

SHRI S. N. MAZUMDAR: May I know, Sir, when the Government is expected to come to a decision on this question?

SHRI ABID ALI: It will take time, Sir.

SHRI S. N. MAZUMDAR: May I have at least an approximate idea of the time Government will require to come to a decision?

SHRI ABID ALI: I am sorry, Sir, that I will not be able to give it.

SHRI S. N. MAZUMDAR: Is it not possible, in the meantime, to come forward with at least some amendments to the Payment of Wages Act to promote relief of the employees?

SHRI ABID ALI: The Factories Amendment Bill was introduced here in the month of September and the Minimum Wages Amendment Bill in March last year, and still these have not been considered. I would request the Members kindly to help us in disposing of the pending matter.

SHRI S. N. MAZUMDAR: This advice should be given to the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and not to the Party in opposition.

*169. [For answer, vide cols. 1478-79]

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*170. [For answer, vide col. 1479]

QUALITY OF RICE SUPPLIED TO WEST BENGAL

*171. SHRI B. C. GHOSE: Will the Minister for FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any complaints from the West Bengal Government about the poor quality and high landing cost of rice supplied to that State by the other States;

(b) if the reply to part (a) above be in the affirmative, what action has been taken on these complaints; and

(c) whether any promise was made that the rice to be supplied to that State from other States would be mostly in the form of paddy?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (SHRI M. V. KRISHNAPPA): (a) and (b). Representations received from West Bengal Government relate to the fact that rice allotted to them from Orissa is less polished than is acceptable to consumers in West Bengal, that the allotments offered by Orissa are mostly of superfine rice, and that, in any case, practically all the rice offered for import into West Bengal from the surplus States consists of raw rice for which there is much less demand in West Bengal.

The West Bengal Government have in the past, through their Inspecting Officers, rejected qualities which were not suitable to them. The Orissa Government were also asked to try to meet the objection regarding under-poiish. Both Orissa and Madhya Pradesh Governments have actually been encouraged to produce more par-boiled rice; or, in the alternative, to send paddy to West Bengal. The procurement price of common rice both in Orissa and Madhya Pradesh, from where mainly allotments of rice to West Bengal have been made, are less than the procurement price in West Bengal. There is, therefore, no ground for grievance for West Bengal on this score. But these questions are now out-of-date, as West Bengal Government have decided not to import any more rice from surplus States during 1954.

(c) Yes. it was agreed that as far as possible, arrangement would be made to supply either boiled rice or paddy which West Bengal Government would mill into boiled rice in their own mills.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE: Do I understand that the West Bengal Government are * not importing any rice from other States in 1954 and that therefore the question of getting good or bad rice from other States does not arise?

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI: Yes. They are not importing. They have produced more than they require.

SHRI B. GUPTA: May I know if the West Bengal Government made any request to the Central Government for supplying rice at a lower cost?

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI: How can they? The procurement price of common rice both in Orissa and Madhya Pradesh is less than the procurement price in West Bengal. They cannot be responsible for the transport cost, which the West Bengal Government has to pay. They cannot expect the Orissa Government or the Madhya Pradesh Government to pay.

SHRI B. GUPTA: May I know, Sir, if it was not pointed out to the Central Government that the rationed rice at Calcutta was selling at a price which was beyond the reach of the 'average consumer'?

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI: I note the hon. Member and other friends saying that.

UNDER-CHARGES IN THE *ex-G*- I. P. RAILWAY

*160. SHRI S. MAHANTY (ON BEHALF OF SHRI P. C. BHANJ DEO) : Will the Minister for RAILWAYS be pleased to refer to Annexure B (page 219) to the Appropriation Accpunts of Railways in India for 1950-51, Part II, and state the reasons for the high percentage of under-charges to earnings on the *ex-G.I.P.* Railway?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS AND TRANSPORT (SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN) : These under-charges were detected chiefly under coaching earnings during the course of check of warrants and credit notes, against the Civil and Military Departments. Heavy under-charges on Military traffic were generally due to explosives having been

booked by stations at lower rates than actually applicable.

IMPORT OF SUGAR

*161. SHRI S. MAHANTY: (ON BEHALF OF SHRI P. C. BHANJ DEO) : Will the Minister for FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the cost of sugar imported so far against the budget provision made for that purpose for the year 1953-54;

(b) the recoveries so far made from the sale of the imported sugar against the estimated recoveries for the year; and

(c) whether any unsold stock of the imported sugar will be carried forward to the next year?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (DR. P. S. DESHMUKH): (a), (b) and (c). The accounts relating to the import of sugar during 1953-54 have not yet been finalised. On the basis of the latest estimates available, the total cost of imported sugar works out to Rs. 17 • 23 crores as against the budget provision of Rs. 17'17 crores. Out of the total sale proceeds of about Rs. 20-1 crores, Rs. 19-06 crores have already been realised. No unsold stock of imported sugar is likely to be carried forward to the next year.

IMPORT OF AIRCRAFT

*169. SHRI S. MAHANTY (ON BEHALF OF SHRI P. C. BHANJ DEO) : Will the Minister for COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state the value of civil aircraft and spare parts of such aircraft imported from abroad in each year from 1948-49 to 1952-53?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAJ BAHADUR): A statement showing the total value of imports of aircraft and spare parts made during the year 1948-49 to 1952-53 is laid on the Table of the House Separate figures of aircraft and parts intended only for civil use are not available.