

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. Iyyunni:** (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. Iyyunni: 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. Iyyunni: 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. Iyyunni: 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. Iyyunni: 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?

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: We are receiving of late, reports from the representatives of various growers and also the trade that on account of indiscriminate imports, the prices of arecanut are falling down. We are receiving such reports.

Shri E. S. Murthy: May I know whether there is any truth in the allegation that the standard has gone down?

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: Our arecanut is of the most superfine quality, while the ones imported from Singapore and Ceylon are all wild crops grown in the forests.

Shri Punnoose: Have the Government received any representation from arecanut growers that the quantity of imports be reduced?

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: Yes, we are receiving such reports.

Shri Damodara Menon: Have the Government taken any steps regarding these representations?

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: Not yet.

Shri Achuthan rose—

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. I am going to the next question.

MANGALORE AERODROME

*469. **Shri C. E. Iyyanni:** Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether the construction of the aerodrome at Mangalore is over; and

(b) if so, when the air service at Mangalore will be available for use?

The Deputy Minister of Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur): (a) and (b). The aerodrome at Mangalore is nearing completion and it is expected that scheduled air services will start operating to and from Mangalore by the end of this Calendar year.

Mr. Speaker: Now question No. 470.

Sardar Hukam Singh: Question No 490 also may be taken up along with this.

Mr. Speaker: Is Mr. Sodhia present here?

Shri K. C. Sodhia: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: I believe it is convenient to the hon. Minister to answer both these questions together.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Shah Nawaz Khan): Yes, Sir.

MOTOR VEHICLES TAXATION ENQUIRY COMMITTEE REPORT.

*470. **Shri S. N. Das:** (a) Will the Minister of Transport be pleased to state which of the recommendations of the Motor Vehicles Taxation Enquiry Committee have been accepted and implemented by the Government of India and the various State Governments?

(b) Which of the important recommendations are still under consideration of Government?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Shah Nawaz Khan): (a) and (b). No decision has yet been taken by the Central and State Governments on the recommendations of the Motor Vehicle Taxation Enquiry Committee.

MOTOR VEHICLES TAXATION

*490 **Shri K. C. Sodhia:** Will the Minister of Transport be pleased to state whether Government have come to any decision on the recommendations of the Transport Advisory Council regarding motor vehicles taxation made in April 1951?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Shah Nawaz Khan): Attention is invited to my reply to Starred Question No. 470 asked by Shri S. N. Das today.

Shri S. N. Das: May I know whether the recommendations of this Inquiry Committee were considered by the Transport Advisory Council at any time, and if so, what were the decisions of the Advisory Council?

Shri Shah Nawaz Khan: The decisions were considered by the Transport Advisory Council, and at present the whole matter is between the Technical Committee and the State Governments?

Shri S. N. Das: May I know when that Technical Committee was appointed, and by what time it was asked to submit its report?

Shri Shah Nawaz Khan: It was appointed in August 1952, and has finished its deliberations. The report will be ready by December.

Sardar Hukam Singh: May I know whether any ceiling for sales tax on petrol has been fixed according to the recommendation of this Advisory Council?