

import and export cargoes, moving on Government account. The Committee does not deal with shipment problems connected with trade moving on private account.

Shri Rameshwar Tantia: May I know the number of foreign ships chartered during 1957 to carry Government cargo both for import and export and how much freight and demurrage were paid?

Shri Raj Bahadur: It is not possible for me to answer such a comprehensive question without notice.

Shri Rameshwar Tantia: May I know whether any negotiations took place with the foreign shipping concerns to pay the freight in rupees?

Shri Raj Bahadur: I am not aware of any negotiations with the foreign shippers regarding payment of freight in rupee.

Shri Ramanathan Chettiar: May I know whether the representatives of chambers of commerce and trade associations will be associated with this Liaison Committee?

Shri Raj Bahadur: The shipping companies in the private sector have appointed a liaison officer, and that liaison officer will provide the necessary co-ordination.

Shri Joachim Alva: Whenever any Ministry has a shipping problem does that Ministry keep in direct touch with the Ministry of Transport or does it go to the Indian shippers direct?

Shri Raj Bahadur: By and large, this is the purpose of the Co-ordination Committee.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: May I know whether this Committee will be entitled to go into the demurrage which Government have paid for unloading cargo last year?

Shri Raj Bahadur: The question is whether we can effect maximum utilisation of the Indian shipping for purposes of moving Government

goods. This Committee has come into being for that specific purpose.

Import of Wheat

*1246. **Shri D. C. Sharma:** Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) the programme of import of wheat during 1958-59; and

(b) the amount of foreign exchange to be spent for importing wheat during the above-mentioned period?

The Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri A. M. Thomas): (a) and (b). Out of the current agreements with USA and Canada, about 5 lakh tons of wheat may remain to be shipped at the beginning of the next financial year. The foreign exchange requirements, that is mainly on freight, may be approximately Rs. 2 crores. Further shipments and the foreign exchange required will depend on the terms of the agreements that may be entered into with the exporting countries for further supplies. In the budget for 1958-59, provision has been made for the import of 2 million tons of wheat estimated to cost about Rs. 77 crores, of which about Rs. 13 crores may have to be incurred in foreign exchange.

Shri D. C. Sharma: May I know whether Government is entering into negotiations, so far as supply of wheat is concerned, with countries other than Canada and USA?

Shri A. M. Thomas: Except Canada and USA, we have not entered into any agreement with any other country.

Shri D. C. Sharma: May I know how the imports for 1958-59 compare with imports in 1957 and 1958? Has there been any upward trend in imports?

Shri A. M. Thomas: No, Sir. As will be seen from the supplementary demands which came up before the

House recently, the revised estimates for 1957-58 provide for the shipment of about 30 lakhs tons of wheat and 5 lakhs tons of rice and the total cost would be Rs. 159 crores, out of which the foreign exchange element may come to Rs. 38 crores. In 1958-59, according to the budget, we have a programme to import two million tons of wheat and 5 lakhs tons of rice.

Shri Sinhasan Singh: Has the Government taken any step to reduce the import of foodgrains and to utilize that money for importing fertilizer, as recommended by the Mehta Committee?

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri A. P. Jain): In fact, the foreign exchange which we are to spend on import of food has been going down. In the year 1956-57 it was Rs. 48 crores; in 1957-58 it was Rs. 43 crores. We have budgeted for Rs. 36 crores for 1958-59. But I may make it clear that this has no bearing on the import of fertilizers.

Shri Sinhasan Singh: There was a recommendation by the Committee that instead of importing food, we should utilize that money for importing fertilizers so that we can grow more food. Has that aspect of the question been considered by Government? Will food import be reduced and that money utilized for import of fertilizers?

Shri A. P. Jain: It is rather a ticklish question which cannot be answered during the Question Hour. I will make the position clear during the course of the debate when it takes place on the Demands of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture on 1st and 2nd April.

Shri Thrumala Rao: Have Government taken any policy decision on the recommendations of the Foodgrains Enquiry Committee with regard to the quantum of imports from outside in the next two years?

Shri A. P. Jain: No, Sir. We have not adopted any decision in the matter. Of course, while considering the import programme we are keeping in view the recommendations of the Foodgrains Enquiry Committee.

Shri C. E. Pattabhi Raman: Are Government aware of the figures given by the Planning Commission with regard to the foreign exchange element in the import of foodgrains?

Shri A. P. Jain: Yes, I am aware of it. I think the figures given by the Planning Commission create a somewhat misleading impression.

Shri C. E. Pattabhi Raman: The figures are different.

Shri A. P. Jain: When they say that the imports for 1956-57 are of the order of Rs. 102 crores, the general impression that it will create is that the whole of the amount is in terms of foreign exchange. Actually, part of it is in terms of rupees and part in foreign exchange.

The actual amount spent in terms of foreign exchange is only Rs. 48 crores and not Rs. 102 crores.

सेड गांविसः दशः : केवल इस साल हमारी गहूँ और चावल की फसल खराब हुई है। किदवाई गाहब के जमाने में यह उम्मीद की जाती थी कि हम बाहर से अनाज मंगाना बहुत जल्द बन्द कर सकेंगे। एक साल फसल खराब हुई है यह तो ठीक है, लेकिन क्या हम यह बराबर बाहर से अनाज मंगाना जारी रखेंगे या यह आशा की जाती है कि कभी बन्द कर सकेंगे? और अगर बन्द कर सकेंगे तो कब तक ?

श्री प्र० प्र० जैन : हमारी बराबर यह कोशिश है कि हम बाहर से जितना कम अनाज मंगायें उतना अच्छा है। लेकिन मैं वह नहीं कह सकता कि फलां तारीख से बन्द कर दिशा जायेगा, मैं इसके बारे में कोई तारीख मुकर्रर नहीं कर सकता क्योंकि ऐसा करना एक बहुत लम्बी बात कहना होगा। प्लान के बहुत धारे

स्ट्रैण्ड और स्ट्रैण्ड हैं और उनकी वजह से कुछ मंगाने को ज़रूरत पड़ जाती है। तो इसको किस वक़्त बन्द कर सकेंगे या बंद नहीं कर सकेंगे यह तो नहीं कहा जा सकता, लेकिन बन्द करने की कोशिश करेंगे।

Shri C. E. Pattabhi Raman: May I know whether it is impossible to negotiate with Burma for payment in rupees instead of in sterling?

Shri A. P. Jain: That again is a rather complicated question because we have a certain pattern of trade with Burma. There are two principal commodities which Burma exports—one is rice and the other is timber. Now if we have to export anything to Burma, naturally we have to buy rice and timber from them. Although the payments may actually be calculated in terms of sterling or any other type of foreign exchange but to the extent that the purchases are made in India they are adjusted one against the other.

Shri P. R. Patel: May I know if the foodgrains imported will be sold at subsidised rates? If so, at what rates and what will be the loss to the Government?

Shri A. P. Jain: The loss can be calculated only after we have known the prices at which the foodgrains are imported. The price in the world market varies from time to time. The hon. Member would be aware that inside the country we have so far been selling wheat at Rs. 14 per maund and rice at Rs. 16 per maund. Some of our agreements are on the basis of a foreign price, for instance, the agreement with Burma for the import of rice. But the prices of other foodgrains depend upon the ruling prices in the world market on which it is not possible to calculate the loss.

Unwanted Coins

*1247. **Dr. Ram Subhag Singh:** will the Minister of Transport and Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether Director General Post Offices has issued a circular directing

the post offices not to accept certain coins; and

(b) if so, the coins which are not acceptable according to that circular?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Standard silver rupee, half rupee, $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ rupee coins issued prior to 1940 which ceased to be legal tender.

Shri Joachim Alva: May I know what is the difficulty for the post offices to accept this coin and make arrangements with the State Bank of India for passing it on to them? The man in the village has to undergo great difficulty because of its rejection by the post offices.

Shri Raj Bahadur: We have to act within the four corners of the instructions laid down by the Ministry of Finance according to which such coins as have been declared not to be legal tender have to be tendered to the Reserve Bank.

Shri Tyagi: Transfer your wisdom to them.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister should consider this suggestion. How many villagers will go to the Reserve Bank? Whatever inconvenience is caused ought to be mitigated as far as possible. After all it is this Ministry which experiences the difficulty.

Shri Raj Bahadur: It is not only applicable to the post offices. It is applicable to all institutions.

Mr. Speaker: ...to the extent the hon. Minister is in charge of post offices. Let no inconvenience be caused to them.

The Minister of Transport and Communications (Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri): If the inconvenience is there, we will certainly take it up with the Finance Ministry or, if necessary, with the banks concerned. Naturally