

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Now the hon. Minister should know better.

SHRI D. P. KARMARKAR: Yes, I know a little better in this matter. The fact was that during the last six months there was a little shortage and the actual imports that came in, fell a little short of the requirements. It is always under such conditions that people who have got some stocks put it underground, hoard it and they don't make it available to the public, with the result that prices shoot up.

SHRI H. C. DASAPPA: What action has been taken against those elements?

SHRI D. P. KARMARKAR: As I said in the main answer, by issue of licences to actual users and by stepping up imports under the Canalisation Scheme.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: May I know if an attempt was actually made to unearth the hidden stocks from the speculators?

SHRI D. P. KARMARKAR: Yes, the stocks are coming up and the prices are going down.

IMPORT OF CEMENT

*437. SHRIMATI SAVITRY DEVI NIGAM: Will the Minister for COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state the quantity of cement to be imported in India in 1956-57?

THE MINISTER FOR HEAVY INDUSTRIES (SHRI M. M. SHAH): Firm commitments have been made for the import of 211,000 tons, Negotiations for purchase of another 450,000 tons are under way.

SHRIMATI SAVITRY DEVI NIGAM: May I know the names of the countries from where we are importing cement?

SHRI M. M. SHAH: The U.S.S.R. Yugoslavia, Rumania, Japan, Poland and West Pakistan.

SHRIMATI SAVITRY DEVI NIGAM: May I know if it is a fact that the imported cement is more expensive and is inferior in quality as compared with the Indian cement?

SHRI M. M. SHAH: The quality is quite comparable. It is true that it is expensive.

SHRIMATI SAVITRY DEVI NIGAM: How many cement factories are working three shifts, two shifts and one shift respectively in our country?

SHRI M. M. SHAH: The hon. Member probably knows that cement factories never work one or two shifts. They are continuously working and they work round the clock.

SHRIMATI SAVITRY DEVI NIGAM: May I know if the Government is aware that the pool price has made the cement quite expensive for the poor consumers?

SHRI M. M. SHAH: As a matter of fact, it has brought down the price for the consumers.

SHRIMATI SAVITRY DEVI NIGAM: What is the present price of cement per bag?

SHRI M. M. SHAH: Rs. 102/8 per ton. That is the statutory price.

SHRI S. MAHANTY: What is the present installed capacity of the cement plant?

SHRI M. M. SHAH: The present capacity is 6.5 million tons.

SHRI S. MAHANTY: Is it commensurate with the growing needs of the country?

SHRI M. M. SHAH: No, Sir. The present capacity is not at all commensurate and that is why we import. We are taking steps to license more factories. Actually 22 new factories have been licensed with a capacity of 6 million tons and 12 more applications are pending for consideration.

SHRI S. MAHANTY: May I know whether the import is undertaken by the private parties or by the State direct?

SHRI M. M. SHAH: The entire imports are undertaken by the State Trading Corporation.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Of the companies that had been licensed, whether the Government is starting any under the State sector?

SHRI M. M. SHAH: There is not a very definite proposal in the public sector but as subsidiaries to the Rourekela plant, Bhilai plant and Durgapur Plant, we are thinking of taking to conversion of slag into cement.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: May I know, why in view of such shortage of cement, the Government had not thought it proper to expand the public sector in that line of industry?

SHRI M. M. SHAH: The applications that are coming forward from the private sector are so many that the Government does not think it necessary to enter into the field.

CENTRAL ASSISTANCE TO STATES FOR SLUM CLEARANCE

*438. **SHRI M. VALIULLA:** Will the Minister for WORKS, HOUSING AND SUPPLY be pleased to state:

(a) whether any loans or subsidies have been given by the Government of India for slum clearance to States or Municipal Corporations; and

(b) if so, how much and to which States and Corporations?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS, HOUSING AND SUPPLY (SARDAR SWARAN SINGH): (a) No, Sir. Not so far.

(b) Does not arise.

SHRI M. VALIULLA: May I know whether any amount for subsidy was kept apart during the First Five Year Plan for slum clearance?

SARDAR SWARAN SINGH: Not so far as I remember.

SHRI M. VALIULLA: May I take it that some amounts are kept in the Second Plan?

SARDAR SWARAN SINGH: Yes, there is a total allocation of Rs. 20 crores. The essential pattern is, 25 per cent. of the cost to be given by the Centre as subsidy, provided an equal amount is paid by the State Government concerned as a matching subsidy and the balance 50 per cent. of the cost to be advanced by the Centre as a long-term interest-bearing loan.

SHRI M. VALIULLA: Is there any condition laying down that for slum clearance they should have so much of population, and may I know whether under such terms, any State has applied for a subsidy or grant?

SARDAR SWARAN SINGH: We are awaiting the replies. We have issued a circular letter giving the details of the scheme. We are expecting replies from the States.

BABU GOPINATH SINGH: May I know if this subsidy is for re-housing or for slum clearance?

SARDAR SWARAN SINGH: The two are complementary. There cannot be slum clearance alone. There is a provision for re-housing.

BABU GOPINATH SINGH: My information is that it has been allotted only for re-housing and not for slum clearance. Will the Minister kindly state the true position?

SARDAR SWARAN SINGH: I think the element of subsidy will come in for re-housing obviously because what will be the subsidy if it is not going to be for re-housing? So, it is only when the new house is constructed and the rent works out at a level which is beyond the pocket of that unfortunate individual, that the element of subsidy comes in. I cannot understand what could be the arrangement of subsidy for slum clearance, as my hon. friend defines.

SHRI H. C. DASAPPA: May I know why the Government insist upon 25 per cent. subsidy from the State Governments? Would it not be sufficient if the Corporation concerned offers to take 75 per cent. as loan? Why should not the Government of India be prepared to give 25 per cent. as subsidy?

SARDAR SWARAN SINGH: Essentially, this being a State responsibility, we thought that the State also should contribute.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: In view of the Prime Minister's indignant utterances—rightly indignant—about this clearance, may I know what fund actually the Government has allocated for the slum clearance so that the sentiments expressed by the Prime Minister could be translated into action by way of clearing the slums?

SARDAR SWARAN SINGH: I have already given the figures.