:

SHRI YOGENDRA SHARMA:

SHRI KRISHAN KANT:

SHRI NAGESHWAR PRASAD SHAHI:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of cashew factories in the country at present;

(b) what is the total number of persons employed;

(c) what is the number of women labour employed and their ratio vis-a-vis male labour; and

(d) what wages are paid to them?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA): (a) and (b) According to the statistics collected by the Director, Labour Bureau, Simla, there were 431 cashew working factories registered under the Factories Act, 1948 during the year 1972 and estimated average daily employment in such factories was 1,38,985.

(c) According to the statistics collected by Director, Labour Bureau, Simla, women constituted about 94 per cent of total employment

(d) According to the statistics of earnings collected by Director, Labour Bureau, Simla, the per capita daily earnings of cashew factory workers in 1971 was Rs. 245.

The Governments of Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu have fixed minimum rates of wages for workers in the Cashew industry in their respective States under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948.

J. K. Nagar Aluminium Corporation

747. SHRI SARDAR AMJAD ALI: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that West Bengal Government have recommended to the Central Government for the take-over of J. K. Nagar Aluminium Corporation; and

(b) if so, what steps Government have taken in this regard?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI SUKHDEV PRASAD). (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) An Investigating Body under Section 15 of the Industries (Development and Regulation) Act, 1951, was appointed in May 1974, to enquire into the affairs of the company which has been under lock-out since September 1973. The report of the Investigating Body is under consideration of Government.

Central Road Transport Corporation

748. SHRI SARDAR AMJAD ALI: Will the Minister of SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any decision to close down the Central Road Transport Corporation;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor;

(c) if the reply to part (a) above be in the negative, whether any financial aid is proposed to be given to the organisation for the current year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI H. M. TRIVEDI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Short-term loans amounting to Rs. 14 lakhs have been given to the Central Road Transport Corporation Ltd. during the current financial year for ways and means support.

Change in service records

749. DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN:

SHRI P. K. KUNJACHEN:

SHRI V. V. SWAMINATHAN:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the date of birth of a Major General in his Official records has been changed under the directive of Army Headquarters; and

(b) if so, what effect the change had in his service career and to those immediately junior and senior to him?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SARDAR SWARAN SINGH): (a) The error in the recording of date of birth of an Officer of Major General rank has been rectified according to law & procedure.

(b) The only foreseeable effect of the decision on the service career of the officer is that he becomes due for retirement correspondingly earlier. As far as can be foreseen, the officers immediately junior and senior to him will not be affected by this decision.

Relations with Chile

750. SHRI KALYAN ROY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of India have lodged any protest with the Government of Chile against repression and deprivation of human rights in that country;

(b) if so, what is the reaction of the Government of Chile thereto;

(c) whether the Government of India propose to sever diplomatic relations with that country; and

(d) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI BIPINPAL DAS): (a) and (b) Government of India have made known its position on this question at the United Nations and other international forums and the Government of Chile are aware of it.

(c) and (d) At present the Government of India have *defacto* relations with Chile. Government do not propose to change the existing status at this stage.

751. [Transferred to the 6th March, 1975.]

Khetri Copper Project

752. SHRIMATI SAVITA BEHEN: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to refer to the answer to Starred Question 516 given in the Rajya