

Administration purchased stocks of Chira from local merchants in order to assist them in the disposal of these stocks. Subsequently they sold these stocks by public auction for export outside the territory.

Information about profit made has been called for from the Administration.

(c) No, Sir.

**Shri L. Achaw Singh:** May I know whether the Government is aware that a large number of chira makers have been thrown out of employment due to the stoppage of export of chira; if so, what steps are being taken to give them alternative employment?

**Shri A. M. Thomas:** There is a ban on the export of rice from Manipur. And, if export of chira is allowed freely, that will defeat the very purpose of putting the ban on the export of rice. Our idea is to make rice available in abundance in Manipur.

**Shri L. Achaw Singh:** What about the position of the chira makers who have been rendered unemployed—a large number of them?

**Shri A. M. Thomas:** The hon. Member may repeat his question.

**Shri A. M. Thomas:** When the stocks accumulated, we purchased at the rate of Rs. 12 per maund bagged and then we allowed export of that by auctioning the stocks. So, when it came to a difficult position, we came to the aid of the merchants and the producers.

#### Protection of Railway Line

\*1556. **Shri Radhamohan Singh:** Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether any scheme has been sanctioned to protect the Railway line between Suraimanpur and Reoti stations of the North-Eastern Railway;

(b) if so, what is the amount proposed to be spent on it and whether the U.P. Government are meeting any portion of the cost; and

(c) through whom the work is proposed to be undertaken?

**The Deputy Minister of Railways (Shri Shah Nawaz Khan):** (a) Yes, Sir. A scheme has been drawn up.

(b) Rs. 9 lakhs approximately. The cost of the work is provisionally proposed to be shared on 50:50 basis by the Railway and the Uttar Pradesh Government.

(c) By the Irrigation Department of Uttar Pradesh Government.

**Shri Radhamohan Singh:** By what time is it proposed to complete the work?

**Shri Shah Nawaz Khan:** The work that we have taken in hand at present is purely of a temporary nature and we hope it will be completed by May this year.

**Shri Radhamohan Singh:** Will the hon. Minister be pleased to say whether the U.P. Government requested that three fourths of the cost should be met by the Centre?

**Shri Shah Nawaz Khan:** I have just now said that the U.P. Government has agreed to bear the cost on 50:50 basis.

#### Price of Rice in Punjab

\*1557. **Shri Daljit Singh:** Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been a rise in the price of rice in Punjab; and

(b) whether Government propose to purchase more rice stocks from Punjab?

**The Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri A. M. Thomas):** (a) The prices of rice have been more or less steady in Punjab during recent months.

(b) Yes, Sir.