

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.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He has given the figures.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: He should tell something. I am not satisfied.

UNIFORM COAL PRICE ALL OVER THE COUNTRY

•439. SHRI M. VALIULLA: Will the Minister for PRODUCTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to have a uniform price for coal all over the country; and

(b) if so, what is the price to be so fixed?

THE MINISTER FOR PRODUCTION (SHRI K. C. REDDY) : (a) and (b). Consequent on a recommendation made by the Railway Equipment Committee and a similar recommendation made by the Estimates Committee in their- 15th Report (1954-55), a proposal to have a uniform price for coal all over the country is under examination of Government.

SHRI M. VALIULLA: May I know if the Government is aware that for other essential articles like cement, iron and fertilizers, etc. there is a uniform price all over India and that there is need for a uniform price for coal also?

SHRI K. C. REDDY: Yes, the Government is aware of it.

SHRI M. VALIULLA: When will this scheme come into operation when only the consideration of it has taken so long?

SHRI K. C. REDDY: Coming to a decision on this point is not a simple matter. It is not, if I may say so, so simple as that. We have to consult various Ministries with regard to this matter, the Ministry of Iron and Steel, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Railway Ministry, and perhaps the Ministry of Finance.. We are consulting all these Ministries. We have also to find out and assess carefully the impact of the fixation of a uniform price for coal on the existing industrial units in the country. We have to look into all these matters and then come to a final decision. But we hope we will be able to take such a decision as early as possible..

SHRI M. VALIULLA : During the last month only the price of coal was increased. May I know whether the uniform price of coal, when fixed, will be higher or less than its present price?

SHRI K. C. REDDY: Naturally if the price has only been recently increased, the price today is more than before. As regards what would be the prices if and when uniform prices are introduced, one cannot say definitely at present.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE: May I know, Sir, whether Government are considering the proposal in relation to particular commodities or whether they are also considering it generally, in respect of important raw materials?

SHRI K. C. REDDY: I do not know anything about the general question, I do not remember having read anything on these lines in the Report of the Planning Commission. But we are taking up item by item, and we have accepted this principle in respect of iron and steel, cement, and I may also mention the case of fertilizers. We have now taken up coal. We have to examine each item on its merits and then come to a decision.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE: Is the Government aware that this policy will have the effect of taking away the natural advantages of particular regions? Is the Government pursuing this as a matter of policy in order to equalise the conditions, so far as the differences in prices of materials are concerned? Is that the general policy being pursued?

SHRI K. C. REDDY: Yes. As regards the policy aspect, it is a suggestion for our consideration. We shall examine how far it is possible to do so.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Consultations are all right. But may I know whether after the rise in the price of coal, the Government are considering any steps for reducing the price of coal so that it becomes available to the people in larger quantities?

SHRI K. C. REDDY: I could not follow the question fully. I think the hon. Member asks me, whether after the recent rise in the price of coal, Government are considering steps to reduce the price..