

(b) if so, whether they are authorised to do so as per Telegraph Rules; and

(c) whether the enquiry clerks on any other Railway have been entrusted with this work?

The Deputy Minister of Railways (Shri Shahawaz Khan): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Enquiry Clerks have been specially trained for the purpose and there is nothing in the Telegraph Rules prohibiting such staff from performing such duties.

(c) Yes, Sir. At Hyderabad on the Central Railway; Lucknow on the Northern Railway; and Bombay Central on the Western Railway.

Tirunelveli-Trivandrum Rail Link

3929. Shri Kumaran: Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state at what stage is the proposal to construct a railway link from Tirunelveli to Trivandrum?

The Deputy Minister of Railways (Shri S. V. Ramaswamy): The Traffic survey has been completed and the report is under compilation. The project is however, not included in the Second Five Year Plan.

Poultry Farms in Punjab

3930. Shri Daljit Singh: Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state the amount allotted for the development of the Poultry Farms in the Punjab State during 1957-58?

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri A. P. Jain): States are not eligible for central assistance for development of poultry farms. However, under the All India Poultry Development Scheme, a grant of Rs. 3,45,045 and a loan of Rs. 51,000 were sanctioned to the Punjab State for running the 6 old Extension Cen-

tres and opening of 4 new centres in 1957-58.

Famine in Assam

3931. Shri Sanganna: Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that "Mao Tam", a type of famine which is preceded by flowering of bamboos which bear fruits followed by an abnormal increase of rats, is prevailing in Tribal Districts of Assam;

(b) if so, whether the phenomenon has been referred to the Dehra Dun Forest Institute for expert opinion as to flowering and bearing fruits of bamboos; and

(c) if so, with what results?

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri A. P. Jain): (a) to (c). There are no reports of famine conditions prevailing in the tribal districts of Assam. Most varieties of bamboos flower and bear fruit about once in thirty years, and this flowering is accelerated by drought which is generally responsible for famine conditions also. The relationship between the flowering of bamboos and famine conditions is, however, only incidental. There is generally an abnormal increase in rats soon after flowering as they feed in the bamboo fruits. There have been reports on flowering of bamboos and the resultant increase of rats in Kameng District Frontier Division of N.E.F.A. Rat extermination has been organised in that district successfully.

There is no problem connected with the flowering of bamboos for the Forest Research Institute to study. No reference has also been received by the Institute.

New Sub-Post Offices

3932. Shri Assar: Will the Minister of Transport and Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that new sub-post offices have been sanctioned