

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Kidwai): (a) Yes.

(b) 548.

(c) 185.

LOCUST INVASION

*220. { **Dr. Ram Subhag Singh:**
Shri K. P. Sinha:
Shri B. K. Das:
Shri N. Rachiah:
Shri S. C. Samanta:
Shri Raghunath Singh:
Shri S. C. Singhal:
Shri N. C. Kasliwal:
Shri P. C. Bose:

Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) the number of locust swarms which have so far come to India from Pakistan during the year 1954;

(b) the extent of damage done to the standing crops by them in each region; and

(c) whether any additional precautions have been taken to prevent their menace?

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Kidwai): (a) About 80.

(b) A precise assessment of damage in various States is not available. The damage, however, does not appear to be serious.

(c) A statement in this regard is laid on the Table of the House. [See Appendix I, annexure No. 49.]

RECRUITMENT OF SEAMEN

*221. **Shri Jhulan Sinha:** Will the Minister of Transport be pleased to state:

(a) the existing system of recruitment of seamen;

(b) whether there is any proposal to effect a change in the system; and

(c) if so, what will be the proposed new system?

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

The Shipping Companies hitherto selected only the senior ratings, e.g. Butlers and Serangs direct while the selection of the rest of the crew was left to these senior ratings. On account of serious complaints received against this system of recruitment, Government have decided to set up statutory Employment Offices at Bombay and Calcutta which are the two principal ports of recruitment in India. An office has already been established and is working in Bombay from the 7th June, 1954 and a similar office is expected to function at Calcutta very shortly. Under the new arrangement, seamen will be recruited on the principle of rotation with reasonable freedom to shipowners in the selection of crews and to seamen in the selection of their ship.

TUBE-WELLS

*222. **Sardar A. S. Saigal:** Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a contract has been entered into with a French combine of contractors for the construction of tube-wells in India;

(b) if so, when this work will be completed; and

(c) what arrangements have been made to get diesel generating sets, pumping sets and insulators, so that the work may be completed soon?

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Kidwai): (a) Yes.

(b) By January, 1956.

(c) These wells are located in areas where surplus power is expected to be available from existing sources of power generation. All the pumping sets have been ordered from indigenous manufacturers and are already being supplied. Arrangements for the import of insulators after inviting tenders on a global basis are being made and they are expected to arrive in time for the completion of the tube-wells.