

(c) The main functions of the Seamen's Welfare Officer posted in United Kingdom are :

(i) to look after the welfare of Indian Seamen in general,

(ii) to attend to the grievances of Seaman pertaining to service conditions, sickness, payment of dues, etc;

(iii) to keep liaison with the local authorities; and

(iv) to secure more jobs for Indian seamen on British and other foreign ships.

RISE IN PRICES OF VEGETABLE OIL/GHEE

1023. SHRI IBRAHIM KALANIYA : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) the criteria for fixing the price of vanaspathi ghee ;

(b) whether it is a fact that due to high prices fixed for vegetable ghee, the price of edible oil i.e ground-nut oil has been doubled in the current year; and

(c) whether Government propose to fix any ceiling price for vanaspathi ghee and other steps, if any, to curb the sharp rise in the prices of edible oil ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ANNASAHAB SHINDE): (a) The price of vanaspathi is fixed on the basis of the prevailing price of raw oils, indigenous and imported, used in its manufacture, to which is added the approved conversion and other costs covering processing, packing, selling and distribution, freight and return on capital.

(b) While some sympathetic rise in oil prices cannot be ruled out, basically it is the price of ground-nut and other raw oils that govern the price of vanaspathi, and not *vice versa*. The prices of groundnut oil, this year, are higher primarily due to shortage in production of groundnut.

(c) In the absence of a ceiling price for the edible oils used in its manufacture, it is not practicable to fix a ceiling price for vanaspathi. Even so, an effort is made to maintain the prices of vanaspathi, once fixed, unchanged for as long a period as possible, by neutralising relatively minor fluctuations in indigenous oil prices, through release of an appropriate quantity of cheaper imported oil.

RELIEF WORKS

1024. SHRI IBRAHIM KALANIYA : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) the number of persons engaged in relief works in the scarcity and drought affected areas and the rates of wages paid under Relief Manual;

(b) whether there is any proposal to revise the wage rates ; and

(c) the progress in Relief Works and the expenditure incurred during the months of January, February and March, 1973?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ANNASAHAB SHINDE): (a) and (b) As on 1-5-1973, 81.69 lakh persons were engaged on relief works in the drought affected States. Some State Governments have taken action for revision of wage rates. The maximum rates of wages sanctioned for relief works as recently reported by some State Governments are given in the Statement attached.

(c) The number of relief works undertaken by the various State Governments as at the end of January, February & March 73, was 87,000, 99,000 and 95,000 respectively. As on 1-5-1973, the number of relief works was 1.37 lakhs. The figures of expenditure on relief works monthwise are not yet available. However till 1-5-1973, against the ceilings of expenditure of Rs 217.31 crores adopted, an amount of Rs. 191.465 crores has been released to the affected States.