

basis? What is the form in which it is given?

Shri Raj Bahadur: Farmers' daily weather forecasts are broadcast by the All India Radio, and they are also published in the newspapers.

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: Do these forecasts emanate from more than one observatory, or only one?

Shri Raj Bahadur: Regional observatories send information which is coordinated at the main observatory and issued.

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: Has any effort been made to find out the correctness of these forecasts?

Shri Raj Bahadur: This question had been put before and I would refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave then.

Shri Beli Ram Das: Is it a fact that the agriculturists cannot take advantage of these weather forecasts, because there is no radio in the villages?

Shri Raj Bahadur: Community sets have been provided in the villages and many agriculturists take advantage of these forecasts from them.

श्री गणपति राम : क्या मंत्री जी बतलाने की कृपा करेंगे कि मेटेरोलोजिकल डिपार्टमेंट कब से खुला और उस की प्रति वर्ष क्या उन्नति है ?

[**Shri Ganpati Ram:** Will the hon. Minister please state when the Meteorological Department started functioning and what has been its progress from year to year?]

Mr. Speaker: It is too general a question to be answered.

Shri K. K. Basu: Way I know whether there is any arrangement anywhere in India whereby the tillers of the soil can get the benefit of these forecasts—I mean, apart from the A.I.R. medium?

Shri Raj Bahadur: This is primarily a matter for the State Governments. What we can do is to publicise to the various regions information about the weather forecasts.

Shri Sarangadhar Das: May I enquire whether the hon. Minister has got information as to whether every village has been covered by the community radio sets, whether they be distributed by the Central

Government or by the Provincial Governments?

Shri Raj Bahadur: That pertains to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. All I can say is that there are as many as 3847 community sets all over the country.

FISHING

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

(a) whether it is a fact that the West Bengal Government has asked for light-powered craft from Australia for fishing in the estuarine areas of the Sunderbans;

(b) if so, how many and when they are expected to reach; and

(c) how far the Colombo Plan will help to solve the problems of fishing in coastal areas in West Bengal?

The Deputy Minister of Commerce and Industry (Shri Karmarkar): (a) Yes.

(b) The request is under consideration

(c) There is no plan at present to obtain assistance under the Colombo Plan for fishing in coastal areas of West Bengal but the question will be examined.

Shri S. C. Samanta: May I know whether any arrangements have been made by the Government of India for the collection and publication of data regarding fish catches made by power-driven vessels in Indian waters?

Shri Karmarkar: This question refers to Indian waters, whereas the original question related to only West Bengal.

Mr. Speaker: I think that he is referring to the Bengal coast.

Shri S. C. Samanta: Yes, Sir.

Shri Karmarkar: So far as Bengal is concerned, I may tell him that the West Bengal Government approached us for obtaining four fishing vessels with necessary equipment. In addition, they have asked for three fishing launches equipped with net, boats etc. In the meantime, they have obtained some and regarding the other demands, the matter is being considered.

Mr. Speaker: I think his question was: What arrangements have been made for maintaining statistics of catches in these areas?

Shri Karmarkar: I have no idea about that at the moment.

Shri S. C. Samanta: May I know whether these light-powered vessels can be used in inland waters also?

Shri Karmarkar: I shall find that out.

Shri S. C. Samanta: May I know how far the sea fishing on West Bengal coast has progressed, and whether any accounts have been kept in respect of the same?

Shri Karmarkar: Out of a total area of 400 square miles of territorial coastal waters in the south of the districts of Midnapore and 24-Parganas which is suitable for coastal water fishing, about 150 sq. miles are now being exploited by the indigenous systems of fishing during certain parts of the year, mostly by local fishermen and partly by fishermen from other parts of the State, giving an yield of the order of 1800 tons per year.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: May I know what will be the cost of these light-powered fishing vessels?

Shri Karmarkar: I should like to have notice.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: May I know if there is any plan for supplying these crafts on loan to refugee fishermen who are facing a great crisis in these areas? They have come from Eastern Bengal, and I want to know whether these crafts will be made available to them on loan or on any other basis.

Shri Karmarkar: I shall have to find that out.

Dr. M. M. Das: May I know whether it is a fact that a certain amount of money has been promised by the U.S.A. for the development of fisheries in this country, and if so, has any plan been drawn up for the utilisation of that money for this purpose?

Shri Karmarkar: Regarding the exact allocation made for improvement of fisheries in India, I should like to have notice, but there appears to be an idea that it might be possible to get from America some amount by way of aid.

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: May I know what degree of efficiency has been attained in fish-mongering?

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. We will go to the next question.

MERGER OF DEARNESS ALLOWANCE OF RAILWAY EMPLOYEES WITH BASIC PAY

*659. **Shri S. C. Samanta:** Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Committee to go into the question of merging Dearness Allowance of the Railwaymen into their basic pay has been set up;

(b) if so, who are the members of the Committee and when they are expected to submit their recommendations; and

(c) what are the terms of reference?

The Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri L. B. Shastri): (a) The Committee has not yet been set up.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

Shri S. C. Samanta: May I know whether the Joint Advisory Committee set up in 1949-50 made any recommendations on the subject?

Shri L. B. Shastri: I have no knowledge.

Shri S. C. Samanta: May I know the amount of loss that is being incurred every year by giving food-grain concessions to railwaymen?

Shri L. B. Shastri: The Committee that is now being set up will not consider the matter which has just now been referred to by the hon. Member, but I may say that this question has already been looked into and a decision has been taken that a portion of the dearness allowance should be merged into the basic pay of the workers to the extent justifiable.

Shri S. C. Samanta: May I know the rate of dearness allowance given to ex-States Railway employees?

Shri L. B. Shastri: The same rates apply generally.

Shri Nambiar: May I know what steps have been taken by Government to comply with the representations made by railwaymen to include not only a portion of the dearness allowance in the basic pay but also adequately to add to the dearness allowance according to the cost of living index on the basis of the Central Pay Commission's recommendations?

Mr. Speaker: I think it is a much wider question.