

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: What was the reason for Government permitting the installation of these mills which could not be run on Indian cotton and which would, consequently! be a constant drain on our foreign exchange resources?

SHRI MANUBHAI SHAH: In this context, the House is fully aware that till 1957, the question of foreign exchange was not so acute. On the contrary, industrialisation was being pushed up and a lot of foreign exchange was being consumed,

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: May I know if these mills which consume foreign cotton are in a position to export some of their products and, if so, how much is exported?

SHRI MANUBHAI SHAH: Sir, it is very difficult to say that any export of garments or cloth is either hundred per cent, made of foreign or Indian cotton. All are admixtures and blended cloth and as against 5,000 million yards we are exporting about 537 million yards.

SHRI NIREN GHOSH: May I know what steps Government have taken to produce in the country cotton of the fibre or staple that is required so as to obviate the necessity of spending foreign exchange in importing cotton from abroad?

SHRI MANUBHAI SHAH: Over the last decade more than 400,000 bales are being produced of C02 Cambodia and the superior Vijay cotton.

SHRI BAIRAGI DWIBEDY: May I know the total number of mills being run by the State Governments and may I also know, if such a thing is allowed, whether it is an infringement of the Government's policy or not?

SHRI MANUBHAI SHAH: It does not arise out of this question. Only those mills which are closing down due to some reasons are taken over by the State Governments.

SHRI N. SRI RAMA REDDY: I would like to know whether, on account of the present stringent situation of foreign exchange, it is possible for these mills that are intended to manufacture cotton fabrics from imported cotton to be converted into mills that could manufacture cloth from out of the indigenous cotton?

SHRI MANUBHAI SHAH: That is a pertinent question because it is really the overall shortage of cotton itself that matters. The annual requirements of cotton for all the Indian mills for all the three shift workings comes to about 60 lakh bales and we do not produce more than 50 to 52 lakh bales. In any case, some cotton has to be imported to keep the industry going.

HIGH PRICE OF MEDICINES

*215. SHRI ANSARUDDIN AHMAD: Will the Minister of HEALTH be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that prices of drugs and medicines which are constantly required for treatment of patients suffering from various diseases, especially those of the imported varieties, have gone very high; and

(b) if so, what are the reasons for this rise?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH (DR. D. S. RAJU) :

(a) Government has no information to this effect.

(b) Does not arise.

SHRI ANSARUDDIN AHMAD: Apart from the rise in prices of medicines all round, there has been a very great rise in the price of medicines imported from abroad and this is of the order of thirty per cent, in the course of the year. What are the reasons for this high rise in prices of imported medicines? Are black-marketeers at work?

DR. D. S. RAJU: The import of drugs has been very much reduced; it is only a very small percentage of the total quantity of drugs required that is imported from outside. Perhaps, the hon. Member is referring to raw materials. In certain places, the price of raw materials has gone up and now a Technical Committee has been formed with representatives of the concerned Ministries to go into the question of production, supply and control of these raw materials so that the price of drugs will not go up hereafter.

SHRI FARIDUL HAQ ANSARI: The hon. Minister said just now, in reply to the question, that no information was available so far as part (a) was concerned. After this question was put, why was the Ministry not taken the trouble to find out the reality that exists in the city of Delhi itself about it?

DR. SUSHILA NAYAR: The Ministry has taken the trouble of enquiring from the various State Governments and by and large the price, of medicines have been fairly stable. There are a few firms in Maharashtra which are not registered firms under the Industries (Regulation and Development) Act which have said that there has been an abnormal rise in the price of raw materials necessitating an increase in the price of medicines manufactured by them. The Drug Controller of Maharashtra has made a proposal that we should make adequate arrangements for the distribution of raw materials to these firms which are not given licences to import for themselves. The whole matter is being examined by the appropriate authorities.

SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA: May I know whether the Drug Controller fixes the prices of various drugs and medicines from time to time and whether there is any machinery to see that the drugs and medicines are sold at the prices fixed by the Drug Controller?

DR. SUSHILA NAYAR: Well, Sir, it is not the Drugs Controller who fixes the price but the Commerce and Industry Ministry has been requested to do the cost accounting and fix the prices of the drugs that are being produced within the Country. Sir, as for the enforcement of the prices so fixed, I might inform the hon. Member that orders have been issued under the Defence of India regulations requiring all sellers of medicines to display the price list to the consumers so that undue exploitation of the consumer can be checked.

LIFE INSURANCE CORPORATION LOAN DUE FROM ANANDA BAZAR PATRIKA

*216. SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the total amount of loan still due to the Life Insurance Corporation from the Ananda Bazar Patrika Limited, Calcutta;

(b) the amount which was recovered from the said concern during the years 1961 and 1962; and

(c) whether the agreement in this connection between the Life Insurance Corporation and the Ananda Bazar Patrika has been modified in any manner?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI B. R. BHAGAT): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House as early as possible.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I am rather surprised. Some time back when the question came up the hon. Minister gave an answer as to how much had been collected. Some 3 years ago they said more would be collected. Now, we are told that the information is being collected. May I know the total amount of loan that was given to the 'Ananda Bazar Patrika' and the amount so far collected?