

**The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Kidwai):** (a) Prices of foodgrains in the country have shown a mixed tendency in recent months; while they have risen in certain areas, they have either been steady or even declined in others.

(b) The extent of fluctuations varies from centre to centre and cereal to cereal. A statement giving the prices of foodgrains and their percentage variations during May, June and July 1953 is laid on the Table of the House. [See Appendix II, annexure No. 11.]

(c) The rise in prices may be attributed largely to seasonal shortage, particularly in the case of Kharif cereals, and to some extent to transport difficulties owing to setting in of rains, or farmers' being busy with agricultural operations.

(d) The steps in question include:

(i) Invoking the aid of the Central Foodgrains (Licencing and Procurement) Order, 1952.

(ii) Opening of fair price shops,

(iii) Issuing larger quantum of foodgrains to card-holders,

(iv) Reducing the issue prices of foodgrains,

(v) Issuing overseas wheat at subsidised rates in scarcity areas,

(vi) Tightening up of anti-smuggling and anti-hoarding measures; and

(vii) Reduction by the Government of India in the prices of the imported wheat by Re. 1/- in March 1953 and by another Re. 1/- from 1st July, 1953.

#### FERRY BOAT FOR GOALPARA

**\*288. Shri Amjad Ali:** (a) Will the Minister of Transport be pleased to state when a ferry was purchased for use on Jogighopa-Goalpara crossing?

(b) What was its price?

(c) What amount, if any, has been spent on its repairs since it was first put up for service on that route?

(d) Is it a fact that for a large part of the year, this boat remains out of use for repairs?

**The Deputy Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Alagesan):** (a) September, 1948.

(b) Rs. 1,60,000/-.

(c) Rs. 65,585/-.

(d) Not since the beginning of this year. The ferry has, however, been leased out to a private firm from 1st July 1953 after calling for tenders. This firm is operating the service with its own steamer.

#### REPRESENTATION FROM PUBLIC OF DHULRI-FAKIREGRAM SECTION

**\*289. Shri Amjad Ali:** (a) Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state whether it is a fact that on the 28th April, 1953, a representation on behalf of the travelling public of Dhulri-Fakiregram section (Pandu-Region) was addressed to the Chief Operating Superintendent, North-Eastern Railway, Gorakhpur (U.P.), about the inconvenience caused to the travelling public by the new time table from the 16th April, 1953?

(b) If so, what action do Government propose to take in the matter?

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

(b) The arrival and departure timings of Mixed Trains Nos. 626 Down and 625 Up at Dhulri have now been altered from 1.35 and 2.30 hours to 23.00 and 23.50 hours respectively with effect from 20-6-1953.

#### LIGHT HOUSES

**\*290. Shri Jethalal Joshi:** Will the Minister of Transport be pleased to state:

(a) the total amount of spare parts required for the repairs to light-houses, imported into India during the year 1952-53:

(b) whether there is any proposal to manufacture such spare parts in India; and

(c) if so where?

**The Deputy Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Alagesan):** (a) So far as the lighthouses directly administered by the Central Government are concerned, no spare parts were imported during 1952-53. In so far as the lighthouses administered by the State Governments and other local authorities are concerned, the information is being collected and will be placed on the Table of the House in due course.

(b) and (c). Most of the spare parts required for the proper maintenance and upkeep of the lighthouses are already being manufactured in the Lighthouse Workshops at Madras and Bombay. It is the intention to develop these workshops so that all spare parts can be manufactured in the country though in the case of lenses and other optical equipment it will take us quite a long time to do so.

#### RECRUITMENT OF SEAMEN

**\*291. Shri Jethalal Joshi:** Will the Minister of Transport be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to expand the recruiting and training facilities for sea-men in order to encourage the development of Indian shipping;

(b) whether they propose to open one more training centre in Saurashtra; and

(c) if so, when the proposal is likely to materialise?

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

(b) and (c). A proposal to start a training centre in Saurashtra is under consideration. It is, however, difficult to say at this stage when it is likely to materialise.

#### PASSENGER AND GOODS EARNINGS

**\*292. Shri K. G. Deshmukh:** (a) Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state whether the Railway goods earnings have improved during the year 1952-53?

(b) If so, to what extent?

(c) What is the position of passenger earnings during the year 1952-53?

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

(b) Goods earnings during 1952-53 amounted to Rs. 146.13 crores against Rs 140.48 crores (excluding freight on carriage of railway coal and materials) in 1951-52.

(c) The passenger earnings during 1952-53 amounted to Rs. 100.36 crores against Rs. 109.88 crores during 1951-52.

#### DIVERSION OF S.S. 'Muzaffari' FROM COLOMBO

**\*293. Shrimati Tarkeshwari Sinha:** Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the freighter named 'Muzaffari' was diverted from Colombo to Bombay with 7,300 tons of Chinese rice; and

(b) whether the rice has been imported by India or it is by way of repayment of rice loan obtained by Ceylon from India in the year 1952?

**The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Kidwai):** (a) Yes Sir. Steamer *Muzaffari* was diverted by the Government of Ceylon from Colombo to Bombay, where she discharged its entire cargo of about 7019 tons of Chinese rice.

(b) This rice was received in part replacement of about 14986 tons rice supplied to the Ceylon Government on loan in September/November, 1952.

#### INDIAN SHIPPING COMPANIES

**\*294. Shri K. C. Sodhia:** (a) Will the Minister of Transport be pleased to state the reasons which have led