

(b) The members of the Board were generally in favour of the maintenance of adequate control over food.

(c) There has been a rise in prices since the relaxation of controls in some surplus Districts and also in some deficit Districts in Madras. In some deficit districts prices have fallen. But these prices are very much lower than the market prices prevailing in Madras for the corresponding period of 1951.

(d) Yes.

(e) No.

EXPLOSION OF SHIPS CARRYING FOODSTUFFS

*614. Shri Sivamurthi Swami: (a) Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state whether any ships carrying foodstuffs from U.S.A. have exploded and all the foodstuffs sank into the sea?

(b) If so, will the loss be borne by India or U.S.A.?

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Kidwai): (a) Only one steamer named, GEORGE WALTON which was bringing a cargo of wheat from U.S.A. had explosion in its engine room and sank in the North Pacific in November, 1951.

(b) The wheat carried by this steamer was the property of the Government of India at the time of shipment. The loss will have to be borne by the Government of India unless it is possible to prove that the explosion in the engine room was due to the negligence on the part of the owners of the vessel, in which case the amount of the loss may be recoverable from the owners who happen to be the Government of U.S.A. in this case. The case at present is sub judice in U.S.A. and the India Supply Mission, Washington are pursuing the case.

RETRENCHMENT IN RAILWAYS

*615. Shri K. K. Basu: Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) the number of non-gazetted and other subordinate staff in different Railways who have been retrenched or demoted since the re-grouping;

(b) the number of claims filed in different Railways since the re-grouping.

(c) whether any complaint has been received from the business-men and public against the working of re-grouping; and

(d) how many extra gazetted posts or ranks have been created in different Railways since re-grouping?

The Deputy Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Alagesan):

(a) There has been no case of retrenchment or demotion of staff on the railways since re-grouping, except on the Southern Railway where 14 non-gazetted staff were reverted from higher officiating grades.

(b) The total number of claims preferred against different Railways from the date of re-grouping to 31st October, 1952 was 4,71,298.

(c) No specific complaints have been received, except a few minor ones on the Central Railway.

(d) Since re-grouping there has been no addition to the gazetted cadres on Indian Railways. On the other hand there has been a small reduction in the number of gazetted posts. The determination of the final cadres for the regrouped systems is still in progress.

FATEHPUR-RAMGARH-CHURU RAILWAY LINE

*616. Shri Balwant Sinha Mehta: Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that construction of Fatehpur-Ramgarh-Churu railway line in Rajasthan was once taken up by the former Jaipur State but was stopped;

(b) if so, why it was stopped; and

(c) whether Government contemplate to start construction of the railway line in the near future and if so, when?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Shah Nawaz Khan): (a) No.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No.

FOOD MINISTERS' CONFERENCE

*617. Shri B. S. Murthy: Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) the subjects discussed and the decisions taken at the Conference of