

(c) Yes. The number so far selected is short of the required number of 30 for this category by 3.

(d) All necessary steps have already been taken and the staffing of the expanded organisation is expected to be completed by the end of this month.

NAGPUR-NAGBHIR RAILWAY LINE

638. **Shri Jagan:** Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether a survey for the conversion of present Nagpur-Nagbhir Railway line from narrow gauge to Broad gauge was made with a view to connect this line with Bhairamgarh, Jagdalpur-Vizagapatnam route to tap Bailadila iron-ores;

(b) if so, when the survey was carried out; and

(c) whether there is any proposal for the construction of this railway line in the near future?

The Deputy Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Alagan):
(a) Yes.

(b) In 1945-48.

(c) No.

EMPLOYEES' PROVIDENT FUNDS ACT

639. **Shri Tushar Chatterjee:** Will the Minister of Labour be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian Jute Mills Association has applied to Government for exemption of their member mills from the provisions of the Employees' Provident Funds Act 1952;

(b) if so, what is exactly the proposal of the Indian Jute Mills Association and whether Government have taken any decision on it;

(c) whether Government have also received any representation from the Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union on this question; and

(d) if so, what action Government have taken on it?

The Minister of Labour (Shri V. V. Giri): (a) Yes.

(b) The proposal of the Indian Jute Mills Association is that since the members of the Association have modified and are prepared to modify further, if required, their provident fund schemes in accordance with the

Employees' Provident Funds Scheme, 1952, they should be exempted from the scope of the Employees' Provident Funds Act, 1952. The applications for exemption are under examination in consultation with the Regional Provident Fund Commissioners, the State Governments and the Labour Unions. Pending disposal of applications for exemption, relaxation orders from the provisions of the Scheme have already been issued to the Jute Mills (which applied for exemption on or before 31st October, 1952) by the Central Provident Fund Commissioner in exercise of powers vested in him under paragraph 79 of the Employees' Provident Fund Scheme.

(c) and (d). The Bengal Chatkal Mazdoor Union have objected to the claim of the Indian Jute Mills Association for exemption being granted to their member mills from the provisions of the Act, particularly on the ground that the administrative machinery of the Funds should not vest with the managements but should be transferred to the appropriate authority under the Act. This is at present under the consideration of Government.

Podu CULTIVATION

640. **Shri Sangama:** Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) whether Dr. J. D. N. Vershaya, the representative of the U.N.E.S.C.O. visited Orissa in the month of September, 1952 to study the steps taken by the Government of Orissa in regard to Podu cultivation;

(b) if so, whether he has conferred with the Government of Orissa; and

(c) what are his impressions about Podu cultivation in Orissa?

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

(b) Yes.

(c) The Orissa Government report that he has made some general suggestion about the problem of podu cultivation.

ALL-INDIA SEAFARERS' FEDERATION

641. **Prof. D. C. Sharma:** Will the Minister of Transport be pleased to state:

(a) whether a deputation of the All India Seafarers' Federation has met the Minister of Transport; and

(b) if so, what proposals the deputationists have put before him?