

often they have to traverse as much as 12 miles to reach such destinations. Therefore, it is very difficult to keep the time, especially in snow-bound times.

Shri Hem Raj: May I know whether in those areas where there is a great concentration of ex-servicemen branch post-offices will be up-graded to sub-offices so that they may be nearer the centres of collection?

Dr. P. Subbarayan: We are bound by rules on this matter. When the population of a village is 2000 and the loss incurred is only Rs. 1000, then post offices are opened in such regions. But extra departmental offices are also opened under certain conditions. But when the loss goes over that amount, unless somebody in the village or other interested in the village guarantee this sum, we do not open post offices.

लाला अर्चित राम : क्या माननीय मंत्री जी इस बात को महसूस करते हैं कि आजादी के बारह वर्ष बाद भी डाक इतनी देर में पहुंचती है कि एक महीना तक लग जाता है ? क्या वे इस पीरियड को कुछ कम नहीं कर सकते ?

Dr. P. Subbarayan: The hon. Member says: 'After 12 years of independence. If he knows the financial condition of the State and the developmental projects we are undertaking, I am sure, the hon. Member will not ask that question. Replying to the hon. Member who asked whether post offices cannot be opened, I may say we are trying to open post offices as quickly as possible. And, the hon. Members will realise that we fulfilled the First Plan target of 55,000 post offices in time. Now, up to 2,000 have got to be opened; that is, out of about 75,000 we are only 2,000 short which I hope will be opened before the next Plan period.'

लाला अर्चित राम : मेरे सवाल का जवाब नहीं दिया गया, मंत्री महोदय ने और बातें कही हैं। आज कल जो एक महीने

का समय लगता है क्या आप उसको पंद्रह दिन करेंगे ? Can we not reduce the period?

Dr. P. Subbarayan: I have already said that. But, evidently, the hon. Member does not understand my language and I do not understand his language. I have already said that it cannot be shortened.

Shri P. C. Borooah: May I know whether it is the policy of Government to open a branch post office in habitations where there is 2,000 population? Are there any rules about that?

Dr. P. Subbarayan: I have already said so.

Commodity Committee for Spices

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*896. { **Shri Achar:**
Shri Rameshwar Tantia:

Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to refer to the reply given to Starred Question No. 550 on the 19th August, 1960 and state the progress made with regard to the setting up of a Commodity Committee for the development of spices?

The Minister of Agriculture (Dr. P. S. Deshmukh): The question of setting up of a Commodity Committee for the development of spices is still under the consideration of the Government of India.

Shri Achar: It has been pending for a fairly long time. May I know when the decision will be taken?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: I am conscious that we have not been able to expedite the decision. But there are arguments and counter arguments. In the meantime, the Spices Export Committee has come into being. So, we are considering the pros and cons of it.

Shri Achar: May I know whether the Export Promotion Committee is only for the purpose of improving exports? The question of production is the main thing. And, from that

point of view, may I know whether the matter would be expedited?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: That is the point of view the Ministry of Agriculture is pressing.

Shri Warrior: To a former question the answer was given that there was some difference of opinion between Agriculture Ministry and the Planning Commission. May I know whether that difference has been resolved now? It is time for taking a final decision in this matter.

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: Not yet fully.

Shri Tangamani: In view of the fact that the ICAR has recommended the formation of such a committee and that the hon. Minister has also accepted on the floor of the House on a previous occasion that cardamom is one of the rich foreign exchange earners, I would like to know why there is so much delay. Let us know whether they are going to set up such a committee or board.

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: One view that is expressed is that no sooner have we such committees the expenditure increases and so on. We are trying to meet that argument.

Protection from Termites

*897. { **Shrimati Ila Palchoudhuri:**
Dr. Ram Subhag Singh:

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

(a) whether any data has been maintained relating to the approximate extent of damage in terms of money caused annually by termites in India to wood-work, furniture, stored products, books and records in Government buildings and to crops in India;

(b) if so, details thereof; and

(c) the nature of protective measures taken in this regard?

The Minister of Agriculture (Dr. P. S. Deshmukh): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Different methods are used for different articles. Those adopted for Government stores, buildings and properties, are spraying of D.D.T., exposure to sun, use of termite-proof chemicals and paints. Organic and inorganic insecticides are used in the case of crops.

Shrimati Ila Palchoudhuri: The control of termites, particularly as regards grain, has been experimented with radio isotopes. May I know whether we have had any such experiments with radio isotopes in India?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: The radio isotope is a recent thing, which we are utilising for all kinds of research. I do not know whether we have gone to the problem of termite so far.

Shrimati Ila Palchoudhuri: Have we evolved any anti-termite thing especially for food such as obtains in the U.S.A. because the damage is very great through termites?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: With regard to storages, all our improved storages are termite-proof and no damage is reported.

Shrimati Ila Palchoudhuri: I am speaking of damages to crops alone.

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: We are going to investigate so far as damage to crops is concerned.

Soil Conservation

*899. { **Shri Achar:**
Shri Ajit Singh Sarhadi:

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

(a) whether a team of soil conservation experts from the U.S.A. have visited India recently;

(b) if so, the States visited by them;

(c) whether any report has been submitted by them; and

(d) if so, Government's reaction thereto?