

A Committee consisting of four officials and two non-officials which was appointed in 1952 to examine the storage arrangements made by the Ministry and to make suggestions for avoiding deterioration in quality has reported about some of this wheat that, though it was not unfit for human consumption and would also keep for a number of months, it was poor in quality in the sense that the quality was below the average standard quality with large percentage of dead, thin and uneven grains with a fairly large quantity of dust and dirt admixture.

On arrival at Indian ports of foodgrains purchased by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture they are inspected for quality and these inspection reports showed that the wheat was according to the prescribed specifications of the grades under reference. The point needing examination then is whether better quality wheat could not have been purchased bearing in mind the availabilities at the time, and whether the price differential for the wheat actually purchased was such as to be justified in view of the prices prevailing for other types of wheat which were available in the requisite quantity. Enquiries are being made on this point and the result will be placed on the Table of the House.

SHRI B. RATH : According to paragraph 2 of the statement the quality was below the average standard quality with large percentage of dead, thin and uneven grains with a fairly large quantity of dust and dirt admixture. May I know what is the percentage of this dead, thin and uneven grain that was imported from America ?

SHRI M. V. KRISHNAPPA : Sir, when these experts visited the godowns, there were 1,32,000 tons of imported wheat and 81,000 tons of indigenous wheat in our godowns. These experts, on the basis of their inspection, have come to the conclusion that nearly 20 per cent, of it was in the condition described by my hon. friend.

(Shri B. Gupta rose.)

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Order, order. Question hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

B.C.G. VACCINATION

*35- SHRI K. C. GEORGE : Will the Minister for HEALTH be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that an opinion is gaining currency that in certain cases, B.C.G. Vaccination on normally healthy persons results in developing tuberculosis in such persons ; and

(b) whether Government have taken or propose to take any steps to verify the correctness of that opinion ?

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR) : (a) It is not correct to say that opinion is getting currency that in certain cases B.C.G. vaccination on normally healthy persons leads to development of tuberculosis in them.

(b) The Government have already considered criticisms against B.C.G. vaccination and have taken into consideration expert opinion in India and outside, which is overwhelmingly in favour of the vaccination. The Government are fully satisfied that this is a safe and effective preventive measure against tuberculosis. By innumerable tests it has been proved that B.C.G. vaccination cannot produce disease, and is harmless.

LEPERS IN RAILWAY PLATFORMS

♦36. SHRI K. C. GEORGE : Will the Minister for RAILWAYS be pleased to state whether it is a fact that a large number of lepers wander about on the Railway platforms, particularly at stations between Madras and Bezwada ? If so, do Government propose to take any steps to prevent them from doing so ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS AND TRANSPORT (SHRI O.V. ALAGESAN) : Lepers are sometimes noticed begging in Railway premises but it is not a special feature on the Madras-Bezwada section. The station staff have instructions to remove such persons when found in station premises but it is difficult to completely prevent them from coming into the station premises.