

SHRI PURNA CHANDRA SHARMA: May I know, Sir, whether the rail-head for Kulu Valley is not Joginder-nagar?

SHRI SHAH NAWAZ KHAN: From Pathankot, the Chamba Valley and Dalhousie are also served. These are the two important hill stations to which we have been giving concession for rail travel. It is not possible to give rail concessions for every station situated in the hills.

SHRI PURNA CHANDRA SHARMA: Will the Government consider about the Kulu Valley, which is equally a health centre like Dehra Dun and Simla?

SHRI SHAH NAWAZ KHAN: If a request is made, we will certainly consider it on its merits.

SHRIMATI MAYA DEVI CHETTRY: May I know whether Darjeeling has been included?

SHRI SHAH NAWAZ KHAN: It is included.

REQUEST FROM ASSAM FOR CENTRAL
LOAN FOR BUILDING UP A BUFFER STOCK
OF PADDY

*209. **SHRI PURNA CHANDRA SHARMA:** Will the Minister of Food AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state whether the Government of Assam has asked for a loan of Rs. 1 crore from the Centre for building up a buffer stock of paddy and if so, whether the amount has been sanctioned?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (SHRI A. M. THOMAS): Yes, Sir, the Government of Assam asked for a loan of one crore of rupees, and the Government of India have sanctioned cash credit accommodation upto that limit from the State Bank of India.

INCREASE IN THE FARES OF INDIAN
AIRLINES CORPORATION

*210. **SHRI M. H. SAMUEL:** Will the Minister of TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state whether Government have now taken a decision to revise air fares of the Indian Airlines Corporation with effect from May 1; if so,—

(a) what will be the increase over the present rates; and

(b) what are the reasons for the increase?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI AHMED MOHIUDDIN): (a) and (b). The proposals for the revision of the passenger fares of the Indian Airlines Corporation are still under examination.

SHRI M. H. SAMUEL: May I know, when you propose to bring them into effect?

MR. CHAIRMAN: They are still under consideration. First of all they must decide and then implement.

SHRI MAHESWAR NAIK: May I know, Sir, whether an increase is contemplated?

SHRI AHMED MOHIUDDIN: The Air Transport Council has recommended rationalisation of the fares and the proposals are under consideration. The revision is really more of rationalisation and incidentally there are also certain proposals under consideration. The proposal is to increase rates for a number of sectors; there are certain sectors for which the rates will not be increased.

SHRI M. H. SAMUEL: When did the last revision take place?

SHRI AHMED MOHIUDDIN: The last revision had taken place in about 1955.

SHRI M. H. SAMUEL: Has there been any corresponding increase in

the, comforts of the passengers on account of the increase?

SHRI AHMED MOHIUDDIN: Yes, Sir. The number of passengers has also considerably increased.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: May I know, Sir, whether any actual scheme has been worked out to justify what is called rationalisation and whether in that scheme the interests of the passengers have been taken fully into account?

SHRI S. K. PATIL: Yes, such a scheme has been worked out. The matter is under consideration and when the final decision is taken it will be placed on the Table of the House.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: May I know, Sir whether the Government is considering . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, order. Question Hour is over.

12 Noon

SHORT NOTICE QUESTION AND ANSWER

FOOD SITUATION IN WEST BENGAL

2. DR. NIHAR RANJAN RAY: Will the Minister of FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether during his recent visit to Calcutta he discussed the food situation in West Bengal with the Chief Minister and the Minister for Food and senior officers of that State;

(b) whether he came back with the disquieting impression that the food situation in the State was quite serious;

(c) if the answer to part (b) above be in the affirmative, what steps have been taken and are proposed to be taken by Government to avert an impending crisis; and

(d) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to give any grant to the Government of West Bengal for distribution as agricultural loan to farmers, if necessary?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (SHRI A. P. JAIN): (a) to (c). Yes Sir, the food position in West Bengal was discussed with the West Bengal Government. The position is, no doubt, difficult, and needs careful handling, but Government have enough stocks of food-grains available with them and are confident of keeping the situation under control.

(d) The question of giving a suitable advance to the State Government for agricultural loans to the farmers is under consideration of the Government of India.

DR. NIHAR RANJAN RAY: Has the hon. Minister's attention been drawn to a news item from Calcutta published in the Delhi edition of the "Statesman" of May 5th alleging that "at least five deaths from near starvation and sale of four babies either for money or in their parents' anxiety to save their lives" have occurred in the Raiganj area of the West Dinajpur district?

SHRI A. P. JAIN: I have seen that report, but I cannot say whether it is correct or incorrect. I have made enquiries from the West Bengal Government.

DR. NIHAR RANJAN RAY: Is the hon. Minister aware of the fact that whatever relief measures the Government have adopted are working rather unsatisfactorily and that the payment of wages for test relief work is in many cases rather irregular and very much delayed?

SHRI A. P. JAIN: I have seen Press reports to that effect, but that function clearly falls under the State Government and I am not in a position to say whether it is a fact or it is not a fact.