

lines are being leased to railwaymen for cultivation; and

(b) if so, whether a uniform policy is laid down in the matter of leases?

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

(a) Normally, the land between stations is not leased out to railway employees, but where the State Governments have not so far taken over surplus railway land for lease to outsiders, such land has been leased in some cases to Railway employees as a temporary measure.

(b) Yes. The policy is that small plots of railway land within station limits may be leased to railway men for cultivation of vegetables etc. in cases where it is certain that it would not be to the detriment of their duties.

RESCUE STATIONS IN COAL-FIELDS

*103. **Shri P. C. Bose:** Will the Minister of Labour be pleased to state:

(a) the benefit that the Jharia and Raniganj coal-fields have so far derived from the coal mines rescue stations organised in those fields; and

(b) the reasons for delay in opening similar rescue stations in the Central India coal-fields, particularly in Parasia, where fire has already occurred in several coal mines?

The Minister of Labour (Shri V. V. Giri): (a) The permanent rescue corps maintained at these stations conduct rescue work and take all practicable steps to minimise danger in mines caused by explosion, outbreak of fire, irruption of gas, etc. They have rendered assistance in sealing off areas affected by underground fires and are also instrumental in recovering large areas of workings sealed off on account of spontaneous combustion underground. Since their inception in 1933, these Rescue Stations have rendered assistance in making available about seven million tons of good quality coal from such sealed off areas, and have also given training in rescue

and recovery work to more than 1000 mine employees.

(b) The coal seams in the central Indian coal-fields being non-gassy and less liable to spontaneous heating, no necessity for establishing rescue stations was felt so far. A proposal for establishing a rescue station at Parasia, where some fires have occurred in mines, is however under consideration.

POSTAGE STAMPS

*104. **Shri Balmiki:** (a) Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state how many sets of special stamps have been issued since August, 1947 in memory of great men?

(b) Is the conquest of Everest by Tensing and Hillary going to be commemorated in stamps?

The Deputy Minister of Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur): (a) Only two such sets have been issued in memory of (1) the Father of the Nation and (2) of certain poets and saint-poets.

(b) The conquest of Everest is proposed to be commemorated by issue of special stamps in two denominations of -/14/- and -/2/-.

Kharif Crop

*105. **Shri Balmiki:** Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) the prospects of *kharif* crop in all the States;

(b) whether it is better than last year's crop; and

(c) if not reasons therefor?

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Kidwai): (a) The *kharif* sowings hitherto have been done under favourable conditions and the prospects of the standing crops are generally reported to be fair in the country. A statement is placed on the Table of the House giving the available information state-wise. [See Appendix I, annexure No. 22.]