

(c) The Argemone plant is found all over India.

(d) The question of preventing the use of Argemone oil in the manufacture of bathing soaps does not arise. Argemone oil is generally used for adulteration of mustard oil. The Government of India have already requested the State Governments concerned to take necessary steps to exterminate the argemone weed wherever found. The Indian Standards Institution have also recently finalised the ISI Specification for mustard oil where it has been laid down that the oil shall be free from mixture with Argemone Oil.

The Prevention of Food Adulteration Bill, 1952 which is at present pending before the House of the People when enacted will also help in preventing the adulteration of edible oils with Argemone oil.

**Shri Gidwani:** Has the attention of the Government been drawn to the report of the Department of Post-Graduate Studies and Research, V. S. Hospital, Ahmedabad, to the effect that the strange disease of epidemic dropsy accompanied by diarrhoea and vomiting, etc., was caused by the contamination of foodstuffs in general and edible oil in particular, and if so, will the Government take steps to give wide publicity for the information of the public?

**Shrimati Chandraskhar:** We are aware of the fact that was mentioned by the Member, and we are taking the necessary steps, as far as possible to avoid this contamination of food, and as soon as the Food Adulteration Bill comes before this House and passed, then every possible step will be taken.

**Kumari Annie Mascarene:** May I know, Sir, if the Government are aware that the administration of the Medical Department in the last few years had done more harm than good to the people?

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** The question need not be answered. Next question.

**Shri Dabhi:** We have not been allowed to ask even one question. This relates to my district.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** I have called the next question.

**Shri Dabhi:** One question.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** I have called the next question. I did not notice the hon. Member.

**Shri Dabhi:** It relates to my town.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** All right—anyhow, if the hon. Member is so interested in his district, let him put the question.

**Shri Dabhi:** May I know whether it is a fact that as a result of the consumption of edible oils adulterated with argemone oil, about 1,000 people were affected and suffered from diarrhoea, vomiting, swelling of legs and thighs like anaemia and six persons died in Nadiad town, Kaira District, Bombay State?

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Is there dropsy, apart from swelling of legs? Mr. Gidwani has already asked whether steps are being taken even to the extent of educating the public in the methods of preventing this disease. The hon. Member is giving some information that in some part of the country some persons died.

**Shri Dabhi:** This relates to my town.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** In that case the hon. Member himself should have tabled a question.

#### RAILWAY VENDORS

\*1390. **Shri Gidwani:** (a) Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state whether the attention of Government has been drawn to a report by the staff correspondent of the 'Hindustan Times' published in that paper dated the 31st August, 1953, on page 5, regarding ineffective check on food for Railway passengers?

(b) Is it a fact that certain standards of cleanliness and quality as well as prices for food-stuffs sold at stations have been laid down by the Railway authorities?

(c) Are Government aware that these rules are not observed by the vendors?

(d) Is it a fact that the contractors to whom licence for vending food-stuffs is given, give out sub-contracts?

(e) What steps have Government taken to see that the food supplied to the passengers is good, clean and at reasonable prices?

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Shahnawaz Khan):** (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) As far as the Government are aware, the rules are enforced and are on the whole duly observed by vendors. If and when any breach comes to notice, adequate action is taken against the defaulter.

(d) No. On the other hand sub-letting of contracts is strictly prohibited and a contract is terminated forthwith if sub-letting is proved.

(e) A daily check is exercised to ensure vending of wholesome and clean food at reasonable rates fixed by the Administration.

**Shri Gidwani:** Is it a fact that the General Manager of one of the Railways received numerous complaints against one of the biggest contractors, Messrs. Ballabhdas Eshwardas, who is considered to be the king of contractors.....

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Why all this description? A question was asked the other day whether on the Grand Trunk Express catering has deteriorated.

**Shri Gidwani:** Is it a fact that a very responsible officer reported the bad service of food by this contractor

to the Member in charge, but was rebuked for doing so?

**The Deputy Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Alagesan):** There was no such thing—no officer was rebuked.

**Shri Gidwani:** It was the other day stated in reply to my supplementary question that Messrs. Ballabhdas Eshwardas have as much as 180 food stalls and 132 refreshment rooms, besides contract for dining cars on the three railways.....

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** What has that to do with this question?

**Shri Gidwani:** When one man has got so many things he is not able to look after them.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** The hon. Member cannot quarrel if somebody is making money by normal and moral means.

**Shri Gidwani:** He is not able to look after his contract properly.

**Shri Muniswamy:** May I know, Sir, whether it has come to the notice of Government that vendors are selling food-stuffs in the running trains without licence, without tickets and without even being checked, and if so, whether Government are taking any steps to prevent this?

**Shri Shahnawaz Khan:** We have no such information.

**Shri Muniswamy rose—**

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** If the Parliamentary Secretary says that they have no information and the hon. Member is in possession of any such information, he can give it to him later on, not now.

**Shri T. N. Singh:** The replies given by the hon. Minister show that everything in regard to catering on the railways is all right. In this House on more than one occasion several questions have been asked. May I know if even now Government are convinced

that everything is all right in that 'state'?

**The Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri L. B. Shastri):** It has never been suggested that everything is all right. In fact, the other day in this House I informed hon. members that we are going to place the whole matter before the next meeting of the National Railway Users' Council. That Council will go into this question as to whether the present system of issuing contracts and licences should be continued or should be changed or modified. As I said, in this House as well as in the other House, we will try to abide by the recommendations made by the Users' Council.

**Shrimati Tarkeshwari Sinha:** Has the selling of food-stuffs, tea and milk on the platforms at night been stopped recently by the Railway authorities?

**Shri L. B. Shastri:** It has been stopped between 11 and 4 O'Clock at night because it causes inconvenience to the passengers.

**Shri T. N. Singh:** The answer given by the hon. Minister gives a somewhat different impression from the written answer read out. May I suggest that the hon. Minister may kindly look into the answer read out and remove any misapprehension that may have been created?

**Shrimati Tarkeshwari Sinha.** Have any representations been made by the public of some areas about the stoppage of sale of food-stuffs at night, because difficulty is experienced in getting milk for children?

**Shri L. B. Shastri:** Stalls are open at night and passengers can go and purchase. They are not allowed to shout on the platforms.

**Shri Chattopadhyaya:** Are Government aware that very often—at least on two occasions I had the experience of finding fish and other bones in the vegetarian food?

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** How can the Government be aware of the experience of the hon. Member?

**Shri Chattopadhyaya:** If they are not aware, may I draw their attention to the fact that this thing does occur during our travels?

**Shri Nanadas:** May I know, Sir, through what source the travelling public are informed of the standards prescribed for food on the railways?

**Shri Shahnawaz Khan:** The standard is good, clean and wholesome food.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** The hon. Minister has said that the Railway Users' Council will look into this matter and he will abide by their recommendations.

#### CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES

\*1391. **Shri Vittal Rao:** Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether the examination of the report submitted in September, 1952 by the Special Officer appointed to conduct a survey of Co-operative Societies on Railways has since been concluded;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to lay a copy of the same on the Table of the House; and

(c) if the answer to part (a) above be in the negative, the reasons for the delay?

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Shahnawaz Khan):** (a) Not yet. The Report in question is still under examination.

(b) As soon as the examination is completed, full information will be placed on the Table of the House.

(c) The recommendations involve various financial and administrative questions requiring careful examination and consideration.