

made by the department as to how many water tanks situated in the Railway boundary and owned by the Railways have got surplus water which could be supplied to the adjoining fields for irrigation purpose?

(b) If so, what is the number of tanks and where are they situated?

(c) What steps have Government so far taken for making this surplus water available to the cultivators for helping them in growing more food?

The Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri L. B. Shastri): (a) to (c). On a request from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, orders were issued to Railway Administrations that requests from Agriculturists for the utilisation of surplus water in tanks in railway premises may be given favourable consideration, provided such requests are supported by the Revenue Authorities of the State Governments concerned, and the railway interests are not in any way adversely affected by the grant of this concession. The Railway Administrations send a Quarterly Report direct to the Ministry of Food and Agriculture giving particulars of requests received from State Governments for the utilisation of water from railway tanks and the extent to which these are acceded to. The number of such tanks will vary from year to year, depending on the rainfall and other local factors.

SARDARGANJ-BHUJ RAIL LINK

***203. Shri Jasani:** (a) Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state whether there is any proposal to construct a Metre Gauge Railway line from Sardarganj to Bhuj connecting the present Kandla-Deesa Railway line?

(b) If so, when is the work likely to be commenced and what will be the total cost?

The Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri L. B. Shastri): (a) There is no proposal to construct a new M.G. line but the conversion of the existing N.G. to M.G. is under examination.

(b) The costs involved are being worked out and no final decision has yet been reached regarding the execution of this work.

FOOD GIFTS FROM ABROAD

***204. Shri Gopala Rao:** Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) the policy and practice that have been adopted regarding the dis-

tribution of food gifts from abroad received by unofficial organisations in India; and

(b) whether the Government of India has taken any decision to ban the distribution of food gifts received from abroad by private bodies in India, on the ground that such distribution will upset Government's plans for relief and rationing?

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Kidwai): (a) Only Recognised Relief Organisations are allowed to import food gifts from foreign countries. Such gifts have to be distributed free among the poor and needy irrespective of their race, caste or creed.

(b) There has been no change in Government's policy regarding import of food gifts by Recognised Relief Organisations.

SUGAR-CANE PRICES

***205. Shri Gopala Rao:** Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that sugar-cane prices have been reduced by 25 per cent; and

(b) if so, the factors that led to the Government's decision to reduce the prices of sugar-cane?

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

(b) The decision to reduce the prices of sugarcane has been taken after taking into consideration the recommendation of the Tariff Board and the State Governments and the present position of sugar supply, anticipated production in 1952-53, the current level of gur prices and the downward trend in the prices of important agricultural commodities. This decision is also in line with the world trend of sugar prices which have been declining for the last one year or so.

SINGARENI GROUP OF MINES (ACCIDENT)

***206. Shri Vittal Rao:** Will the Minister of Labour be pleased to state:

(a) the causes for the accident in the Birlay Pit, Kothagudium on the 15th September, 1952;

(b) why no enquiry has been held even though more than a month has elapsed; and

(c) whether Government contemplate appointing a non-official Enquiry Committee in view of large number of accidents occurring in the Singareni Group of Mines?