

(b) if so, what price has been paid for the ships; and

(c) what was the reason for the purchase of such old ships?

THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJ BAHADUR): (a) Yes, **Sir**.

(b) ₹1,060,000 (Rs. 141.3 lakhs).

(c) To meet urgent commitments in their existing liner services for which they had frequently to resort to chartering foreign ships. These are second-hand ships which are only 7 to 8 years old as against then-income-tax life of 20 years.

COST OF PRODUCTION OF FOODGRAINS

•285. SHRI KRISHAN DUTT: Will the Minister of FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state the estimated cost of production per maund incurred by the producer for each of the foodgrains, which has been taken" by Government as the basis for fixing the minimum and maximum prices of paddy, wheat, gram, jowar, bajra and maize payable to the producer during the 1964-65 season and what is in Government's view the percentage of margin of profit assured to the producer thereby?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (SHRI C. SUBRAMA-NIAM) : The producers' prices of paddy, wheat, gram, jowar, bajra and maize for the 1964-65 season have been determined on the basis of the recommendations of the Foodgrains Prices Committee and also in the light of the subsequent discussions with the State Governments. The producers' prices announced by the Government are generally higher than the average prices received by the producers during the post-harvest seasons of the last three years. As such, they are considered to be reasonable.

LOSS OF FOODGRAINS DUE TO INSECTS AND ANIMALS

*286. SHRI R. R. DIWAKAR: Will the Minister of FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the annual estimated loss of foodgrains owing to insects, rodents, monkeys and such other animals; and

(b) what special measures are being adopted by Government to prevent this annual loss?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (SHRI C. SUBRAMA-NIAM):

(a) No accurate assessments have been made but it is estimated that over-all losses caused by insects, other animals, pests, diseases and weeds are of the order of 20 per cent, of the value of the agricultural produce per year. Thus estimated the loss works out to approximately Rs. 1,000 crores at the current prices.

(b) Plant Protection Organisations have been set up in all States for taking effective control measures against plant pest and diseases. The Central Government are assisting the State Governments, wherever required, by way of technical advice and in arrangements for the imports of pesticides and equipment and also by way of assistance in ground and aerial operations. For the distribution of pesticides and manually operated sprayers/dusters the Central Government gives a subsidy of 25 per cent.

CLOSING DOWN OF FLOUR MILLS

•288. SHRI MULKA GOVINDA REDDY: Will the Minister of FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of roller flour mills in the whole of the country have been closed down owing to non-arrival of their quotas of imported wheat from the Centre; and