

(a) the criteria laid down to fix the issue prices of foodgrains supplied through Public Distribution System;

(b) whether under the present system the issue price is fixed in relation to the procurement price of foodgrains;

(c) whether various State Governments have urged the Union Government to reduce the issue price of foodgrains; and

(d) the steps proposed to reduce the prices of foodgrains in the P.D.S.?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD (SHRI KALP NATH RAI): (a) and (b). Central issue prices of rice and wheat (*ex-FCI* godowns) are fixed by the Government taking into account Minimum Support Prices/Procurement Prices of paddy and wheat and acquisition and handling cost of the grains incurred by FCI. The distribution cost and carrying cost are not taken into account and Central Government bears a huge food subsidy on this account.

(c) and (d). Representations from few State Governments and social organisations and individuals have been received.

Issue of rice and wheat by Food Corporation of India at CIPs so fixed carries a huge food subsidy burden on the Government and to contain the food subsidy budget, it is not possible to reduce the CIPs. The end retail prices are fixed by the State Governments themselves.

[*Translation*]

Casual Labourers

*229. SHRI HARI KEWAL PRASAD:
SHRI MOHAMMAD ALI
ASHRAF FATMI:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the criteria laid down for the regularisation of casual labourers in Railways;

(b) the number of casual labourers waiting for regularisation in Railways, zone-wise; and

(c) the efforts being made by the Government to this effect?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF): (a) The casual labour are regularised in their turn based on the number of days put in by them subject to availability of vacancies in regular establishment and the suitability of individuals.

(b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

(c) In order to provide an opportunity to casual labour to be absorbed in regular establishment, for the last two decades, virtually all vacancies in Group 'D' barring certain exceptions, are filled up by screening and absorption of casual labour and substitutes.

Further, the areas of work of regular nature in which casual labour were being utilised were identified and decasualised and approximately 90,000 posts were sanctioned between 1988 and 1993 under decasualisation schemes. By this the pace of absorption has been greatly accelerated.

With the above efforts, the strength of casual labour has reduced from 2.3 lakhs approx. at the end of 1981-82 to 0.86 lakhs approx. at the end of 1992-93.