

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (Dr. Ram Subhag Singh): (a) A scheme for research on the diseases of fruits in the hilly areas of Punjab has been sanctioned by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research for a period of five years from 1st April, 1963;

(b) The scheme will be worked out at Sultanpur (Kulu Valley) and the estimated expenditure is Rs. 60,300 for a period of five years.

Railway link with Pakistan

*422. { Shri Mantri:
Shri Ram Ratan Gupta:

Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether Pakistan has taken up the question of a direct railway link between East Pakistan and West Pakistan through India; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Railways (Shri Shah Nawaz Khan): (a) and (b). The question of grant of transit facilities by India and Pakistan for the rail movement of civilians traffic (passengers, parcels and goods) passing from one area to another of the same country through the other country has been under the consideration of Government for some time but no final decision in the matter has so far been arrived at.

Shipping Tonnage

*423. { Shri Ram Ratan Gupta:
Shri Mantri:

Will the Minister of Transport and Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Shipping Board has asked for more funds for the acquisition of new tonnage; and

(b) if so, action taken in the matter?

The Minister of Shipping in the Ministry of Transport and Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur): (a) No

such request has been received after the Third Plan target for gross acquisition was raised from 3,75,000 G.R.T. to 5,50,000 G.R.T.

(b) Does not arise.

Employment to Agriculturists

*424. **Shri Harish Chandra Mathur:** Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) the main features and nature of Rajasthan Government's scheme to provide employment to 4.25 lakh agriculturists in the State and to increase agricultural production; and

(b) what is Central Government's reaction to the proposal?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (Dr. Ram Subhag Singh): (a) The Government of Rajasthan mentioned that there are 4.25 lakh agriculturists in the State and they could be resettled on an area of 122.5 lakh acres of unoccupied cultivable wastelands in the State. The estimated cost would be about Rs. 20 crores.

(b) As the progress of the work will depend upon the phased programme and the administrative resources available, the State Government has been asked to draw up a phased programme of reclamation and resettlement on the lands indicating the number of families to be settled, the area to be allotted and the estimated expenditure from year to year.

Import of Rice from Burma

{ Shri P.C. Borooah:
Shri Maheswar Naik:
*425. { Shri Bishanchander Seth:
Shri Rameshwar Tantia:
Shri Ram Ratan Gupta:
Shri Mantri:

Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) whether an agreement has been signed between India and Burma for

importing 2,25,000 tons of Burmese rice into India; and

(b) if so, what are the terms of the agreement?

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (Shri A. M. Thomas): (a) and (b). On the 24th of December, 1962 an Agreement was signed between the Governments of Burma and India for the purchase by India of not less than 1.5 lakh tons of rice annually for a period of three years from 1-1-63. On the same date a contract for the purchase in 1963 of a quantity of 1.5 lakh tons and additional quantities if required and available of Burma rice was also signed. In other respects the pattern of the purchase contract broadly follows the previous contracts for the purchase of rice from Burma.

Derailment of 8 Down Express

*426. **Shri D. C. Sharma:** Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether any enquiry has been made into the attempt to derail 8 Down Express between Lakwa and Suffry railway stations by placing boulders during November, 1962; and

(b) if so, what are its findings?

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Railways (Shri S. V. Ramaswamy):

(a) Yes Sir.

(b) The case is still under police investigation.

Road Transport

*427 { **Shri Maheswar Naik.**
Dr. L. M. Singhvi.

Will the Minister of Transport and Communications be pleased to state:

(a) the extent of additional burden of traffic which has been brought to bear upon the road transport system as a result of the emergency in the country;

(b) what measures are being taken to cope with the additional burden; and

(c) whether any foreign assistance has been made available outside the plan provisions on this account?

The Minister of Shipping in the Ministry of Transport and Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur): (a) Although some additional burden has fallen on road transport because of the emergency, it is difficult to indicate the extent of the increase since no surveys in this respect has been conducted by the State Governments, in whom the executive authority in respect of road transport vests.

(b) The following measures have been taken to cope with the situation:

(1) A special Road Transport Organisation has been set up under the Department of Transport, for transport, by road, of essential supplies to Assam. This is intended to supplement the existing rail and water transport services to Assam. Fifty vehicles have already been acquired by this Organisation. Fifty more vehicles will be added by the close of the current financial year. There is also a proposal for acquiring 100 vehicles during the next financial year.

(2) Orders have been issued under the Defence of India Rules, 1962, exempting vehicles and persons engaged in the transport of goods or personnel for the defence of India and civil defence etc. from laden weight restrictions and the necessity of obtaining permits and counter-signatures.

(3) A programme for the improvement of certain arterial routes in the States of Bihar, West Bengal and Assam and certain other roads