

(d) Yes. The accident is considered to be a case of misadventure as an unforeseen weakness in the natural strata near the bottom of a shaft 95 feet deep, which was to be used as a sand separator and bunker, resulted in transmission of hydraulic pressure over a structure of steel and reinforced concrete at the bottom of the shaft and caused the structure to collapse when the Damodar river, in flood, inundated the shaft.

STRIKE BY TEA GARDEN WORKERS

*1213. **Shri H. N. Mukerjee:** Will the Minister of Labour be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the press report of a strike by 20,000 workers in some thirty European-owned tea gardens in Assam; and

(b) if so, what steps have been taken, or are proposed to be taken in this regard?

The Minister of Labour (Shri V. V. Giri): (a) Yes.

(b) The dispute falls in the State sphere. According to a report received from the Government of Assam the strike was called off after the management had agreed to pay compensation for lay-off in economic gardens at the rate of 50 per cent. of wages and to upgrade plucking rates.

CHILD MORTALITY

*1214. **Shri Achuthan:** Will the Minister of Health be pleased to state:

(a) the percentage of child mortality in the various States in India during the last five years; and

(b) the causes for high child mortality in India and the short term steps Government propose to take in the matter?

The Deputy Minister of Health (Shrimati Chandrasekhar): (a) and (b). A statement is placed on the Table of the House. [See Appendix VI, annexure No. 8.]

AIR LINES

*1215. **Shri Achuthan:** Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to open any new air lines in the near future; and

(b) the total number of employees serving in the two Air Corporations?

The Minister of Communications (Shri Jagjivan Ram): (a) A technical Committee of the Indian Airlines Corporation has been constituted recently to consider, *inter alia*, the formulation of a suitable route pattern for the operation of air services. The question of opening new routes will be considered by the Corporation after the report of the Committee has been received.

(b) The total number of employees of the two Air Corporations is 9214.

INLAND WATER TRANSPORT

*1216. **Shri Achuthan:** Will the Minister of Transport be pleased to state how far the development works have progressed in the Inland Water Transport in South India as per the Plan?

The Deputy Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Alagesan): A provision of Rs. 6 lakhs has been included in the first Five Year Plan towards the Central Government's contribution to the Water Transport Board that may be set up in South India covering Madras and Travancore-Cochin States. The question of setting up such a Board has been taken up with the State Governments concerned.

CONGESTION ON SOME SECTIONS OF NORTH-EASTERN RAILWAY

616. **Shri Anirudha Sinha:** (a) Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state the daily average number of passengers who travelled between Darbhanga and Jainagar and Darbhanga and Nirmali both ways on the North-Eastern Railway between 1st January, 1953 to 1st June, 1953?