

Shri B. N. Roy: Why were these restrictions imposed before the next paddy season?

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Kidwai): These restrictions have been placed to accelerate procurement.

Shri T. K. Chaudhuri: May I know Sir, the actual price of rice till the recent restrictions and the price now, in U.P.?

Shri Kidwai: The position is this. The price of rice in U.P. is always higher than in South India or East India or West India.

Shri Gopala Rao: What was the price of paddy before the introduction of the restrictions and what is the present price after the introduction of the restrictions?

Shri Kidwai: The restrictions were introduced sometime in 1939 or '40.

Shri Nambiar: Sir, we want to know the price before the recent restrictions.

Shri Kidwai: The restrictions were imposed first in the Eastern districts, which is a rice-eating area so that the rice from that area may not go out of that area. The prices went down by several rupees. The people and retailers purchased at a lower price because the restrictions were placed and the rice could not be taken out of that area. Therefore the prices went down. Then, in another region where the movement was free, the Government is reported to have seized all the stocks to supply them to the deficit areas and States. That created a sort of nervousness in the traders and I am told that even in this restricted area of the Eastern district rice went underground and the prices went a little high but they are quite normal now.

श्री आर० एन० सिंह : क्या ऐसे प्रतिबन्ध जनता में चोरी की भावना नहीं पैदा करते ?

श्री किदवाई : कभी कभी ऐसा होता है ।

श्री आर० एन० सिंह : ऐसे प्रतिबन्ध क्यों लगाये गये हैं ?

श्री किदवाई : यह सवाल यू० पी० गवर्नमेंट से किया जा सकता है ।

RETRENCHMENT OF JUTE MILL WORKERS

*819. **Shri Ramananda Das:** (a) Will the Minister of Labour be pleased to

state whether there has been retrenchment and discharge of jute mill workers recently in West Bengal jute mills?

(b) If so, what is the number of jute mill workers retrenched and discharged during the last three months in West Bengal?

(c) Have Government received any representation from the National Union of Workers and other labour organisations to this effect seeking remedies?

(d) If so, what steps have Government taken or contemplate to take to stop this kind of retrenchment and discharge of jute mill workers?

The Minister of Labour (Shri V. V. Giri): (a) and (b). The Government of West Bengal have intimated that no large scale retrenchment has yet been effected in jute mills. The managements of some of the jute mills, however, propose to retrench some workers who have been considered surplus to their requirements. The number of workers proposed to be retrenched is not known.

(c) Copies of a Memorandum submitted by the National Union of Jute Workers to the Government of West Bengal on the subject have been received by the Government of India. The Union has also suggested, *inter alia*, the appointment of an Inquiry Commission to study the position of the Jute Mills—their business, finance, conditions of workmen etc.

(d) The State Labour Directorate has taken up the question of proposed retrenchment with parties concerned for settlement under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947.

Shri Ramananda Das: May I know whether any workers have been discharged in these three months?

Shri V. V. Giri: I have already said that I do not know the exact number.

Shri N. Sreekantan Nair: May I know whether the Government are aware that recently there was a major demonstration by all Central trade organisations before the West Bengal Legislature to protest against the large-scale retrenchment of workers?

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

Shri Nambiar: May I know whether about 50 thousand workers are threatened to be retrenched and whether 10 thousand workers have already been retrenched in the jute mills in Bengal? Do Government know it, and if so, what steps are they going to take?

Shri V. V. Giri: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry are considering the appointment, as soon as possible of a Commission of Inquiry to undertake a comprehensive examination of the marketing practices etc. regarding raw jute and jute manufactures.

Shri B. S. Murthy: Is it a fact that the millowners have not given due consideration to the request made by the West Bengal Government that retrenchment should not be made haphazardly?

Shri V. V. Giri: I think the West Bengal Government is looking to that matter in a minute manner.

Shri Nambiar: May I know whether any relief is granted to those who have been retrenched or whether any help has been rendered to the Provincial Government in that respect?

Shri V. V. Giri: Notice.

Shri Ramananda Das: May I know whether Government propose to set up an Inquiry Committee with regard to these workers?

Shri V. V. Giri: I think a Commission of Inquiry is being set up. I do not know exactly what would be the terms of reference to that Commission, but I am sure this would be one of the terms.

Dr. S. P. Mookerjee: May I know in a case where there is a possibility of large-scale retrenchment in any big major industry which is the Ministry generally responsible for seeing that no such catastrophe takes place, or that mischief is prevented? Is it the hon. Minister's Ministry, or the Ministry of his colleague the Minister of Commerce and Industry?

Shri V. V. Giri: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry is concerned in the first instance. Secondly I come in also.

Shri B. S. Murthy: May I know whether Government have issued any instructions to the millowners that further retrenchment should not be made?

Shri V. V. Giri: It is for the West Bengal Government. I cannot answer the question off-hand.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: May I know the composition of this Inquiry Commission?

Shri V. V. Giri: It is yet under contemplation.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: It has not yet been appointed.

Shri K. K. Basu: In view of the proposal to set up an Inquiry Commission, will Government consider the advisability of instructing the West Bengal Government to impress upon the millowners not to go in for further retrenchment at least for some time and issue a sort of stay order on the retrenchment policy?

Shri V. V. Giri: I take note of the suggestion.

ALLOTMENT OF FUNDS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF ROADS IN THE NORTH EAST FRONTIER AGENCY

***820. Shri Rishang Keishing:** (a) Will the Minister of Transport be pleased to refer to the answer given by the Prime Minister in reply to a supplementary question to starred question No. 100 on the 17th February, 1953 to the effect that the biggest problem of N. E. Frontier Agency was of Communications and state what percentage of the total amount of money allotted for the development of the people in the North East Frontier Agency has been used for construction of roads during 1952-53?

(b) How many roads have been completed, how many are under construction and what is the mileage of the roads completed?

(c) Have the Government of India any plan for construction of roads in the North East Frontier Agency during the next three years?

(d) Who are the Agents to whom the work of construction of roads is entrusted?

The Deputy Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Alagesan): (a) Approximately 35 per cent is expected to be spent.

(b) Thirteen roads have been completed, two roads improved and five roads are under construction. The mileages are, 145 miles newly constructed and 90 miles improved.

(c) Yes.

(d) The Engineering Department of the North East Frontier Agency and Army Engineers.

Shri Rishang Keishing: May I know whether there is any time-limit by which all the sub-divisions in the North East Frontier Agency may be linked with the plains of Assam by motorable roads?

Shri Alagesan: A vast programme is expected to be carried out during