

RICE

*671. **Shri V. Missir:** Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) the total quantity of surplus rice in the country at present;

(b) whether it is a fact that Government are making attempts to revive the pre-war contracts in the international rice market to dispose of the surplus stock; and

(c) if so, with what result?

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri A. P. Jain): (a) to (c). On 19.2.55, Government had a stock of about 15.8 lakh tons of rice, a large portion of which is proposed to be maintained as Central Reserve.

Government have, however, permitted export of 2 lakh tons of rice by trade and to facilitate this export the export duty has been reduced from 20 per cent, *ad valorem* to the nominal amount of Rs.-2|3 per maund. The exports which were negligible in the beginning are now gaining momentum.

CANCELLATION OF RENT ARREARS

*674. **Shri Dasaratha Deb:** Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the recoveries of arrears of rent from cultivators are being effected forcibly by the Government of Tripura; and

(b) whether Government propose to lay on the Table of the House a copy of the report of the Officer of his Ministry who was deputed to Manipur and Tripura to look into this matter?

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri A. P. Jain): (a) Action for recovery of arrears of rent is being taken by Government according to the legal provisions in that respect. Recoveries are not being made by force. The Government is also considering the question of remission of old arrears strictly on merits in suitable cases.

(b) An officer of the Ministry visited Manipur and Tripura some time ago and submitted his report to Government of India and the Administration of Tripura and Manipur. It is not in the public interest to place his reports on the Table of the Sabha.

STRIKE IN LIGNITE MINES IN NEIVELI

*678. **Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy:** Will the Minister of Labour be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that workers of lignite mines in Neiveli went on a strike on the 20th January, 1955;

(b) whether it is a fact that some of them were arrested;

(c) if so, the main reasons therefor; and

(d) the number of arrests made in this connection?

The Deputy Minister of Labour (Shri Abid Ali): (a) No. Consequent on the completion of certain excavation work in the Lignite Project, Neiveli, in December, 1954, the Project Authority disbanded some surplus staff during January-February, 1955. A few of the concerned workers stayed away from work of their own accord on 18th January, 1955, and on subsequent days.

(b) to (d). It appears that certain workers were prosecuted under the Police Act. Information as regards the actual number of persons arrested and the reasons for the arrest is not available.

BALAN RAILWAY BRIDGE

*684. **Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad:** Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state whether Government propose to raise above the highest flood level, the Balan railway bridge near Nirmali and the railway track from Ghoghardipa to Nirmali?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Shah Nawaz Khan): The matter is receiving the attention of the Railway administration.