

SHRI S. MAHANTY: I want to know if the regional headquarters at Bilaspur is going to be split up and located at Waltair, Kharagpur and Bilaspur.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Minister has stated that the whole question is under consideration and no final decision has been reached. On the other side, hon. Members go on to suggest that steps are already being taken, without a final decision being reached at top level. Hon. Members should accept what the Minister says. Next question.

RISE IN THE PRICE OF RICE IN MALABAR DISTRICT

*97. SHRI E. K. IMBICHIBAVA: Will the Minister for FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that the price of rice has gone up steeply in the Malabar District of Madras State;

(b) whether Government are aware of the strong protests voiced by the people and leading news papers of Malabar during the last week of January; and

(c) if the replies to parts (a) and (b) above be in the affirmative, whether Government propose to take any steps in the matter; if so, what?

THE MINISTER FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI): (a) There has been a slight rise in the open market price of rice in Malabar District. The issue price of rice from Government shops has been slightly raised by Rs. 1-14-9 per maund in the case of first sort rice; while actually the second sort has been reduced by Rs. 0-6-6 per maund.

(b) I have not received any representation but have seen reports in the Press about the rise in the rice prices.

(c) The fixation of prices for issue from Government shops is a matter

for the State Government to decide, taking into account their availabilities and the prices. However, the Central Government will address the State Government to explore any possibility of a reduction in the price of the first sort rice.

SHRI E. K. IMBICHIBAVA (in Malayalam): "What is the rate of increase of the price in ration shops?"

SHRI M. V. KRISHNAPPA: The increase in the price in ration shops is due to the revised price policy of the Madras Government...

MR. CHAIRMAN: He wants to know the rate of increase.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI: It has actually been reduced in the case of second sort rice; from Rs. 19-2-6 to Rs. 18-12.

AN HON. MEMBER: What about first sort rice?

SHRI M. V. KRISHNAPPA: I have already stated that the price of that rice has been increased by Rs. 1-14-9 per maund.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is for the rich man. Mr. Imbichibava is satisfied. Next question.

TRANSPORT OF Bidis

*98. SHRI E. K. IMBICHIBAVA: Will the Minister for RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that adequate railway facilities do not exist for transport of bidis to Ceylon from India; and

(b) if so, what steps Government propose to take in the matter?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS AND TRANSPORT SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: (a) No, there is

practically no difficulty in the supply of wagons for the transport of *Bidis* or moving this commodity in 'Smalls' to Ceylon. All demands for movement of this traffic by rail to Ceylon via Dhanushkodi are being met currently.

(b) Does not arise.

SHRI E. K. IMBICHIBAVA (*in Malayalam*): "After Tuticorin the transport is by railway. I want to know whether the facilities are adequate."

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: Yes, they are quite adequate.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A matter of opinion.

TRANSPORT OF DRIED FISH

*99. SHRI E. K. IMBICHIBAVA: Will the Minister for RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any representations or protests have been received by Government from traders pointing out the lack of facilities at the Tirur Railway Station on the Southern Railway with regard to the sending of consignments of dried fish from that station; and

(b) how many maunds of dried fish are allowed to be booked from Tirur Railway Station daily?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS AND TRANSPORT (SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN): (a) Yes, some representations were received by the Southern Railway from traders asking for an increase in the quota for movement by rail of dried fish as 'smalls' from Tirur Railway Station.

(b) The quota for dried fish in 'smalls' is 40 maunds a day from Tirur, in addition to 40 maunds a day from Ponnani Out Agency, served by Tirur, making a total of 80 maunds a day from this area. Previously, the quota from Tirur was only 20 maunds a day, which was increased to 40 maunds from 12th November 1952.

SHRI E. K. IMBICHIBAVA (*in Malayalam*): "Is it possible to raise the quota to 60 maunds?"

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: No, because we have to take the demands at other stations into account.

SHRI B. RATH: In view of the fact that dried fish and dried fish "fry" are very palatable, will export facilities be given to traders to export dried fish to other places?

(No reply.)

RAILWAY EMPLOYEES WHO OPTED FOR PAKISTAN AND RETURNED TO INDIA

*100. KHWAJA INAIT ULLAH: Will the Minister for RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) how many Railway servants who had opted provisionally for Pakistan, and then came back to India within the time limit, have not yet been employed; and

(b) if there are such persons, what are the reasons for not taking them back to their posts?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS AND TRANSPORT (SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN): (a) Complete information regarding number of railway employees who provisionally opted for Pakistan and later changed their option to India Final within the time limit but not taken back to duty is not available, as all such employees have not reported to Railway Administrations.

(b) In accordance with the orders on the subject such staff on changing their option to India Final and Reporting to their parent Railway are taken back to duty unless they have been found unsuitable for entertainment in Government service.

KHWAJA INAIT ULLAH: I wish to know about those who returned and applied to the Railway for re-employment. What about them?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: Most of them have been taken back.