

(c) Because the immediate verification of the sale and the account of the tickets purchased from the outside agency is not possible when such tickets are not surrendered within the time allowed.

SHRI S. N. DWIVEDY: Is there any proposal to give authority to outside booking agencies to take the ticket back and refund the money immediately?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: If the ticket purchased from an outside agency is surrendered before closure of business on that day, then immediate refund is granted by the outside booking agency.

EXPORT OF SURPLUS RICE

*289. SHRI P. C. BHANJ DEO: Will the Minister for FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to export surplus rice in the country to other countries; and

(b) if so, how much is proposed to be exported and at what rate?

THE MINISTER FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI): (a) and (b). As already stated during debate in the Rajya Sabha on the Resolution regarding increase in export duty on rice, trade has been permitted to purchase from the open market and export up to 2 lakh tons of rice to foreign countries at prices to be negotiated between the exporters and importers.

SHRI P. C. BHANJ DEO: May I know, whether, in view of the deterioration in the food situation owing to floods and other natural calamities, Government have any plans in view to restrict exports under the present circumstances?

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI: I do not accept it that the food position has deteriorated.

PROF. G. RANGA: Was any prohibitive export duty levied on the speeches made by the Opposition Members, with the result that none of the speeches made by the Opposition Members was reported, and they accepted the speech made by my hon. friend?

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI: Because the papers thought that that was the most important speech.

SHRI H. P. SAKSENA: Does the hon. Food Minister look upon floods as a blessing?

(No reply.)

SHRI S. N. MAZUMDAR: Is the hon. Minister aware that his statement as regards the effects of the floods in North Bengal was challenged by me on the floor of the House the other day?

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI: I heard with patience the hon. Member's description of the effects of floods in North Bengal. But I am not bound to accept, whatever the hon. Member says, as true.

SHRI B. GUPTA: May I ask him one question? Is the hon. Minister aware that over the past few weeks the retail prices of rice in certain parts of Bengal are going up day by day?

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI: I have heard hon. Members often describing such cases in the course of the last few years. But hon. Members should be aware of the fact that wherever any place is cut off either on account of floods or on any other account, the prices go up. But the Bengal Government as well as the other Governments in the affected areas have started supplying rice at subsidised prices, which are lower than the prices at which Government were selling rice before.

SHRI B. GUPTA: The fact that Government have been compelled to supply rice at subsidised prices proves that the situation is deteriorating at least in some parts of Bengal.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is not a question. That is a long statement.

SHRI B. GUPTA: This time I put a question. May I know, if the hon. Minister knows that it is not only in the flood-affected areas but also in some areas very close to Calcutta that the price of rice is going up?

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI: I will be thankful to the hon. Member if he will enable me to sell rice from the Government's stocks at a little lower price than the market price. Nobody is purchasing.

SHRI R. P. N. SINHA: Is the hon. Minister aware of the fact that every year, during the months of *Sawan* and *Bhadon*, the price of rice usually goes up?

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI: But the surprising thing is that this year, except in the flood-affected areas, the rice price, everywhere is going down.

SHRI S. N. MAZUMDAR: Is it the contention of the hon. Minister that if flood waters are not found standing at any place, then it is to be taken that no damage has been caused to the crops there?

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI: I am afraid. I have been misunderstood or misrepresented. I did not say that there had been no damage to rice crops due to floods, but what I said was that whatever we produced this year would be more than sufficient to meet the requirements of the country, and our old stocks were an assurance to the people.

SHRI S. N. MAZUMDAR: May I know, what is the hon. Minister's opinion about the effect of floods on the next year's food production?

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI: Next year's production, I cannot prophesy. He will have to consult some soothsayer.

SHRI S. MAHANTY: In part (b) of this question information was sought

regarding the rate at which rice was going to be exported. The hon. Minister has said that the price will have to be determined between the exporters and the importers. So may I know whether the Government are aware of the fact that there is a great a hiatus between the procurement price and the export price?

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI: We have put such a high duty on the exports that unless the exporter gets very high prices, he will not be able to export rice. That is the check that we have put on the free exports. And, as I have already told the hon. Members, the export of rice will not affect the rice position in this country because we are also importing. It was pointed out the other day that we have exported up till now only about 250 tons. And, I think, we have issued permits for import to the extent of about 40 to 60 thousand tons.

SHRI S. MAHANTY: Is the Government aware of the fact that the actual producers of rice, who do not get a fair price for their rice, think that this is just like robbing Peter to pay Paul?

(No reply.)

SHRI B. GUPTA: The hon. Minister has said that he has got some stocks in hand to meet any contingencies that might arise. May I ask him, as to why these stocks are not being utilised to regulate the market, so that the price of foodgrains—at Rs. 16 or Rs. 17—comes down to a reasonable level and the people may buy them at cheap rates? Why are these stocks not released for regulating the market in the interests of the consumers?

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI: It is difficult for me to understand the hon. Member's point of view. Only some time back when the rice was being sold cheap in Bengal, the hon. Member protested that the producer was not getting a fair price. Now when we procure rice, or buy it, at a price higher than the market price, the price is bound to go up, because if we start

purchasing rice at Rs. 16 or Rs. 18 | a maund, then no private consumer will be able to get that rice at that low-price. Therefore, we can take only one view, either to give it at a cheap price to consumers, or to pay a high price to producers. We cannot do both these things.

SHRI B. GUPTA: I am not on the horns of a dilemma in this matter. Our complaint was that procurement, at the harvesting time, was being made to the disadvantage of the tillers of the food soil. During the rest of the year, the price began to go up. What we demand is that the producers should be given an economic price. And at the same time, when rice is retailed in the market, the Government should so control the prices that the people may buy it. That was our contention.

SHRIMATI SHARDA BHARGAVA: Is the hon. Member making a speech or asking a question?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next question.

ADVANCE ORDERS FOR WAGONS AND COACHES

*290. SHRI P. C. BHANJ DEO: Will the Minister for RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any orders have been placed with foreign countries for the supply of wagons and coaches for the year 1955-56; and

(b) if so, the names of such countries and the number of wagons and coaches ordered from each country?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS AND TRANSPORT (SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN): (a) and (b). No actual orders for the supply of wagons and coaches have been placed so far against 1955-56 Rolling Stock Programme. Available indigenous capacity has, however, been booked for the manufacture of wagons and coaches and in addition offers have been invited from abroad for the supply of Electric Mul-

tiple Unit Stock and other specialised type of rolling stock for which capacity does not, at present, exist in the country.

SHRI P. C. BHANJ DEO: May I know, the prices at which these Electric Multiple Units for the Railway? are going to be obtained for this country?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: We have invited offers, and the prices are yet being negotiated and fixed.

SHRI P. C. BHANJ DEO: May I know the countries from which they have been ordered?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: This is from Italy.

EXPERIMENTS ON THE NUTRITIVE VALUE OF OIL CAKES

*291. SHRI P. C. BHANJ DEO: Will the Minister for FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the year in which experiments were started at the Indian Veterinary Research Institute with a view to determining the nutritive value of oilcakes from which oil had been extracted; and

(b) the year in which the experiments are likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI): (a) In 1950.

(b) The scheme is at present sanctioned up to the end of February 1955.

SHRI P. C. BHANJ DEO: May I know, the number of workers employed in this Research Institute in order to turn cow-feed into food for human consumption?

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI: I would require notice for that, because I thought that the hon. Member was interested only in the experiments and not in the number of people employed.