

SHRI MANUBHAI SHAH: It is regarding the price per ton . . .

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: that it will not be in the public interest commercially to give it . . .

SHRI MANUBHAI SHAH: We do not want to reveal it to the whole world and we do not want to announce what are our costs and what are our recoveries.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: The hon. Minister need not give the costings, if he likes not-to, but why should there be hesitation in giving the information with regard to the prices they are charging?

SHRI MANUBHAI SHAH: It is because, Sir, price also is a matter of secrecy in trade; different buyers and different considerations are all there and it is not worth while or necessary to disclose them.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Therefore I take it that in this matter of settling prices it depends upon the negotiations that go between the various parties and that prices may change from party to party also.

SHRI MANUBHAI SHAH: It depends; if a big order of 10 million tons is available, then naturally the seller would tend to have a different price than in the case of a small spot order of 20,000 tons. I hope the hon. Member agrees with that.

FOOD POISONING IN THE COUNTRY

•323. SHRI S. C. KARAYALAR: Will the Minister of HEALTH be pleased to state:

(a) whether cases of food poisoning have been on the increase in the country;

(b) if so, the reason thereof; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken in the matter?

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

(a) to (c) There is no statistical information available to show that Food Poisoning cases have been on the increase in the country. Government propose to take suitable legislative and other measures to prevent the occurrence of food poisoning.

SHRI S. C. KARAYALAR: Are the cases, which have come to the notice of the Government, from hotels and restaurants, or from other private places also say, from private boarding houses also?

DR. D. S. RAJU: Not so much from private places or from private boarding houses, but we had some cases reported from Bengal and Bombay and Assam, but they are mostly cases of food contaminated by insecticides. Hon. Members are perhaps aware that last year about 450 of these cases of food poisoning by contamination with insecticides have occurred in Malda and Dinajpur districts of Bengal and in Darrang district of Assam also, and also a few cases in Bombay and Maharashtra. They are being investigated; they have been investigated actually . . .

SHRI S. C. KARAYALAR: Are these cases of poisoning due to actual adulteration by the hotel managements, or are they due to poisoning materials introduced from outside?

DR. SUSHILA NAYAR: Sir, occasionally cases of food poisoning have taken place due to bad food in the hotels, but large numbers of cases in recent years have been due to contamination of foodstuffs with insecticides, presumably during their transport in ships or boats, when both insecticides and food were being transported in the same carrier.

SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA: May I know, Sir, what steps, if any, have been taken by the Central Government to advise the States and other

authorities concerned to see that foodstuffs and insecticides are not allowed to be mixed up during transit?

DR. SUSHILA NAYAR: Well, Sir, the Government of India, Ministry of Health, had appointed a commission of enquiry after the first incident in 1958 in Keraia. The Commission, in order to prevent such incidents in future, made some short-term and long-term recommendations. The short-term recommendations have been implemented by the various concerned authorities and the long-term recommendation, which envisages legislation for the control of production, storage, transport and distribution of insecticides, is being processed.

SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA: May I know, Sir, whether the Ministry of Health have taken up this question with the Ministry of Food to see that Food Inspectors are appointed to test foodstuffs from time to time and see that no adulteration of poisonous material is possible in the foodstuffs?

DR. SUSHILA NAYAR: Sir, we had first asked the Ministry of Food to sponsor this legislation, but they have sent it back saying that the Health Ministry should sponsor it and see to its implementation, because there are Food Inspectors and Drug Inspectors with the Health Ministry already. They do not think it will be proper or advisable to duplicate the machinery by appointing separate Inspectors under the Food Ministry.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: How is it that after all these years the Government of India have not found it possible not to get foodstuffs mixed with these insecticides while they are in transport? Why should that not have been possible all these years and the matter is still under investigation? It appears to be a simple thing.

DR. SUSHILA NAYAR: I have answered the question. I may, however, add that my hon. friend, Mr. Bhupesh Gupta, and his companions keep on preventing any disciplinary

action being taken against certain people who deal with the transportation, storage and various things. It is laxity and failure of the human element. Sir, it has become terribly difficult to take any disciplinary action because of my hon. friends.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Is it the Health Minister's contention—she is not a Police Minister—that this mix-up takes place because some of my friends come in the way, or is it because the Government is grossly negligent and inhuman in the matter of handling the entire thing?

DR. SUSHILA NAYAR: The hon Member must understand that it is due to failure of the human element at different levels. At some of the levels we have been able to deal with the defaulters while at others we have not been able to deal with them effectively.

♦324. [The questioner (Shri R. W. Kakati) was absent. For answer, vide cols. 2508-09 infra.].

*325. [The questioner (Shri B. K. Gaikwad) was absent. For answer, vide col. 2509 infra.].

VISIT OF SIR ANDREW COHEN OF BRITAIN TO INDIA

*326. SHRI S. C. DEB: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Sir Andrew Cohen, Director General of Department of Technical Corporation of Britain came to India to have talks regarding assistance of British technical experts towards the implementation of various developmental plans; and

(b) if so, what was the nature of the talks?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI B. R. BHAGAT): (a) and (b) No, Sir. Sir Andrew Cohen came on his first fact-finding visit to India and had only