

(b) what quota was allowed to India and whether it meets her need of rice consumption for the current year; and

(c) what countries took part in this Conference?

The Deputy Minister of Commerce and Industry (Shri Karmarkar): (a) Presumably the hon. Member is referring to the Fourth meeting of the Consultative Committee on rice held at Singapore on the 25th and the 26th March, 1952. The main object of this meeting was to review rice supply and demand prospects for 1952. It did not propose to make any allocations of rice.

(b) does not arise.

(c) A list of the countries which took part in this meeting is placed on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

Aden
Australia
Ceylon
France
Hongkong
India
Indonesia
Japan
Laos
Federation of Malaya
Mauritius
Netherlands.
North Borneo
Pakistan
The Philippines
Portugal
Sarawak
The Seychelles.
Singapore
Thailand
U.S.A.
Viet Nam.

Pandit Munishwar Datt Upadhyay: May I know what are the rice producing countries that participated in this Conference?

Shri Karmarkar: The whole list is given. Regarding as to what exactly are the rice producing countries, I shall have to find out.

Pandit Munishwar Datt Upadhyay: What is the total quantity of rice that the rice producing countries can make available for purchase and for fair distribution?

Shri Karmarkar: I should like to have notice.

Pandit Munishwar Datt Upadhyay: May I know why Burma was ignored in this Conference?

Shri Karmarkar: I am not sure

whether the hon. Member is correct. Burma was invited; but the Government of Burma were unable to send a representative. They requested that they be provided with a copy of the report and I think a copy of the report was sent to them.

Pandit Munishwar Datt Upadhyay: What are the countries from which India was allowed to purchase rice?

Shri Karmarkar: The countries from which we actually imported rice was given by me a moment ago in reply to a previous question. There is no question of being allowed or not allowed. Whatever is available, we are allowed to import.

Pandit Munishwar Datt Upadhyay: Under this Agreement?

Shri Karmarkar: Yes, surely.

Shri Veeraswamy: May I know whether the Food Ministry will send more rice to the Madras State where rice is the staple food?

Shri Karmarkar: That is not on the agenda of the Singapore Conference.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: Since we are giving wheat to Pakistan, may I know whether any attempt has been made to get rice from them in exchange?

Shri Karmarkar: I said the other day that we do expect to get some rice in exchange. But, whether that expectation will fructify or not, is a matter for the future.

COAL INDUSTRY

***245. Dr. M. M. Das:** Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of a transport bottleneck from which the coal industry is suffering for the last few months;

(b) if so, what are the reasons for the same;

(c) the steps that have been taken or are proposed to be taken for removing the bottleneck; and

(d) whether it is a fact that the non-availability of wagons has compelled traders to use motor trucks and this has given them an opportunity to evade the coal cesses imposed by Government?

The Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri L. B. Shastri): (a) to (c). There has been no particular bottleneck during the last few months in respect of movement of coal by rail.

On the contrary, the average daily loading in the West Bengal and Bihar Coalfields in 1951 was about 172 wagons more compared to that in 1950 and the average daily loading during the first four months of 1952 has been about 127 wagons more than that during the corresponding period of 1951. Similarly, there has been increase in 1952 over the loading in the corresponding period of 1951 in Pench, Chanda Valley, C.I.C. and Singareni Collieries.

It is, however, a fact that the overall requirements for movement of coal exceed the number of wagons that it is at present feasible to make available for the loading of coal, consistent with the other requirements of traffic that have also to be met concurrently. On some sections, movement of coal along with that of other traffic, particularly to the South, is also limited by the line capacity. A large number of new wagons have already been received and some thousands more are on order. Steps are also being taken to augment the line capacity on some of the difficult routes. The position is thus expected to progressively improve.

(d) Movement of coal by road is allowed under permits issued by the Coal Commissioner and normally Welfare Cess is due to be collected on such despatches also. Certain road despatches, however, may be escaping levy of cess and the question of tightening up the procedure is under active examination by the Ministries of Labour and of Works, Production and Supply.

Dr. M. M. Das: May I know, Sir, whether Government is aware that a series of articles were published in Calcutta newspapers during recent months complaining about transport bottlenecks in the coal industry?

Shri L. B. Shastri: I am not but it is just possible that there have been complaints.

Dr. M. M. Das: May I know, Sir, whether Government is aware of the fact that coal amounting to four or five million tons have been accumulating in the coal fields of Bihar and West Bengal for want of proper transport facilities?

Shri L. B. Shastri: I have already said in my reply that we have wagon shortage and it is not feasible to step up the target as we have to meet other essential demands like movement of imported foodgrains etc.

Dr. M. M. Das: May I know, Sir, whether Government have received any

memorandum from the coal industry stating that the regrouping of Railways will cause them more trouble and more difficulty about transport?

Shri L. B. Shastri: Yes, we have.

Shri A. C. Guha: May I know what was the average raising of coal last year every month and what was the capacity of the wagon supply for removing the coal from the colliery sites?

Shri L. B. Shastri: The average daily loading in 1951 has been nearly 200 wagons, more than the average daily loading in 1950. I can give that figure to the hon. Member.

Shri A. C. Guha: My point was whether the average daily loading was proportionate to the average daily raising of coal and whether due to shortage of wagons there was an accumulation of coal at the colliery sites.

Shri L. B. Shastri: That will require notice.

Shri B. S. Murthy: May I know whether Government has received any complaints from the industrialists of the South that their legitimate quota is not regularly supplied?

Shri L. B. Shastri: I have no knowledge, but there has been some complaint from the South.

Shri T. K. Chandhuri: Does the hon. Minister's statement hold good for the Central Provinces collieries also?

Shri L. B. Shastri: I have given the total figure, but it is difficult for me to tell specially about the Madhya Pradesh collieries.

Dr. M. M. Das: May I know, Sir, whether the Government is in a position to give us an approximate date by which this transport difficulty about carrying coal will cease to exist?

Shri L. B. Shastri: Well, it is difficult to give an exact date, but as I have said, we have ordered for thousands of coaches, and as soon as we get sufficient number of coaches, this difficulty will be removed.

Shri B. S. Murthy: May I know what action is proposed to be taken on the complaints the Hon. Minister has received?

Shri L. B. Shastri: Government is looking into the matter and will do the needful.

Shri Nambiar: May I know, Sir, since when coaches are carrying loads of coal?

JOINING AMRAVATI WITH THE MAIN RAILWAY LINE

***246. Dr. P. S. Deshmukh:** (a) Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state the cost of joining Amravati with the main railway line from Nagpur to Bombay?

(b) What is the position of this proposal?

(c) Have Government received any representation in this matter?

(d) If so, have Government taken any decision on it?

The Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri L. B. Shastri): (a) The cost of bringing Amravati on the main Railway line was estimated in 1946 at Rs. 37-33 lakhs.

(b) The question of diverting the main line between Bombay and Nagpur via Amravati was investigated in 1946 but in view of the poor financial prospects revealed by the Traffic Survey Report, the project was dropped.

(c) Yes.

(d) As already stated in reply to part (b), it was decided to drop the project and Government do not see any reason to revise the decision.

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: Is it not a fact that the branch line between Nagpur and Amravati is the most costly line in the whole of India?

Mr. Speaker: He is entering into an argument. We may proceed to the next question.

ACCIDENT IN RAJKUMARI CHOWK ROAD, AMRAVATI

***247. Dr. P. S. Deshmukh:** (a) Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state whether it is a fact that a fatal accident was caused by the negligent act of the Posts and Telegraphs Department servants to Shri Shashikant Nawathe of Amravati on public thoroughfare on 22nd August, 1951 while passing by the crowded Rajkumari Chowk road, where he contacted loosely lying coils of telephone wires on the street?

(b) Is it a fact that the gangmen of the department were working without the necessary instruments and necessary precautions on the live electric wires without stopping the electric current?

(c) Has the District Magistrate made enquiries into the accident and, if so, with what result?

(d) Has any compensation been paid so far and if not, why not?

(e) What measures has the Posts and Telegraphs Department taken to give redress to the persons affected?

(f) Will Government institute a full and detailed enquiry into the accident?

The Minister of Communications (Shri Jagjivan Ram): (a) I regret to say that it is a fact that Shri Shashikant Nawathe of Amravati met with a fatal accident near the Rajkumari Chowk by treading on a coil of telephone wires one of which happened to have become charged by accidental contact with a live wire.

(b) The workmen of the department were dismantling two spare telephone wires one of which accidentally got charged by contact with a live electric wire, whose insulation had been damaged. The workmen had the necessary tools but had gone inside a building to remove an obstruction when the accident happened.

(c) I am not aware of any enquiry made by the District Magistrate.

(d) and (e). The parents of the deceased have given notice of a Civil Suit against Government while the question of making an *ex gratia* payment to them is under consideration.

(f) The accident has already been investigated by officers of the P. and T. Department, by the police and by the Electrical Inspector to the Government of Madhya Pradesh. It is not proposed to institute any further enquiry into the matter.

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: Sir, has the Government determined the amount which they are prepared to pay to the father of the deceased?

Shri Jagjivan Ram: Sir, I am not prepared to divulge the information at this stage. I have asked my officers to negotiate with the parents of the deceased.

RURAL POST OFFICES (BERAR)

***248. Dr. P. S. Deshmukh:** (a) Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state if there are any villages with a population of 2,000 and more which are yet to have an independent Post Office in Berar (M.P.)?