

done by the Rehabilitation Ministry. We do not come into the picture. It has been suggested to our Ministry that work on deep-sea fishing should be undertaken by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and we are examining it.

SHRI A. D. MANI: Sir, since we are developing export trade in fish by carrying it on on the Malabar coast, may I ask the Minister what varieties of fish do we get in the Andamans which are being kept for export? My interest in the question is just academic because I happen to be a vegetarian. I would like to ask whether shrimp is being caught in the Andamans.

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE: At present deep-sea fishing is not carried on near the Andamans. Shrimp and Mackerel are available. It is possible we may obtain them for exports if the trade is developed in that area.

SHRI P. K. KUMARAN: After tapping rich resources of fish in and around the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, may I know, Sir, if we are going to start any canning industry or export it, or will it be carried to the mainland?

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE: All these possibilities are obviously there.

SHRIMATI YASHODA REDDY: May I know, Sir, from the hon. Minister whether any export is being carried on in the sea food especially when I find that in foreign countries the lobster or the big size shrimp are particularly popular? They are very easily available near the Southern part of our country near the Malabar coast. There is a great demand in foreign countries for them. I would like to know from the Government whether in this sphere they have taken any action. If so, how much we have exported?

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE: The question of the hon. lady Member

does not fall within the purview of this question. However, I may submit that from Bombay and Cochin we are exporting a considerable quantity of shrimp.

SHRI AJMAL KHAN: May I know whether there is any scheme of dehydrating fish after fishing it had making is into powder because canning is very expensive? If we make powder we can send it to other countries and very cheaply. America is selling the powder of fish at four annas per kilogram. May I know, Sir, if the Government is doing anything in this regard?

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE: This is being examined.

*547. [The questioner (Shri Banka Behary Das) was absent. For answer, vide col. 4602-4603 infra.]

*548. [The questioner (Shri D. Thengari) was absent. For answer vide col. 4605 infra.]

VEHICLES OF THE HINDUSTAN SHIPYARD LIMITED

*549. SHRI M. V. BHADRAM: Will the Minister of TRANSPORT AND SHIPPING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that motor vehicles belonging to the Hindustan Shipyard Limited, Visakhapatnam were used in favour of a candidate contesting a by-election on the 27th April, 1967; and

(b) if so, what action has been taken by Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND SHIPPING (PROF. V. K. R. V. RAO): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The facts are that on 27-4-67 the driver of a car of the Hindustan Shipyard Limited, while returning home for lunch from Circuit House, where he was posted on duty, took the car to the polling booth to cast his vote. The driver was warned for this lapse on his part.

SHRI M. V. BHADRAM: Sir, I have seen that particular car flying a flag of a candidate in that election. I am prepared to produce evidence.

SHRI A. D. MANI: Who is the candidate?

SHRI M. V. BHADRAM: The candidate belongs to the party which was in power in that State. I am prepared to produce evidence. May I know, Sir, if the Minister will institute an inquiry into it?

SHRI AKBAR ALI KHAN: On a point of order, Sir. It is a matter for the Election Commission.

PROF. V. K. R. V. RAO: I am certainly not prepared to cross swords with the hon. Member regarding the identity of the car and what flag it was flying and so on. But I would like to give the House the information that we have received. I was myself in Visakhapatnam on that day. I had gone there for the purpose of inspecting the shipyard and making enquiries and so on. In fact, the hon. Member will know that a representation was made to us at that time that there should be a holiday in the shipyard so that people can go and vote. We made arrangements for the workers so that everybody could get a chance to go and vote. Coming to this particular point, the driver was there; the staff car of the Hindustan Shipyard was there, the driver had gone there to vote. Immediately this was noticed, an enquiry was made. We asked for information and found out that an enquiry had been made. It was found that when this man was going for lunch, he unauthorisedly took the car for the purpose of voting, left the car and went in to vote. According to the statement that he has made, when he returned, the car was surrounded by a number of people among whom were people belonging to the Congress Party. But he had not carried them there, nor had the car been used for the purpose of carrying candidates. This is the

information that we have received. Immediately, the person was taken to task for this. The same evening, a deputation of some kind had come to see me and one of the members of the deputation, who was, it seems, present at the place, also confirmed the story of the driver. Therefore, the Hindustan Shipyard authorities felt satisfied that the driver did not do what had been alleged. But if the hon. Member thinks something else has been done, I think it is absolutely open to him to take the matter before the Election Commission and have an election petition filed.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: The point is, it is not a matter for the Election Commission. This is a matter relating to the misuse of the public machinery for the election purposes of the Congress. The hon. Minister said here that when the driver of the car returned after voting, many Congressmen were around that car. I believe the driver was not a great political leader like Mr. Morarji Desai so that people collect to see him. I think it does follow *prima facie* from what he has said that they were getting into the car or they had alighted from that car. Now anyone would get that impression from the statement he has made. Sir, do you believe that when your driver goes to vote in a small car or in a staff car, people will gather round that car? No, they will not. It is only when you are inside the car or some people are inside the car, people gather round. So, in view of these things, and in view of the patent absurdity of the facts presented here, I should like to know the manner of investigation conducted by the Minister. Did he ask for a report from the Hindustan Shipyard people or from the police or somebody else? Or did he depute his own agency to investigate into this matter? I should also like to know whether, when the statement was made by the driver, any attempt was made to verify that statement by taking the evidence of those who had brought in the complaint.

PROF. V. K. R. V. RAO: Sir, I find it difficult to follow the comparison that the hon. Member makes between person and person. I would also like to point out that it is not anything so unnatural. It is not only political leaders around whom people gather. It does happen that even drivers of cars have got friends . . .

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: That we know.

PROF. V. K. R. V. RAO: Excuse me, but you have gone to the length of comparing the driver of this car with Shri Morarji Desai . . .

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: No . . . (Interruption) I only said that I can understand Congress members gathering round a car if, for example, such a great man like Mr. Morarji Desai was inside it. Since he was not a great man but a common man like a driver, how do you explain this sudden appearance of so many Congressmen around the car?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It was election day.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: All Congressmen . . .

PROF. V. K. R. V. RAO: All were not Congressmen.

SHRI A. D. MANI: On a point of order, Sir. When an hon. Member of this House says that he is prepared to offer evidence, I would request the hon. Minister to bear in mind the high standards which have been set up in the House of Commons. When a member of the House of Commons offers evidence, the Minister conducts an enquiry. Will the Minister for Transport accept this sporting offer of the hon. Member and conduct an enquiry and not refer it to the Election Commission. The matter can be referred to the Election Commission by an aggrieved party or by a voter. Here it is a question of departmental discipline and I request the hon. Minister to reconsider his reply.

MR. CHAIRMAN: My feeling is the poor worker has been warned. I think we should leave it at that.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I fully appreciate your sympathy for the worker. But I say, Sir, the management was using the car for the Congress and the worker is being made a scapegoat.

SHRI M. V. BHADRAM: 27th April was a holiday. There was no need for the vehicle to go out on duty that day. Secondly, it is not a question of the driver having gone to the polling booth to cast his vote. I had personally seen that vehicle in several places when I was going round the town and the officer in charge of the Transport Section of the Shipyard himself has made a report against the Managing Director who had allowed the vehicle to be used by that particular candidate on that day. Will the Minister be prepared to go into it and investigate the whole affair again?

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: A Member is saying this, Sir.

PROF. V. K. R. V. RAO: As I said right in the beginning, I proceeded on the basis of the information that I received. About 27th being a holiday, it was declared a holiday for the purpose of this election. But that day, a number of officers were also at the Circuit House having discussions with me and, therefore, the driver of the staff car was on duty. I must say I am surprised and somewhat shocked at all the things that have been stated by Mr. Bhadram. But when a statement like that has been made by the hon. Member, certainly I will not stop with this. I shall make further enquiries and if I find it is necessary to have a still further enquiry, I will also get into touch with the hon. Member and he can give me more information that he has got in his possession. This matter will be enquired into.

SHRIMATI VIMAL PUNJAB DESHMUKH: Did the candidate for whom the driver voted win or lose?

(No reply)

SHRIMATI YASHODA REDDY: The hon. Minister has himself said that it was a holiday. I would like to know whether on a holiday during lunch-hour, a driver is entitled to use this car for his personal and private work. Because an Opposition Member has asked this question, it should not appear that just the Congress wins or loses just because we are using public cars. I would like to know how that car went there. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the shipping authorities had anything to do with it or the driver took it on his own.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That has been answered.

PROF. V. K. R. V. RAO: I am prepared to answer the hon. Member's question. Actually the driver was on duty at the Circuit House and evidently he took the car . . .

SHRIMATI YASHODA REDDY: It was a holiday.

PROF. V. K. R. V. RAO: It was not a holiday in the strict sense of the term. It was declared a holiday for the purpose of enabling the workers to go and vote. I thought I had told the House that at that time, the Minister for Transport was in Visakhapatnam holding enquiries and discussions with a number of officers of the shipyard at the Circuit House. The staff car was at the Circuit House and the driver was on duty. Evidently—it is not an entirely unnatural and ununderstandable practice—the driver must have taken the car for going home for lunch. When he was going home for lunch, according to the statement I received, he went to the particular place, stopped the car and went in to cast his vote. When he came back, he found a few friends clustered round the car, of whom some

were Congressmen. Now that the hon. Member has made a very serious statement that he saw the car in a number of places flying the Congress flag, certainly I shall seek more information and see what further enquiries can be made into the matter.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next question.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CENTRAL AND STATE GOVERNMENTS' ESTIMATES OF FOOD PRODUCTION

*550. SHRI P. K. KUMARAN:†
SHRI T. V. ANANDAN:
SHRI SITARAM JAIPURIA:

Will the Minister of FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is considerable difference between the Central and State Governments' estimates of food production in 1966-67;

(b) whether this difference in estimates have proved to be a major hurdle in the rational distribution of available foodgrains in the country; and

(c) if so, whether Government intend to set up an independent machinery to collect agricultural production data which should be acceptable to both the Centre and the State?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION (SHRI D. ERING): (a) Firm estimates of food production for 1966-67 are not yet available and as such the question of difference between the Central and State estimates does not arise.

(b) Absence of reliable advance estimates of food production was the main hurdle in the preparation of a proper and accurate national food budget.

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri P. K. Kumaran.