

(b) whether it is a fact that the berths of these coaches are defective; and

(c) why these coaches have been withdrawn from the Frontier Mail and other Express trains?

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

(b) No.

(c) On account of complaints of inadequate leg room between the seats in Second Class compartments.

Shri Dabhi: May I know whether the berths of these coaches are of less width than the ordinary higher class coaches, and therefore, they are less comfortable?

Shri Alagesan: Yes. These are all corridor type coaches. As far as Second Class accommodation is concerned, there were complaints that they are more inconvenient, and people seem to prefer the conventional type of Second Class coaches.

Shri Dabhi: May I know whether these withdrawn coaches are attached to the ordinary local trains and other passenger trains?

Shri Alagesan: For short distance and other passenger trains.

Pandit Munishwar Datt Upadhyay: Is it a fact that these coaches were purchased cheaper than the other upper class coaches purchased earlier?

Shri Alagesan: All these coaches were ordered, and they were furnished here—most of them are furnished here, for Second Class, First Class, and so on.

FOOD GRAIN PRICES

*43. **Shri S. C. Singhal:** Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that the prices of food grains have gone down causing great hardship thereby to the cultivators;

(b) whether Government have considered any plan for standardising the food grain prices; and

(c) what quantity of food grains is in the stock of Government, its cost price and its present value?

The Minister of Agriculture (Dr. P. S. Deshmukh): (a) It is true that prices of foodgrains have been tending to come down but so far the levels reached by this downward trend are not such as to cause hardship to the cultivators.

(b) No plan has yet been formulated but Government are watching the situation and suitable measures will be taken if the prices tend to fall below uneconomic levels. In the case of wheat the Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Pepsu Governments had notified that if prices fall below Rs. 10 per maund, they would commence purchasing wheat.

(c) There is a stock of about 15.4 lakh tons of foodgrains with the Government; out of this 12.2 lakh tons were still with the State Governments on 1st August, 1954 (in the process of being taken over by the Centre) and 3.2 lakh tons with the Centre including stocks already taken over from the State Governments till that date. The book value of foodgrains held in the Central Reserve is about Rs. 14.9 crores and its estimated present market value is about Rs. 13.6 crores. It is difficult to indicate immediately the precise value of rice stocks which Centre will be taking over from State Governments, but it can be very approximately estimated at Rs. 57 crores.

Shri S. C. Singhal: May I know whether the fall in price is due to increase in production, or due to the fall in the purchasing power of the people?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: It is certainly due to more production.

Shri Nanadas: May I know whether Government have any idea as to what extent the prices of foodgrains would still fall?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: For the time being, the fall has been arrested, and

there is a little upward trend in some places.

Dr. Rama Rao: In the face of the present low prices of foodstuffs, are Government going to import Burma rice at a higher price?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: We are bound to import what we have contracted for. We do not intend to import any more. In fact, we are anxious to export.

Shri T. K. Chaudhuri: I heard the hon. Minister employing the term 'over-production' in this connection. May I ask him whether...

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: Not over-production, but more production.

Shri Syamnandan Sahaya: Increased production.

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: Yes, increased production.

WATER SUPPLY IN JHARIA COAL-FIELDS

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

(a) whether Government are aware that there is still a short supply of water in the Jharia coal-fields;

(b) whether the amount sanctioned as grant and loan for augmentation of water supply, has been made available to the Jharia Water Board; and

(c) if so, the reasons for the delay in the implementation of the scheme to augment the water supply there?

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

(b) and (c). The money which was to be made available to the Government of Bihar has not yet been disbursed as the Government of Bihar has not claimed it so far. They are still negotiating with the Damodar Valley Corporation for a reasonable rate for a supply of water from the Damodar River.

Shri P. C. Bose: May I know what the actual difference is between the Bihar Government and the DVC, as

regards the water rate from the Damodar river?

Shri V. V. Giri: The Damodar Valley Corporation quoted to the State Government a rate of two annas and six pies per thousand gallons of water drawn from the river. The Bihar Government are negotiating with the Damodar Valley Corporation for a reasonable rate, say, six pies per thousand gallons.

Shri P. C. Bose: If they cannot come to a decision as regards the rate, may I know what the Government propose to do to finalise the matter?

Shri V. V. Giri: Let us wait and see.

MICA MINE WORKERS

*46. **Shri K. P. Sinha:** Will the Minister of Labour be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a sum of Rupees three lakhs is due to about 5,000 workers of Mica Mines in Rajasthan by way of wages; and

(b) if so, what steps Government have taken to see that these dues are paid?

The Minister of Labour (Shri V. V. Giri): (a) A sum of about Rupees five lakhs seventy one thousand was due to about 3,000 mica workers in March this year. The amount was brought down to about Rupees three lakhs seventy one thousand by the end of June.

(b) The Officers of the Industrial Relations Machinery are getting the arrears of wages cleared either by persuasion or by penal action against the defaulters as may be suitable. These officers have also been required to intimate the progress monthly. Instructions have been issued for more vigorous action for recovery of the arrears.

Shri K. P. Sinha: May I know the main causes leading to non-payment to this large number of workers?