

tractors by their members in rural parts in any State in India?

(b) Have Government any scheme to help develop tractor-mindedness?

**The Minister of Agriculture (Dr. P. S. Deshmukh):** (a) Yes, some co-operative societies are engaged in this work along with other activities.

(b) There is no specific scheme to make the farmers tractor-minded. Loans are, however, sanctioned under the Grow More Food campaign for purchase of tractors by the cultivators.

**Shri S. V. Ramaswamy:** How many tractors are in the possession of private owners?

**Dr. P. S. Deshmukh:** The total number must be in the neighbourhood of about 15,000. This I calculate from the figures of imports for various years—for instance,

1949-50	imported number	3318,
1950-51	"	4930,
1951-52	"	7148,

**Shri S. V. Ramaswamy:** What is the total extent of acreage under tractor cultivation?

**Dr. P. S. Deshmukh:** I have not got these figures. There are various State Governments who keep these figures. I have not got a consolidated statement in my possession.

**Shri K. G. Deshmukh:** May I know what are the conditions precedent for the formation of such co-operative societies and what sort of assistance is given to any such society?

**Dr. P. S. Deshmukh:** The Central Government makes grants on approved schemes to the State Governments. It is essentially for the State Governments to lay down the conditions for making any co-operative society eligible for assistance.

**Shri Jasani:** May I know the States in which these co-operative societies are working for the present?

**Dr. P. S. Deshmukh:** So far as our information goes, U.P. Punjab, Bombay and Hyderabad have got them.

**Shri Jasani:** Are there any such societies in Madhya Pradesh?

**Dr. P. S. Deshmukh:** It does not appear from the information available with me.

**Shri S. S. More:** May I know how many co-operative societies for the purchase and use of tractors have been formed in Maharashtra?

**Dr. P. S. Deshmukh:** Maharashtra is not a separate State. I can give figures for Bombay. In Bombay, the State Government has sanctioned a scheme for the grant of financial assistance to co-operative societies for the purchase of tractors and their accessories up to 60 per cent. of the cost price of the tractors, for the use of agriculturists. I am afraid more information is not in my possession.

**Shri Bheekha Bhai:** May I know if any such co-operative society is functioning in Rajasthan?

**Dr. P. S. Deshmukh:** I have not got the information.

#### DISCHARGE OF WOMAN WORKER

\*1291. **Shri K. P. Tripathi:** Will the Minister of Labour be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that recently one woman worker Lakshmi-chari of Doomdooma in Dibrugarh (Assam) tea garden, was discharged in advanced stage of pregnancy, depriving her of maternity leave, treatment, medical attendance, and rations for no fault of her, but because the husband of the woman happened to be discharged and if so, whether the woman and the baby both died at child birth;

(b) whether it is a fact that a large meeting was held by women workers of Doomdooma Chah Mazdoor Sangha in Assam under the presidency of Sri Lily Sen Gupta to protest against it on 26th October, 1952; and

(c) if so, whether Government are considering any step to prevent such discharges due to vicarious liability, especially in view of the reply given to Starred Question No. 2096 on the 24th July, 1952 in the Parliament?

**The Deputy Minister of Labour (Shri Abid Ali):** (a) Yes, the woman worker, Lakshmi Chabi by name, was discharged and evicted from Sankar Tea Estate following the dismissal of her husband. Later she and the child born to her died. The grant of maternity benefit in Assam is regulated by the Assam Maternity Benefit Act and necessary action is being taken by the Inspector under that Act as the claim for maternity benefit in this case was rejected by the employer.

(b) Yes.

(c) I would invite the attention of the hon. Member to the reply to parts (b) and (d) of starred question No. 774 put by him on the 27th November, 1952.

**Shri K. P. Tripathi:** In view of the fact that women are granted equal rights with men in the Fundamental rights, may I know whether the Government will consider setting aside the Tribunal award under which the employers are seeking protection in this case?

**Shri Abid Ali:** The decision of the last tribunal in this respect has been unfortunate. We appreciate it. Another appeal is pending before the hon. appellate tribunal and we are awaiting the decision of the tribunal. In case it goes against the workers, then, we contemplate taking appropriate action in the matter.

**Shri K. P. Tripathi:** Is it the policy of the Government that women should get equal rights with men with regard to work?

**Shri Abid Ali:** That is a fundamental right already granted by the Constitution.

**Shrimati A. Kale:** Is the Government aware that this method of not giving maternity benefit is an old one practised by several business concerns?

**Shri Abid Ali:** I have not followed the question.

**Shrimati A. Kale:** This trick has been used by business concerns for a very long time. I want to know whether the Government has taken any steps in this direction. As soon as a woman becomes pregnant, under some excuse or other, she is discharged. That is the practice of the firms.

**Shri Abid Ali:** As I have already said, in one case an appeal is pending before the appellate tribunal. I have already assured the House that in case the decision goes against the workers, Government contemplate further action in the matter to give protection in such cases.

**Shri K. P. Tripathi:** Is it a fact that, in the Standing Orders of the companies, the Indian Tea Association and others, there is no such provision to treat a woman worker on a different footing from that of a man?

**The Minister of Revenue and Expenditure (Shri Tyagi):** A man cannot be given maternity benefits.

**Shri K. P. Tripathi:** My hon. friend has misunderstood the position. It is not a question of maternity benefit. It is a question of right to work being given. As soon as the husband is discharged, the woman also is discharged. In this case, fortuitously enough, the question of maternity benefit was also involved. In other cases, maternity benefit may not be involved.

The whole question is whether, if a man is dismissed, the woman is also automatically dismissed, and from that point of view, I ask whether in the standing order, there is no distinction made between male and female.

**Shri Abid Ali:** The view of the Labour Department of the Assam Government in this case was that this particular worker was entitled to compensation and also maternity benefit. As the employers have refused to accede to the suggestion, orders have already been issued to prosecute them.

**Shri K. P. Tripathi:** Is it a fact that in South India, when a man is discharged in tea estate, the woman is not automatically discharged? She is asked whether she also wants to go and if she says no, she is allowed to continue.

**Shri Abid Ali:** Unfortunately, the opinion of the Appellate Tribunal and of the Chairman of the Tribunal which delivered the award of 25th June, 1951 in another case has been very much against the workers in this particular matter. With regard to the practice in South India, it is true that in some gardens on that side, the position is somewhat better.

**Shri K. P. Tripathi:** Are the government prepared to give permission to pleaders to appear before the Tribunal to defend the policy that women should have equal rights with men?

**Shri Abid Ali:** We will examine this question.

#### RAILWAY EMPLOYEES IN SEALDAH DIVISION

\*1292. **Shri H. N. Mukerjee:** Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of Government has been drawn to the fact that many railway employees in the Sealdah Division of the Eastern Railway are still compelled to live in condemned wagons unsuitable for the human habitation; and

(b) whether the attention of Government has also been drawn to the fact that there are in the said Sealdah Division structures put up temporarily during war time and scheduled for dismantling by 1947 where railway employees live without adequate ventilation, water-supply and sanitary arrangements?

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Shah Nawaz Khan):** (a) Government is aware that some employees of the Eastern Railway on the Sealdah