

THE MINISTER FOR COMMERCE (SHRI D. P. KARMARKAR): (a) The question of placing the Central Sericultural Research Station on a permanent basis is under consideration of Government.

(b) The question of expansion of the activities of the Central Sericultural Research Station will be considered after decision is taken regarding its permanency.

(c) The results of research are published in Annual Reports, Scientific Journals etc., copies of which are supplied to the State Governments and the Central Silk Board. Disease-free improved seeds of indigenous and foreign breeds, mulberry seeds, cuttings and grafts of improved varieties, analytical results of mulberry leaf, soil, manure as well as pathological slides of different diseases of silkworms are supplied to the various State Governments. The Central Silk Board and State Governments disseminate this information to the rural sericulturists.

PRICES OF PAPER IN INDIA AND ABROAD

*72. DR. RADHA KUMUD MOOKERJI: Will the Minister for COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the price of paper of main varieties in India and in some of the other principal countries of the world;

(b) whether it is a fact that the ruling prices of this essential commodity in India are much higher than in most of the other countries; and, if so, what are the causes of the same; and

(c) what steps Government propose to take to keep the price of this essential commodity low?

THE MINISTER FOR COMMERCE (SHRI D. P. KARMARKAR): (a) and (b). Government have no data of the prices of like qualities of paper produced in India and foreign countries, on which alone a true comparison of

the prices can be made. The hon. Member will agree that the price of paper will vary depending upon its quality; the cost of production will also vary depending upon the raw materials used and the technical skill and method employed in the manufacture. But from such information as is available with the Government it is not correct to say that the ruling prices of paper in India are much higher than in most of the other countries.

(c) Besides encouraging the existing units to increase the production and the establishment of new units, import is allowed to cover the shortage between the existing demand and production in the country.

A Paper and Pulp Expert of the F.A.O. has recently carried out a survey of the paper and pulp industry in the country with a view to ascertaining the potential resources available for further expansion, the working methods and the cost structure of the important paper mills in the country. His report on the survey is awaited and such action as may be necessary would be taken to improve the efficiency of the paper mills in the country on receipt of the report.

ASSAM OIL COMPANY OF DIGBOI, ASSAM

*73. SHRI L. BOROOAH: Will the Minister for WORKS, HOUSING AND SUPPLY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Assam Oil Company of Digboi in Assam is a foreign concern;

(b) whether it is a fact that the cost of petrol manufactured and sold by this company is the highest in India;

(c) if the answer to part (b) above be in the affirmative what action Government propose to take to control the prices of petrol manufactured by this company; and

(d) whether it is a fact that the said company derives over 100 per cent. profit?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR WORKS, HOUSING AND SUPPLY (SHRI S. N. BURAGOHAJ): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. The sale price of petrol is the same irrespective of the company that produces or sells it. But if the hon. Member has in mind the retail price of petrol in Assam, it is true that it is higher than in most parts of the country, except in a few outlying places and in the State of Jammu & Kashmir. The basic factor of the prices is the f.o.b. Gulf of Mexico price to which are added, among others, ocean and inland transport charges.

(c) The Government are looking into the question of the prices of petroleum products of the company.

(d) Yes, Sir. During the last few years the company has been making profits of 100 per cent. and even more.

FAIL IN THE EXPORT OF COAL

*67. SHRI V. K. DHAGE: Will the Minister for PRODUCTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the export of coal from India has considerably gone down;

(b) if so, what are the reasons; and

(c) what steps Government propose to take for the full utilization of the coal resources?

THE MINISTER FOR PRODUCTION (SHRI K. C. REDDY): (a) The high level of exports reached during 1951 and 1952 has not been maintained during the current year. There has been instead a noticeable falling off since the beginning of this year. A statement showing monthly coal exports during 1951 to 1953 and another statement showing coal exports to different destinations during the years 1946 to 1953 are placed on the Table. [See Appendix V, Annexures Nos. 6 and 7.]

(b) The increase in coal exports in 1951 and 1952 was caused by several

factors. There was coal shortage in Europe and in the U.K., internal transport difficulties in South Africa, restricted production in Australia and the difficult shipping position due to the Korean War. These factors have now disappeared. Australia has stepped up her production and is in a position to export coal. Similar is the case with South Africa. Hence, the decline in our coal exports during the current year. Our normal markets have not been seriously affected; only the special markets which we secured under the exceptional conditions described above are disappearing.

(c) The Government are examining the steps necessary for stepping up coal exports. They are also constantly endeavouring to improve the internal transport facilities for coal, thereby enabling the fuller utilization of current production of coal.

POWER USED BY THE SINDRI FERTILIZER FACTORY

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

(a) the daily consumption of electric power by the Sindri Fertilizer Factory;

(b) who charges the factory for the use of power, and what is the average monthly bill which the factory is paying for such use;

(c) whether the factory owns any power station (thermal or otherwise); and

(d) if the answer to part (c) above be in the affirmative, (i) what is the installed capacity of that power station and (ii) whether this power station is used as a reserve or daily?

THE MINISTER FOR PRODUCTION (SHRI K. C. REDDY): (a) The daily consumption of electric power by the Sindri Fertilizer Factory varies from 20,000 k.w. to 30,000 k.w.

(b) and (c). No one charges the factory for use of the power, as the factory owns its own thermal power station.