

and large, the quality of our exports has been free from objection. Cases do, however, arise in actual practice where complaints are received from foreign importers against individual exporters or in respect of certain consignments. When such cases come to the notice of Government, investigation is instituted with a view to taking remedial action. Effective check on quality can be made only after standards for the types that enter our export trade, are fixed, provided the exporter and importer agree to abide by them. Standards are being worked by the Indian Standards Institution.

(c) Mainly Brazil, Tanganyika, Union of South Africa and Rhodesia also compete with India to some extent.

IMPORT OF MEDICINES AND MEDICAL STORES

163. SHRI B. P. AGARWAL: Will the Minister for COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state the value of imports of medicines and medical stores during the last three years (year by year)?

THE MINISTER FOR COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI T. T. KRISHNAMACHARI): A statement is attached. [See Appendix V, Annexure No. 95.]

POPULARIZATION OF SOFT COKE

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

(a) whether soft coke is popularized in rural areas; and

(b) what are the methods adopted to see that more rural population make use of soft coke?

THE MINISTER FOR PRODUCTION (SHRI K. C. REDDY): (a) and (b). A Committee, known as Soft Coke Cess Committee, constituted under the Indian Soft Coke Cess Act, in 1930, used to popularize soft coke by means of intensive propaganda through house to house visits, practical demonstrations, free distribution of soft coke

to new consumers, advertisements and pictorial posters, participation in exhibitions and melas etc. As a result of its activities the demand for soft coke reached the limit that was possible for the Railways to handle after meeting the minimum essential requirements of other consumers, and there was no need felt for the continuance of the Committee's activities. The Committee was, therefore, abolished in 1948. Since then no special steps are being taken to encourage the extended use of soft coke in rural areas. The existing demand for soft coke is much more than what the Railways can carry. The Government are fully in favour of the popularization and the extended use of soft coke in rural areas and means for improving the over-all transport availability for coal including soft coke are constantly engaging their attention.

STOWING IN COLLIERIES

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

(a) the number of collieries which are stowing and which are not stowing;

(b) whether Government insist on the collieries which are not stowing to take to stowing;

(c) what is the cost of a stowing plant; and

(d) whether collieries which have started stowing enjoy any special concessions?

THE MINISTER FOR PRODUCTION (SHRI K. C. REDDY): (a) The number of collieries now stowing is 53. The rest of the 830 collieries in India do not stow.

(b) Stowing so far has been mainly voluntary in nature. In a few cases, the Chief Inspector of Mines has ordered compulsory stowing in the interest of safety. Under the Coal Mines (Safety and Conservation) Act, 1952, the Government have power to order compulsory stowing in the interest of safety