

to be checked also with the help of the Central Government? On the other hand the Central Government officials are helping the officials of the co-operative society when they are misusing its funds.

SHRI B. S. MURTHY: I do not know; this is an involved question involving many things, not being definite. I have already stated that the Central Commissioner for Co-operation has no part in it and that because of the mismanagement an Administrator has already been appointed.

SHRI ABID ALI: Was it only a formal forwarding of the representation or was some recommendation also made while forwarding the representation?

SHRI B. S. MURTHY: The hon. Member knows that co-operation is a State subject and that we must always take the States with us as far as possible and that only in an emergency the Centre may be called upon to take direct action.

*130. [The questioner (Shri A. B. Vajpayee) was absent. For answer, vide col. 701 infra].

FOODGRAINS DAMAGED IN GODOWNS

*131. SHRI J. C. CHATTERJI: Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) what are the causes of the damage done to foodgrains in godowns; and

(b) what steps Government propose to take to prevent such damage or loss?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM):

(a) The damage to foodgrains in godowns occurs mainly due to dampness, insects, rodents and birds and sometimes due to leakage of rain water.

(b) The following steps are being taken to prevent such damage:—

- (i) Wooden crates and polythene sheets are used as dunnage for preventing damage by dampness. New godowns now being constructed are made damp-proof;
- (ii) Regular disinfestation treatment is given to the stocks of foodgrains to preserve them from insect depredations;
- (iii) New Government godowns have been made rodent-proof. To eradicate the rodent menace in other godowns poisoning baiting, syano-gassing etc., operations are conducted;
- (iv) Various bird scaring devices are used for scaring away the birds;
- (v) Pre-monsoon checks are made and repairs undertaken wherever needed in the godowns to ensure safety of foodgrain stocks against any leakage of water during the rainy season.

SHRI J. C. CHATTERJI: Last time I put a question regarding the total amount of crop lost in this way and the reply was that the information was being collected and would be laid on the Table of the House. May I know when I can get that information?

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: I do not know with reference to which question this is being asked. I am sorry I cannot give the total loss immediately but I think there is some question later on which deals with losses due to pests and insects. But I can give information with regard to loss in storage which occurred in 1961-62 and 1962-63 in terms of percentage and also in terms of tonnes as far as Central Government godowns are concerned. In 1961-62 the loss was 6.4 thousand metric tonnes and in terms of percentage it was 0.161. In 1962-63 the loss was 10.2 thousand metric

tonnes and the percentage is 0.190. It compares very favourably because generally there is a loss of two to three per cent due to storage and this is much below that.

SHRI GOPIKRISHNA VIJAIVAR-GIYA: When buffer stocks are created are they constantly being disposed of and replenished by fresh stocks?

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: As far as possible that is replenished. Old stocks are given priority in distribution and new stocks are added to that.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: May I know if it is not a fact that at about the time when these losses took place many of these godowns especially in West Bengal were found to be very bad? They had been hired from certain big Business elements and the Government made a promise that they would be changed. May I know what steps the Government have taken in the matter? Or are they continuing in those bad godowns?

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: Sir, I have given the steps taken for the purpose of improvement. If the hon. Member wants any specific information regarding West Bengal, particularly about the godowns hired from the big fellows there, I would like to have separate notice.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: It is a fact that Mr. Patil and others gave these facts on the floor of the House and in fact they also revealed how much money was being spent on account of rent charges and so on. I want to know whether the Government have made any substantial break from the old arrangements or whether they are continuing in the old way. That is all that I want to know; details I do not want to have.

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: I do not know what the old arrangement was but as far as the present arrangement is concerned I have given the steps being taken for the purpose of improv-

ing them and the percentage of loss shows that there has been considerable improvement.

PANDIT S. S. N. TANKHA: Some time back the Delhi Administration had seized a considerable quantity of foodgrains from the traders and later it appeared in the newspapers that a large quantity of it had rotted. May I know what the facts are?

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: I am sorry I cannot give it immediately. This refers to Government storage. With regard to seizures and the quality of those grains, I am not in a position to say anything.

SHRIMATI SHAKUNTALA PARAN-JPYE: If the old godowns suffer from the nuisance of rodents may I ask him whether the simple remedy of having cats has been tried in order to control rodents?

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: Then, we should have hundreds of cats and rear them also. Cats alone will not solve the problem of rodents. We have to take special steps for that purpose.

MR. CHAIRMAN: By the way, it is a suggestion for action.

SHRI S. S. MARISWAMY: Is it a fact that some damage has been done to the foodgrain stocks at Avadi recently?

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: 'Recently' means when?

SHRI S. S. MARISWAMY: Recently, about two months or three months back.

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: I have not heard about it.

SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA: May I know, Sir, if the hon. Minister is aware that there is a complaint that there is considerable wastage of wheat due to weak gunny bags being used while unloading them from ships and taking them to godowns?

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: In the case of large imports in bulk and then in transferring it to godowns, in begging there are abound to be some losses. We always try to minimise the losses.

*132. [The questioner (Shri Abdul Ghani) was absent. For answer, vide col. 701-02 infra.]

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST MESSRS. RIVER
STEAM NAVIGATION AND CO LTD.
CALCUTTA

*133. SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Will the Minister of TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received certain serious allegations against Messrs. Rivers Steam Navigation and Company Ltd., Calcutta;

(b) if so what is the nature of the allegations; and

(c) what action Government have taken on them?

THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJ BAHADUR): (a) to (c). During the course of debate on Companies (Amendment) Bill, 1964, certain allegations were made against Messrs. Rivers Steam Navigation Company Limited. Apart from this, no other complaint has been received. The points raised during the debate are receiving attention.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: May I know, Sir, if these complaints include misuse of funds advanced by the Government, non-fulfilment of obligations undertaken by the Company, absence of proper accounting and auditing and similar things, also false accounting to the Government in order to wangle more funds and that the management is entirely in the hands of one or two British Officers who are interested somehow or other in getting funds from the Government to the detriment of the nation and the company?

SHRI RAJ BAHADUR: The hon. Member himself made certain complaints and, if I may say so brought

some charges against the operation of this Company. I may say with all respect that while we try to analyse them and investigate them as best as we can, until and unless they are concrete and specific, it is not possible for us to go very far. In this particular case, in respect of whatever loans that have been advanced, ways and means loans or loans for the rehabilitation of their fleet—it is essential and it is a vital inland water transport link between Calcutta and Assam and we cannot afford to have it suddenly stopped—we have taken good care to see that properly audited accounts are the basis for loans or advances and other suitable steps are taken in order to ensure that whatever funds are being made available to the Company, the funds are not dissipated or misused.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Is the hon. Minister aware that the overhead charges are shown very high, out of proportion to what should be legitimately spent in an undertaking of this kind, and is he also aware of the fact that the employees—they are Indian nationals, of course—have been making loud demands about this matter and whether the Government has taken any steps to get things from the employees there? I made these allegations—I made it clear—on the basis of information supplied to me by the employees and people who are working there for long. I should like to know what steps the Government took in the matter in order to consult the employees there or representatives of the employees to find out facts, or whether they are relying entirely on the management.

SHRI RAJ BAHADUR: So far as the question of overheads is concerned—because this seems to be a concrete question out of the series of questions put—I might say that to some extent it is correct that overheads are rather large and do admit of improvement and do admit of cutting down and pruning. So far as the other questions are concerned, as the