

(b) Yes, four Committees have submitted their reports regarding the principles to be adopted for combining the seniority of the staff of the integrating units.

(c) No specific ban has been placed on confirmations but in certain categories the pace of confirmations has slowed down.

IMPORT OF WHEAT FROM U.S.A.

*483. **Shri S. C. Singhal:** (a) Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state the present rate at which the Government of India are purchasing wheat in the U.S.A.?

(b) What were the prices at which Government purchased wheat during the last three years and how much quantity was purchased during the same period?

(c) What was the freight paid to the shipping companies and how much was paid to Indian companies?

(d) How much premium was paid to the Insurance companies for covering the risk and what sum was paid to the Indian companies?

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Kidwai): (a) Purchases of wheat from U.S.A. are now being made under the International Wheat Agreement only at rates varying between \$ 1.84 and 1.87 per bushel.

(b) The quantity of wheat purchased from U.S.A. during the last three years and the prices paid were as under:—

Year	Quantity purchased (000 tons)	prices paid per bushel of 60 lbs.
1950	224.5	\$ 1.69 to 1.90
1951	2424.1	\$ 1.79 to 2.65
1952	1537.8	\$ 1.83 to 2.90

(c) The freight paid on the quantity received in India during the three years 1950, 1951 and 1952 was Rs. 4086.2 lakhs. Of this Rs. 72.4 lakhs were paid to Indian Companies.

(d) Cargoes of wheat shipped from U.S.A. were not insured.

INCREASE IN PRICE OF RATION FOR TEA PLANTATION WORKERS

*486. **Shri Vittal Rao:** Will the Minister of Labour be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of West Bengal have increased the price

of ration for the Tea Plantation workers of Darjeeling from Rs. 8/- to Rs. 17 8/- per maund; and

(b) whether it is a fact that this step of the Government of West Bengal has been taken notwithstanding the agreement by the Tea Garden owners with the Tripartite Conference Resolution demand that no reduction in the earnings of the workers should take place pending the report of a Tripartite Commission?

The Minister of Labour (Shri V. V. Giri): (a) On the basis of an interim report of the Minimum Wages Tea Plantations Advisory Committee, the Government of West Bengal have allowed planters in hill areas of Darjeeling to supply rationed foodgrains to workers @ Rs. 17-8-0 per maund instead of Rs. 8/- per maund for a period of two months with effect from the 1st January, 1953, on condition that gardens supplying foodgrains at the higher rate shall not close, nor retrench any existing employee or offer employment for less than six days a week during the said period. This step has been taken purely as a temporary measure to avert closure of more gardens.

(b) The agreement of planters that there would be no reduction in the earnings of workers was subject to the grant of relief to tea gardens by way of refund of excise duty etc., which was not accepted by the Central Government.

LOADINGS OF SUGAR-CANE AND *Gur*

*487. **Shri A. N. Vidyalkar:** Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received complaints from the Cane growers of the Jullundhar District, regarding insufficient arrangements for loading sugar-cane and *gur* during the current crushing season; and

(b) if so, what action Government have taken or propose to take in the matter?

The Deputy Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Alagesan): (a) There have been hardly any complaints in respect of supply of wagons for loading of sugarcane which has been on the whole satisfactory.

Generally during the crushing season, special steps are taken to augment the wagon supply to meet the requirements of sugar mills.

Complaints have, however, been received from various quarters re-