

Hospitals drawing less than Rs. 150 per month for self and dependents;

(b) since when this practice has been introduced;

(c) whether representations from Employees Trade Unions have been received to discontinue this practice; and

(d) if so, the action taken thereon.

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Railways (Shri S. V. Ramaswamy): A statement is laid on the table of the House.

STATEMENT

(a) No diet charges are recovered from a railway employee who is a patient in a railway hospital if he is in receipt of pay up to Rs. 180 per month; but such charges are recovered from any member of his family who is treated as a patient in a railway hospital. In the case of T.B. patients, however, no recoveries are made from the employee or his family if the pay of the employee does not exceed Rs. 380 per month.

(b) The practice has been in force for a very long time. Prior to 1st January, 1961 the pay limits referred to in (a) above were Rs. 130 and Rs. 300 respectively.

(c) and (d). No representation has been received in the Ministry of Railways.

Shipping Tonnage

*540. Shri H. N. Mukerjee: Will the Minister of Transport and Communications be pleased to state:

(a) what has been the progress so far towards achievement of the Plan targets for shipping tonnage;

(b) what is the tonnage now being operated by the Shipping Corporation of India; and

(c) whether there is any scheme of having only Indian ships to carry our own foodgrain imports?

The Minister of Shipping in the Ministry of Transport and Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur): (a) A gross addition of about 45,600 G.R.T. has so far been made against a target of 3,74,500 G.R.T. set in the Third Five Year Plan. However, taking into account the commitments, already made, there is every hope of the Plan target being reached in time.

(b) 154,000 G.R.T. approximately.

" (c) No, Sir.

Embankment over River Brahmani, Orissa

*541. Shri Surendranath Dwivedy: Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government are aware of a scheme amounting to Rs. 22 lakhs drawn up by the Government of Orissa for the construction of a new embankment over river Brahmani near Jevapore with a view to afford protection to the Railway bridge over the river;

(b) whether any discussion on the matter was held between the Railway authorities and the Orissa Government;

(c) whether the Government of Orissa have demanded that half of the cost should be borne by the Railways; and

(d) whether any decision has been taken in the matter?

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Railways (Shri Shahnawaz Khan):

(a) Yes, Sir. The Orissa Government has prepared a scheme for raising the existing embankment along the Brahmani river near Jenapur including provision of a pucca road on it at a cost of Rs. 22 lakhs for protection of countryside affected by floods due to breaches in the protection bund in the past.

(b) and (c). Yes, Sir.

(d) Not yet.

Export of Sugar

*542. **Shri Jedhe:** Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any proposal from the Co-operative Sugar Mills Association to export sugar directly on their behalf;

(b) whether Government are giving any share of their exports of sugar to U.S.A. to the co-operative sugar factories to export directly in future;

(c) if so, the ratio or proportion therefor; and

(d) if not the reasons therefor?

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Food (Shri A. M. Thomas): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d). Do not arise.

Mushroom Cultivation

*543. { **Shri Subodh Hansda:**
Shri S. C. Samanta:
Shri B. K. Das:
Shri Maheswar Naik:

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

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to start mushroom cultivation on a commercial scale;

(b) if so, what steps Government are taking to implement the scheme; and

(c) whether any area has been chosen for this purpose?

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri S. K. Patil): (a) to (c). A statement giving the information required is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

A small pilot scheme for development of mushroom cultivation in Himachal Pradesh was sanctioned by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research in 1960. This scheme actually started functioning from July, 1961.

A survey of different areas of Himachal Pradesh is being conducted with a view to collect species of edible mushrooms found growing in nature and necessary data is being collected with regard to their ecological and soil requirements; as a result of this survey, 8 species of edible mushrooms have been collected and identified. Techniques are now being developed to culture the species in the laboratory.

The material for spawn making has been obtained by the Himachal Pradesh Administration from different sources and efforts to multiply spawns of different species are being made.

The work is in preliminary stages and is being conducted at the Agricultural Research Station, Solan.

Based on the results that may be recorded under the above scheme, the Government would consider the advisability of taking up mushroom cultivation on a commercial scale in Himachal Pradesh as well as in other parts of the country having suitable agro-climatic conditions. It is premature to decide on precise locations for the production on commercial scale.

Sugar to Aden

*544. **Shri P. C. Borooah:** Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) whether an agreement for supply of sugar to Aden has recently been finalised; and

(b) if so, how much sugar is to be exported to that country and on what terms?

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Food (Shri A. M. Thomas): (a) and (b). No agreement has been signed for supply of sugar to Aden by Government. A number of Indian firms have contracted to export 6,500 metric tons of Indian sugar at prices ranging between £24-10-0 to £26-10-0 per metric ton C. & F. Aden and Mukulla (Aden Protectorate) for shipment by May, 1962.