

THE MINISTER FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (SHRI A. P. JAIN): (a) 2,000 lbs. approximately.

(b) Statistics of actual imports of ergot are not available as this item is not shown as distinct item in the Customs Returns wherefrom import figures are collected.

(c) The Indian Council of Agricultural Research is financing two schemes for investigation on the production of ergot in Assam and West Bengal.

RAILWAY PORTERS

Will. SHRI M. VALIULLA: Will the Minister for RAILWAYS be pleased to state the manner in which the amount collected from railway porters as licence fee is utilised?

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS AND TRANSPORT (SHRI LAL BAHADUR) : Where the porters are licenced direct by the Railways, the amount realised is utilised to cover the cost of the supervisory organisation and of the uniforms supplied to the porters.

Where the 'Contract System' is in force, the amount is utilised by the contractors to meet their cost of supervision, retaining also a margin as profit.

HOLDING UP OF TRAINS BY STUDENTS AND MOBS

412. SHRI M. VALIULLA: Will the Minister for RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) how many times students and mobs held up trains in 1954-55 and so far in 1955-56; and

(b) the present strength of the police force on the Railways to protect passengers and railway staff on such occasions?

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS AND TRANSPORT (SHRI LAL

BAHADUR): (a) and (b). The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha as soon as received.

REGIONAL COMMITTEES FOR EMPLOYEES PROVIDENT FUND SCHEME

413. SHRI M. VALIULLA: Will the Minister for LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) how many States have so far set up regional committees to supervise the work connected with the administration of the Employees' Provident Fund Act; and

(b) who appoints these committees?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR LABOUR (SHRI ABID ALI): (a) Regional Committees have been set up in six States, viz., Bombay, Bihar, Madras, Madhya Bharat, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

(b) The Regional Committees are constituted by the Central Government under sub-para (1) of para 4 of the Employees' Provident Fund Scheme, 1952.

CHOWKIDARS IN THE CIVIL AVIATION DEPARTMENT

414. SHRI M. VALIULLA: Will the Minister for COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to refer to the reply given to Starred Question No. 45 on the 25th August 1954 and state: •

(a) whether chowkidars are still working in the Civil Aviation Department; if so, whether they are treated as class IV employees;

(b) whether the benefits under the General Provident Fund scheme are admissible to the class IV employees and chowkidars employed in that Department; and

(c) if not, when such benefits will be extended to them?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAJ BAHADUR): (a) Yes, Sir.