

RAJYA SABHA

Thursday, the 1st September, 1960/
the 10th Bhadra, 1882 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock, Mr. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

MEMBER SWORN

Shri I. T. Lohani (Gujarat)

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

SHORTAGE OF PAPER

*573. DR. A. N. BOSE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is acute shortage of paper in the country and the existing paper mills are not able to meet the requirements of various Government printing presses resulting in acute shortage of forms in Government Departments; and

(b) whether it is a fact that the shortage of paper has seriously affected the publishing business and consequently the cause of education and learning?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MANUBHAI SHAH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. There is some shortage being felt in the availability of paper. But the supply position has considerably improved due to a very big rise in the internal production of paper from about 200,000 tons a year in 1957 to about 350,000 tons in the current year. The demand has also picked up and therefore the Government are importing cheap printing paper through the State Trading Corporation to meet the gap between demand and supply.

DR. A. N. BOSE: Have the Government made any survey of the production of the existing mills and of their stocks and found out the exact amount of deficit?

521 RSD.—1.

SHRI MANUBHAI SHAH: That is a continuous thing. They send us their production as well as supply figures. Nowadays, because of increased production, the supply position has also considerably eased.

DR. A. N. BOSE: Is the Government aware that cornering and profiteering are indulged in by some of the paper merchants and, if so, what steps have been taken to check this evil?

SHRI MANUBHAI SHAH: That is exactly what I replied. The supply position has considerably eased owing to some increase in the local production, almost by 75 per cent. and the quantity, to the extent of the margin, being imported. There may be some rare complaints in respect of certain varieties of paper, but broadly speaking we have not, in recent months, received any major complaints in regard to printing paper.

SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA: May I know whether it is a fact that licences have been given for setting up certain small-scale industries for manufacture of paper on a very large scale, but these licences are not being used because the necessary machinery is not available?

SHRI MANUBHAI SHAH: I am very glad that the hon. Member has raised that question. We have approved 71 small-scale schemes ranging from two, five and ten tons per day and 39 of those schemes have already been issued import licences. In the meantime, some happy development has taken place; we have started manufacturing these machines completely in this country, and all the schemes which have been approved are being diverted to the indigenous-machinery manufacture.

SHRI N. SRI RAMA REDDY: Is it a fact that consumption of paper in India is the lowest?

SHRI MANUBHAI SHAH: Yes, that is true.