

Are the Government aware of that, and may I know whether there is any alternative arrangement to bring these things by rail via Pakistan territory?

Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri: I do not know. In fact, as I said, the rate has not been increased. It was Rs. 2|6|- per maund between Agartala and Calcutta. It remains the same and in so far as the question of rates from Tripura to Calcutta is concerned—and the question pertains to that—I might inform the House that our present rates from Tripura to Calcutta are lower than the rates provided for other places. The rates are ordinarily not less than 87 Naya paisa per ton mile whereas between Agartala and Calcutta the rate for jute works out to approximately 33 Naya paisa per ton mile. The rate is low. I do not think we can consider reducing it.

Paradip Port

*1320. **Shri Sanganna:** Will the Minister of Transport and Communications be pleased to refer to the reply given to Starred Question No 180 on the 15th November, 1957 in respect of Paradip Port and state—

(a) whether British Team was expected to visit Paradip Port in order to make an on-the-spot study of the project;

(b) whether a request to this effect was received from the Government of Orissa;

(c) if so, whether the team has since visited the port; and

(d) if not, the reasons thereof.

The Minister of Transport and Communications (Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri): (a) and (b). No, Sir

(c) and (d). Do not arise

Shri Sanganna: May I know the reaction of the Government of India to the proposal for the conversion of this port into a major port by the Government of Orissa?

Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri: It was discussed only the day before yesterday.

Mr. Speaker: There has been a full debate on this matter and the House is aware of the position. Next question

Raw Jute

*1321. **Shri Rameshwar Tantia:** Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state—

(a) whether low quality jute is sold between Rs 12|- to 15|- per maund in some parts of Bihar,

(b) if so, the steps Government are considering to arrange a reasonable price for the cultivators; and

(c) whether exports of such jute will be allowed to some extent?

The Minister of Co-operation (Dr. P. S. Deshmukh): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The low price received by the jute growers in some parts of Bihar is mainly due to the deterioration in the quality of the fibre as a result of scarcity of retting water caused by drought condition and it is difficult to arrange a higher price for the damaged variety

(c) No Sir. India is deficit in the supply of raw jute and it is not possible to allow its exports at present.

Shri Rameshwar Tantia: May I know whether the Government realise that any such uneconomically low price will hamper the jute crop in a few years and whether they are taking some action to fix a minimum price for jute?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: The Government is aware that the loss caused to the cultivators would discourage them from better cultivation and even cultivation of the same crop. But here the conditions and circumstances were beyond the control of Government.