

DR. SHRIMATI SEETA PARMANAND: Would the hon. Minister kindly tell us which kind of tea is below Rs. 3 a lb. even today? Would the hon. Minister also state whether the prices of tea from 1951 till today have not more than doubled, particularly this year?

SHRI MANUBHAI SHAH: No, Sir. As a matter of fact, the facts of the situation are different. Last year the prices of tea slumped, because the production was very very satisfactory. From 427 million lbs. we went up to 510 million lbs., an increase of nearly 100 million lbs. Our exports also went up. It was really this year that inferior types of tea were not crushed as a result of the low prices. We keep a constant watch, and if the hon*. Member goes into the price structure, she will find that variations have been very little. It is true that in 1954 the prices of tea rose, but again the situation was brought under control in 1955. We reserve a certain quantity for internal consumption in order to maintain reasonable prices, and only the surplus over this is allowed to be exported.

DR. SHRIMATI SEETA PARMANAND: Is it not a fact that Government has arranged for large quantities of tea to be exported to the Soviet Union, and if so, has Government made any effort to see that that advantage! which the tea producers are getting is passed on to the consumers in this country?

SHRI MANUBHAI SHAH: As the House is aware, tea is our biggest foreign exchange earner, and it is our constant endeavour to see that our exports of tea increase, but we should not also forget that there are many competitors in the field of tea exports throughout the world. In our bilateral agreements with Russia we have entered into contracts for the sale of tea there. Recently about 4,000 tons of tea were exported to the Russian market. As regards the profits, as the hon. Minister for

Commerce and Industry the other day stated in the Lok Sabha, out of a total earning of Rs. 11 crores, only Rs. 3:1 crores were allowed to be paid as dividends, and the balance of Rs. 7-9 crores was ploughed back into the industry for the development of the industry.

SHRI KISHEN CHAND: May I know if it is not a fact that the export price of tea is regulated by the export duty levied on it and, the internal price is maintained at a fixed level?

SHRI MANUBHAI SHAH: The export prices, as I said, are not the concern of this country alone. It is really the competitive price of tea throughout the world market which determines the export price. Regarding the internal consumption price of tea, our mechanism does succeed to a certain extent by our keeping a certain block of tea for internal consumption. I may, for the information of the hon. Member say that the internal consumption also is rising very very high. In 1954-55 the loose tea consumed in India was 59.6 million lbs. and it has come to 103 million lbs. in 1955-56. The total of all varieties also has gone up for internal consumption from 171 million lbs. in 1953-54 to 211 million lbs. in 1955-56. All these mechanisms adjust the internal price.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: May I know

MR. CHAIRMAN: No more. Mr. B. P. Agarwal.

*33. [*The questioner (Shri B. P. Agarwal) was absent. For answer, vide cols. 562-63 infra.*]

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

VISA FACILITIES AVAILABLE TO PUBLIC FOR TRAVEL BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN

•33. SHRI B. P. AGARWAL: Will

the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether any review has recently been made by Government of the visa facilities available to the public for travel between India and Pakistan.

(b) whether Government are aware of the increasing difficulties of the Indian business houses having investments in Pakistan in obtaining visas for Indian nationals to look after their interests in Pakistan; and

(c) if so whether Government propose to take any steps to improve this position?

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI LAKSHMI MENON) : (a) In May 1955, the Indo-Pakistan Passport and Visa Scheme was reviewed with a view to liberalising it and a revised Scheme was sent to the Government of Pakistan for their concurrence. The Pakistan Government have not ratified it so far.

, (b) and (c). The Government are aware of these difficulties. Whenever a case is brought to the notice of the Government of India, it is taken up with the Pakistan Government for redress.

PAYMENT FOR USE OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS ASSETS

24. SHRI M. VALIULLA: Will the Minister for COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Messrs. Cable and Wireless Ltd., a nationalised commercial undertaking of the United Kingdom Government, are receiving any payments from the Government of India for using their telecommunications assets; if so, how much; and

(b) whether Government are receiving any amount from any foreign government or agency for their making use of India's telecommunications assets, and if so, how much?

THE MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAJ BAHADUR): (a) Yes.

The Payments are being made as compensation for the use of the sub-marine cables and wireless assets of M/s. Cable and Wireless Ltd. by the Overseas Communications Service of India. The payments during the last three years were as follows:—

Year	Rs.
1953-54 ...	30,20,746
1954-55 ...	31,07,132
1955-56 ...	41,63,030

Provisional

India, like other. Commonwealth countries, has to make annual payments in proportion to the use made by her of those assets.

(b) India's telecommunications assets are not used by other foreign Governments or agencies in that sense.

COAL MINES LABOUR WELFARE FUND

25. SHRI M. VALIULLA: Will the Minister for LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether a sub-committee to draw up a Five Year Plan for incurring expenditure from the Coal Mines Labour Welfare Fund was appointed in 1955;

(b) whether any plan was submitted by the sub-committee; and

(c) if so, what amount has been spent so far in accordance with the Plan programme?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR LABOUR (SHRI ABID ALI): (a) Sub-Committee was appointed by the Coal Mines Labour Welfare Fund Advisory Committee in September, 1954.

(b) Yes.

(c) The amounts spent are given below:

Year	General Welfare Schemes Rs.	Housing Rs.
1955-56 ..	56,83,276	9,63,996
1956-57 (provisional)	57,27,000	3,27,100