

taking into account the overall availability of stocks in the Central Pool, relative needs of the various States, market availability and other related factors.

Shortage of edible oils

*148. SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE:
SHRI DHULESHWAR MEENA:

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state;

(a) whether there is acute shortage of edible oils in the country at present;

(b) what steps are being taken to meet the shortage of edible oils in the country;

(c) whether there is any proposal to import edible oils;

(d) whether it is also a fact that prices of edible oils have increased considerably; and

(e) if so, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD): (a) to (c) There has been some gap between demand for, and production of indigenous edible oil, in the country for the last few years. Concerted efforts are being made by the Central and State Governments to attain self-sufficiency in vegetable oils through implementation of special programmes for increasing production of oilseeds. As a short term measure, the edible oils are being imported to bridge the gap partly.

(d) and (e) In the past few months there has been some increase in the prices of edible oils but of late the prices have started declining. The increase in the prices of edible oils is mainly attributed to the continued impact of the severe drought of 1982 and the shortfall in production of oilseeds in the oil year 1982-83.

Facility of Railway Pass to Freedom Fighters

*149. SHRI CHAND RAM: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have permitted freedom fighters who are getting pension under the Swatantrata Sainik Samraan Scheme to avail of one second class railway pass once in a year; and

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS. (SHRI A. B. A GHANI KHAN CHOUDHURY): (a) and (b) One set of complimentary pass will be issued to each freedom fighter, once in his/her life time and spouse or in the absence of spouse to be accompanied by an attendant from the place of his/her residence to enable them to see various places of interest which he/she wishes to visit and back, on receipt of a request from him/her.

Average maintenance and operational cost of Locomotives

*150. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA:
SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR;

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to refer to the reply to Unstarred Question 1834 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 7th December, 1983 and state;

(a) the separate average total maintenance and operational cost of the broad gauge steam, diesel and electric engines for the same amount of work done (haulage) during 1982-83;

(b) the average available hours per day together with the average actually utilised hours of each of the three types of the above engines on line; and

(c) the steps being taken by Government to improve the utilisation hours per day of the diesel and electric engines to minimise expenditure on steam engines?