

State Governments that have to deal with this matter and the Central Government cannot give a direction.

Shri R. K. Chaudhuri: May I know in what respect the Government of Assam have lowered the wages in the tea estates? Have they not granted an additional wage and raised the D.A. from four annas to five annas?

Shri V. V. Giri: I take the information from the hon. Member.

Shri P. T. Chacko: Yesterday, the hon. Minister for Commerce and Industry said in this House that there was no agreed decision or agreement at the Calcutta Tripartite Conference. May I know what was the reason why the three parties could not agree on any question at this conference?

Shri V. V. Giri: Because they could not agree. It was a bipartite and not a tripartite one.

Shri Nambiar: What was the point of disagreement, so that that could be removed?

Shri V. V. Giri: There were many points of disagreement. The whole matter is being thrashed out by all the parties.

Shri K. K. Basu: Is it the intention of the Government to hold a tripartite conference after the workers have been retrenched and are made to starve?

Shri V. V. Giri: It is not the intention.

Shri B. S. Murthy: May I know why the Government were not able to agree to the bipartite agreement between the employers and the employees?

Shri V. V. Giri: It was not considered practical.

Shri G. P. Sinha: Who was responsible for this failure?

Shri V. V. Giri: Nobody.

FOOD PRICES

*54. **Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy:** Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) what is the recent trend in the prices of food articles;

(b) whether any State Governments have increased food prices recently; and

(c) whether any representations have been made to Government in this regard?

The Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri M. V. Krishnappa): Presumably the Member is referring to

foodgrains. If the presumption is correct the replies to parts (a), (b) and (c) are as follows:—

(a) Generally, the open market prices of rice are either declining or steady; millet prices are steady and wheat prices are firm except in Bihar where they are declining.

(b) and (c). Procurement and issue prices of foodgrains have been raised in a few cases at the request of the State Governments concerned.

Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy: May I know whether the decline in food prices is uniform throughout the country or does it vary from state to state?

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: It varies from state to state.

Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy: What is the special reason for this variation?

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: It depends on the production there. If there is failure of rains in particular parts of the country, there you can expect that the decline, as compared to other surplus areas, will be less.

Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy: Has it come to the notice of the Government that recently in Mysore food prices have been increased and due to the increase in food prices there has been mass agitation?

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: It is true that in Mysore the issue prices were increased from 1st January, 1953. Prior to that date wheat and milo were being sold at below economic cost and the loss was made up to some extent by the profit made on local rice and that on wheat consequent on the retrospective reduction of the pool price of wheat from 1st March, 1952. As the profit on wheat had been wiped off, the issue price of wheat and milo had to be increased to about the economic cost. Even those increased prices are at par with the issue prices prevailing in Madras and Bombay. Hitherto they were able to subsidise it and sell at a lower price. As the subsidy has been wiped out, and they are not able to keep up the subsidy, the prices have increased. But, even the increased price is below economic cost.

Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy: In view of the fact that the purchasing power of the consumers is declining, the recent rise in the food prices has caused a great injury to the interests of the consumers.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: That is only an argument.

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: We are giving purchasing power to the people by starting relief works.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: May I know in what parts of the country the prices of foodgrains are below the issue price in the fair price shops at the present time?

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: In some places in Madras, it is below the issue price.

Shri Nambiar: May I know whether it is a fact that recently the price of rice was increased in Malabar?

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: It is true that in some parts of the country the prices did not come down as much as we expected. It is also true that the prices did not soar up as much as my hon. friend feared.

Shri Dabhi: May I know the prevailing prices of indigenous wheat and rice in the different States?

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: I can give it; it is a big statement.

Shri Nambiar: On a point of clarification, I asked a question as to whether there was a recent increase in the price of rice in Malabar.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I think he answered that.

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Kidwai): It has been answered.

Shri V. P. Nayar: He did not answer that, Sir.

Shri Kidwai: The answer was that the price has not gone down so much as we were expecting, but the price has not also risen as much as some hon. Members wished.

Shri Nambiar: Whether there was a rise in the price in Malabar, is the question.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: There is; but it is not so much as to be appalling. Next question.

UDAIPUR-HIMMAT NAGAR RAILWAY LINE

***55. Shri Bheekha Bhai:** Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to refer to the reply given to unstarred question

No. 688 asked on the 15th December, 1952 and state:

(a) whether the proposal of constructing a new railway line from Udaipur to Himmat Nagar or Modasa has been finalised or approved by the Central Board of Transport;

(b) whether Government have received any deputations from the States of Bombay and Rajasthan demanding the immediate construction of this Railway line; and

(c) whether Government intend to take up construction of this Railway line in the year 1953-54?

The Deputy Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Alagesan): (a) and (c). The reply is in the negative.

(b) Yes.

POINT FOUR AID FUNDS (MALARIA)

***57. Shri N. M. Lingam:** Will the Minister of Health be pleased to state:

(a) whether an agreement has been entered into between the Governments of India and U.S.A. to use Point Four Aid funds to help India to provide protection against Malaria;

(b) what is the nature and extent of the aid; and

(c) whether Government propose to lay on the Table of the House a copy of the Agreement?

The Deputy Minister of Health (Shrimati Chandrasekhar): (a) Yes. Two agreements have so far been signed, one for the year 1952-53 and the other for 1953-54.

(b) The aid will be in the form of DDT, equipment, transport and anti-malarial drugs. The amount of assistance allocated by the Government of the United States of America is \$-648 million during 1952-53 and \$5.2 million during 1953-54.

(c) Copies of Operation Agreement No. 9 relating to 1952-53 have already been placed on the Table of the House in reply to unstarred Question No. 253 dated the 25th June, 1952. Copies of the Supplement to Operation Agreement No. 9 which relates to the year 1953-54 have also since been placed in the Library of the House.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The Question-hour is over.