

require about 600 lathes and the Government factory for Machine Tools at Jalahalli has programmed for 400 of this size. There is, therefore, still room left to the private industry. And so far, the private industry, according to the best of our information, has manufactured only one lathe. There seems to be some scope for the manufacturing of some 8½" lathes also by private industries.

*181 (Member absent, For answer vide column 1300 supra.)

HAJ PILGRIMS FROM INDIA

*182. SHRI E. K. IMBICHIBAVA : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that the Haj pilgrims from India have to pay travelling fares in Saudi Arabia at rates higher than what citizens of Saudi Arabia have to pay ;

(b) if so, what is the difference in the rates ; and

(c) whether Government propose to take any action for the removal of this discrimination ?

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRIMATI LAKSHMI MENON) : Government have no information but have referred the matter to their Consul General at Jeddah in Saudi Arabia. His reply is awaited. As soon as it is received, the matter will be examined.

MR. CHAIRMAN : He is satisfied ? Very well.

PRICE OF ARECANUTS

*183. SHRI E. K. IMBICHIBAVA : Will the Minister for COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have received any representation from Malabar regarding the low and uneconomic price of arecanuts ; and

(b) if so, what action Government propose to take in the matter ?

THE MINISTER FOR COMMERCE (SHRI D. P. KARMARKAR) : (a) Some representations have been received.

(b) There is nothing much that Government can do in this matter as prices of arecanuts had risen in the past and are now coming down. Besides Government have not gone into the economics of arecanut production and have therefore no means of vouchsafing as to the correctness or otherwise of the statement that the prevailing price of arecanuts is uneconomic.

PROF. G. RANGA : Is there not a duty on arecanuts ?

SHRI D. P. KARMARKAR : Yes, a very heavy duty on imports. As the hon. Member himself knows, in 1947, as a result of our combined efforts we had a heavy duty.

PROF. G. RANGA : Is there any excise duty ?

SHRI D. P. KARMARKAR : Excise duty ! I do not know, I have no idea at the moment.

PROF. G. RANGA : In view of the fact that this Government found it necessary at one time to listen to representations on behalf of this industry, and since this is a very important industry, especially in the West Coast, will Government agree to enquire into the economic condition of the growers of arecanuts to see if anything can be done to help them ?

SHRI D. P. KARMARKAR : According to our information, as regards the present or current prices, there has not been a depression. For instance, as against 85 for Calcutta in December 1951, in November 1952 the figure is 93. As against 44 for Palghat-Bangalore, the price is Rs. 32, and for Ceylon I find the price for December was 105 and in November 1952 it is 112. So we see no reason to think there is a depression in the prices.