

be effected not by a special body but by the various Ministries, the Reserve Bank, etc. May I know, Sir, if a loose co-ordination like this is effective or whether Government is going to have a special co-ordinating machinery?

SHRI N. KANUNGO: The co-ordinating machinery consists of officials of the various Boards which is presided over by the Minister of Commerce and Industry. The co-ordinating committee meets almost once in every quarter and common problems are discussed, and common services, as far as possible, are provided for.

PANDIT S. S. N. TANKHA: Is it a fact that the Chairman of the Handloom Board and the Chairman of the Silk Board is the same person and that co-ordination between these two Boards is carried on through him?

SHRI N. KANUNGO: Yes, Sir. As far as the Silk Board and the Handloom Board are concerned, the Textile Commissioner happens to be the Chairman of the Boards, but the Boards are different

COMMON MARKET FOR ASIA

SHRI MAHESWAR NAIK: ♦613. J SHRI M. VALIULLA: I SHRI V. K. DHAGE:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a move by some Asian countries to establish a common market for Asia; and

(b) if so, what is the reaction of the Government of India towards the move?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE & SHRI N. KANUNGO: (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Maheswar Naik.

SHRI M. VALIULLA: May I know whether the Government thought over this matter, this idea whether they should have a common Asian market or not?

SHRI N. KANUNGO: We have never thought of it because the whole policy of the Government is to foster and encourage multilateral trade. If circumstances arise in future where limited markets may be more profitable, it will be thought of at that moment.

SHRI M. VALIULLA: May I know whether Government are not aware that there is a move like that by China and other countries?

SHRI N. KANUNGO: There is no move about it

SHRI M. VALIULLA: Here is an extract from a speech of the Minister of Commerce and Industry, Shri Lal Bahadur. He said that he had been told that there had been a move by China and other Asian countries to establish a common market along the lines of that in Western Europe. May I know whether the Minister is aware of that?

SHRI N. KANUNGO: The hon. Minister was only referring to a Press report to that effect.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Minister is getting ready to speak.

SHRI LAL BAHADUR: As my colleague has said, we have no official information or we have not received any official intimation. But what I had said was that there were reports, I had in mind especially the report of the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance amongst the Communist countries and the U.S.S.R. I was informed that China was also thinking of joining in that programme. That kind of report was not an official report. I have got it from other sources. Therefore I mentioned that in the matter of exports we have to face very severe competition. On the top of that there are proposals of a Common European Market being

formed, and then there are the Afro-Asian talks to have considered a similar suggestion about which I have no definite information. I merely pointed out that this is another problem which we may have to face and which may lead to further reduction in exports.

SHRI M. VALIULLA: My point is whether Government are aware that there is such a move among the Afro-Asian countries, whether they have considered the question whether an Asian market would be helpful to India or not?

SHRI N. KANUNGO: There is no move yet. As the Minister had said, only the idea is floating about. The information we have got is that the Chamber of Commerce of Egypt is convening a conference of various Chambers of Commerce to consider mutual co-operation in trade between Afro-Asian countries. The meeting is supposed to take place some time next year.

SHRI M. VALIULLA: That was not the question. The question was whether they have thought over the matter because they want to export to other countries, whether they consider that such a proposition is helpful or not.

SHRI N. KANUNGO: We must have a picture of the proposition. There is no picture of the proposition yet.

CHINAKURI MINE DISASTER

•614. SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the newspaper report to the effect that a large number of skeletons and human bones, suspected to be from the dead bodies of coalmine workers, killed in February, 1958, in the Chinakuri mine disaster, were discovered near a village about 4-5 miles from Asansol town (Burdwan); and

(b) whether it is a fact that certain packing cases bearing the marks of

Imperial Chemical Industries were found lying near these skeletons and bones?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI ABID ALI): (a) and (b). Yes.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: May I know whether the Government have held an enquiry to find out whether these skeletons and bones were those of the victims of the coal mine disaster?

SHRI ABID ALI: Sir, when a dead body is found, under section 45 of the Criminal Procedure Code intimation is given to the police. Now, these were found in Bengal. Therefore, the regulations according to the Police Act there have to be followed. This question has to go to the West Bengal Government, not to us.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Unfortunately this question has come here. What can I do? We will look after it in West Bengal. Now, Sir, serious allegations by the trade unions and others are made that certain victims of the disaster were burnt in these circumstances without their bodies being taken to post-mortem and all that. Is there any truth in this?

SHRI ABID ALI: This accident took place in February. Dead bodies were found and were taken out from the mine at the end of June. These were sent to the police and they sent them to the hospital for post-mortem. These were only skeletons.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Skeletons will come from bodies. May I know whether the Government of India in the Ministry of Labour has found from the authorities concerned how many people were killed and whether all their bodies were sent for post mortem examination?

SHRI ABID ALI: Yes, Sir. One hundred and seventy-six persons were killed, out of which 175 bodies have been accounted for and sent for post-mortem examination. Only one body has not been traced and six skulls have not been traced. With regard to the previous question about

serious allegations, we have not i received any allegations.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Am I to understand that the bodies of all those people who had been accounted for as killed were sent for post-mortem examination?

SHRI ABID ALI: Out of 176, 175 were sent for post-mortem examination.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: May I know whether the hon. Minister is aware that there is a feeling that certain other dead bodies were not sent for post-mortem examination but were burnt in these circumstances?

SHRI ABID ALI: It is absolutely incorrect.

MUNICIPAL TAX ON CENTRAL GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS IN CALCUTTA

*615. SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: WUI the Minister of WORKS, HOUSING AND SUPPLY to pleased to state:

(a) whether the municipal tax is levied by the Corporation of Calcutta on the Central Government buildings in that city;

(b) whether Government are liable to pay service tax to the Corporation in respect of such buildings;

(c) if so, what is the annual amount of such assessed taxes; and

(d) whether there are any outstanding arrears; if so, to what extent?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF WORKS, HOUSING AND SUPPLY (SHRI ANIL K. CHANDA) : (a) Yes. The usual municipal tax is levied in respect of Central Government properties which existed prior to 1st April, 1937.

(b) Government have agreed to pay service charges in respect of properties which came into being after 1st April, 1937, with effect from 1st April, 1954.

(c) and (d). The Corporation of Calcutta has made an assessment which has not been accepted by the

Government. The total demand in respect of properties referred to at

(a) above for the period 1st April, 1948 to 30th September, 1957 is Rs. 1,24,87,864. The total demand in respect of properties referred to at

(b) above is Rs. 29,51,473. According to the assessment made by the Corporation the outstanding arrears were Rs. 96 lakhs for the period ending 30th September, 1957. The C.P.W.D. have since paid Rs. 16 lakhs 'on account' payment and the other Departments concerned have also been asked to make 'on account' payment to the extent of 30 per cent, of the claim of the Corporation. Orders have since been passed to pay service charges at the rate of 15 per cent, of the gross annual rateable value of Central Government properties.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: May I know whether the hon. Minister is aware that the Calcutta Corporation has been put to great difficulty on account of these arrears having accumulated?

SHRI ANIL K. CHANDA: I agree that if payments are not regularly made, any institution would be put to* difficulty. But I would like to make it very clear that so far as the taxes leviable on Government of India properties of the pre-1937 period are concerned, they have been regularly paid. But the Calcutta Corporation enhanced the taxes according to a scheme of theirs which was not acceptable to the Government, and correspondence has been going on between the Corporation of Calcutta and the Government all these years. Also, with regard to service charges which are to be paid for the recent properties, they had assessed the charges at a very high figure which was not acceptable to us. The latter figure they had given us was 20 per cent. We had accepted 15 per cent.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: May I know under what law or rules the Government of India unilaterally decides as to what should be acceptable to them when the properties are' | so assessed?

SHRI ANIL K. CHANDA: It is not a question of unilateral decision. According to the Act the Corporation has an officer known as the Assessment Officer. He gives notice that he wants to increase the rate. The other party has a right to make a representation which we did. Then he came to a figure which we contested, and correspondence and discussion has been going on. The matter has not yet been finalised. But I may mention that so far as the C.P.W.D. is concerned, our Ministry is concerned, the total amount had been I believe, Rs. 35 lakhs. We have already paid them Rs. 16 lakhs.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: May I know whether this business of contesting the assessed figures of the Calcutta Corporation is understood by them as a kind of contrivance to delay payments to the authorities there?

SHRI ANIL K. CHANDA: I am sure, Sir, the Corporation do not think in the way my hon. friend thinks.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: May I know whether the hon. Minister is aware of the proceedings of the Corporation in which all the parties have expressed very strong opinion including the Mayor?

SHRI ANIL K. CHANDA: We had met the Mayor as well as the Chairman of the Standing Finance Committee of the Corporation of Calcutta. My senior colleague and myself had a long discussion with them. We have been as accommodating, as possible under the circumstances.

SHRI N. M. LINGAM: In the event of the Government of India and a civic body not coming to an agreement on the amount of tax to be paid, is there any machinery for settling such disputes?

SHRI ANIL K. CHANDA: The latest arrangement is this. In those cases where they and we cannot come to an agreement, the matter will be referred to a judicial officer for arbitration.

SHRI B. K. P. SINHA: Are Government of India paying the dues which

they think should be the proper assessment? The Government of India hold that a certain amount should be assessed. Are they paying that amount? Or, subject to the settlement of the disputes, is that amount also not paid?

SHRI ANIL K. CHANDA: As I said, where the figures are not contested we have been regularly paying. Then they have increased it to a figure which, according to us, is not justifiable.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What he says is, don't bother about the increased amount, but is the usual amount paid?

SHRI ANIL K. CHANDA: That has been paid.

INSTALLATION OF CAFFEINE PRODUCING PLANTS IN ASSAM

•616. SHRI AMOLAKH CHAND: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal to instal caffeine producing plants in Assam to produce caffeine from inferior tea; if so, whether orders have been placed for the plants; and

(b) the quantity of caffeine imported in the year 1956-57 and 1957-58?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI SATISH CHANDRA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Import of caffeine and salts during January—March 1957 was 6576 lbs.; and the figure for 1957-58 is 49,946 lbs.

SHRI AMOLAKH CHAND: May I know if there is any proposal before the Government of India to ban the import of caffeine and produce the same locally?

SHRI SATISH CHANDRA: No, Sir, Import licences are being issued in the current licensing period though the import has been considerably restricted. There is a ban on the import of caffeine salts which are manufactured from caffeine because that industry is developing. Caffeine can be imported,