

INTERNATIONAL WHEAT AGREEMENT

*1102. **Dr. Ram Subhag Singh:** (a) Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state whether the Government of India propose to buy wheat during the second half of 1952 under the International Wheat Agreement?

(b) If so, what quantity of wheat do they propose to buy?

(c) Have any orders been placed in this regard with any country?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Shri Satish Chandra): (a) Yes.

(b) About 8 lakh metric tons.

(c) Necessary instructions have been given to our purchase authorities abroad and they will make purchases from different countries at the appropriate time.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: May I know, Sir, the total quantity of wheat which India is entitled to buy under this agreement?

Shri Satish Chandra: 15 lakh tons.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: May I know, Sir, what quantity of wheat has so far been purchased under this agreement in the current financial year.

Shri Satish Chandra: Sir, the International Wheat Agreement year begins from August; it is August to July. So all purchases for next year will be made after August.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: May I know, Sir, the difference between the price of wheat purchased under this agreement and purchased in the open market in other countries—United States, Canada and Australia?

Shri Satish Chandra: I require notice.

Sardar Hukam Singh: How much of this is going to be spared for Pakistan?

Mr. Speaker: It does not arise out of this question. I think the position was made clear during the previous answer.

Shri Satish Chandra: Sir, the question relates only to purchase under the International Wheat Agreement.

HILI-EKLAHMI RAILWAY LINK

*1104. **Shri A. C. Guha:** Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been a proposal to construct a railway line con-

necting Hili and Raiganj (W. Dinajpur, W. Bengal) with Eklakmi or some other station of Maldah district;

(b) if so, when the work is expected to be undertaken and to be completed;

(c) whether Government propose to construct an exclusively Indian railway connection between Calcutta and the two districts of West Dinajpur and Maldah; and

(d) if so, when that work is to be undertaken and completed?

The Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri L. B. Shastri): (a) Yes.

(b) The project is being re-examined. It is not possible to state at present whether and, if so, when the project will be undertaken and completed.

(c) There is no such proposal at present.

(d) Does not arise.

Shri A. C. Guha: May I know, Sir, what are the reasons for the proposal being re-examined? What happened to the first scheme?

Shri L. B. Shastri: In fact, there were different proposals for different lines and the Central Board of Transport while making an over-all review of all projects at their meeting held recently—sometime in March 1952—decided that another examination of these projects should be made in consultation with the officers of the West Bengal Government. The railway administration has been instructed to take steps to implement the decision as soon as possible.

Shri A. C. Guha: Regarding reply to part (c), may I know if the hon. Minister is aware that for lack of direct connection between Calcutta and these parts, there is quite a considerable bottleneck of traffic particularly in foodstuffs?

Shri L. B. Shastri: Well, the hon. Member is right to some extent. But the difficulty is that to provide for direct connection from Calcutta would involve the provision of a bridge across the Ganga. That matter was being considered by the Visveswaraiya Committee. They have submitted a report, but they have suggested that the whole scheme should first be technically and financially scrutinised.

Shri A. C. Guha: May I know if the Central Water and Power Commission also was entrusted with the work of inquiring into the construction of this bridge or barrage over the Ganges, and if that authority has submitted any report?