

Officer on Special Duty has been appointed to carry out preliminary work on the project. He is expected to take up duty shortly.

(b) The estimated cost of the combined road-rail bridge is Rs. 13.5 crores, subject to revision due to changes in the design yet to be finalised.

(c) The construction will require about 5 years to complete.

AIR AGREEMENT WITH PHILIPPINES

*467. **Shri A. M. Thomas:** (a) Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state whether any new Air Agreement has been entered into between the Government of India and the Philippines Government?

(b) If so, what are the modifications made from the 1949 Agreement?

The Deputy Minister of Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Shri A. M. Thomas: May I know whether any Multilateral agreement has been entered into concerning International air transport to which India and the Philippines are parties? If so, which are the other parties?

Shri Raj Bahadur: An international air agreement has been entered into to which all countries are parties. India and Philippines are also parties to the agreement.

Shri A. M. Thomas: Has any separate agreement been come to with other countries, on the lines of the agreement between the Republic of Philippines and India?

Shri Raj Bahadur: There is a separate agreement between India and Philippines made in the year 1949.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member wants to know whether there is any similar agreement with other countries.

Shri Raj Bahadur: There are similar agreements with about 11 countries. If the hon. Member wants the names, I shall give them.

ARECANUT INDUSTRY

*468. **Shri C. E. Iyyanni:** (a) Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state the quantity of arecanut manufactured in each of the various States?

(b) What are the prices of the articles manufactured from arecanut?

(c) Has the industry suffered on account of the unexpected fall in prices?

(d) What is the quantity of arecanut imported from outside and which are the countries from which it is imported?

(e) What is the number of people employed in the industry in each State?

The Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri M. V. Krishnaappa): (a), (b) and (d). A statement is laid on the Table of the House. [See Appendix III, annexure No. 1]

(c) Yes.

(e) Proper statistics are not available. A rough estimate places the total figure at about 30 lakh persons.

Shri C. E. Iyyanni: May I know what is the cost of production of the four varieties, chali, desavaram, choor, and erasal, per pound?

Shri M. V. Krishnaappa: I have not got the figures for the cost of production with me here.

Shri C. E. Iyyanni: May I know whether any steps have been taken by the Government to see that the articles produced in India do fetch a proper price?

Shri M. V. Krishnaappa: There is an Indian Central Arecanut Committee which will recommend to the Government various measures that are to be taken for the protection of this industry, and the Government will act accordingly. I would like to inform the hon. Member that the Indian Central Arecanut Committee has sanctioned schemes for the control of arecanut in the States of Travancore-Cochin, Mysore and Bombay, and these schemes will be started early next year.

Shri C. E. Iyyanni: May I know whether there is any import duty on the arecanut that is imported into India?

Shri M. V. Krishnaappa: Yes, there is.

Shri C. E. Iyyanni: May I know whether an increase in the import duty will not give the desired effect...?

Mr. Speaker: That is a suggestion for action.

Shri Velayudhan: May I know whether it was the import of large quantities of arecanut from foreign countries, that was responsible for the fall in prices of the locally produced arecanut?