

be made permanent on these posts." As stated above, steps have already been taken to convert the eligible number of temporary posts into permanent ones in the various ministerial grades. Action has also been/is being taken for confirming the eligible staff against the permanent posts. Similarly, steps have been taken from time to time to provide more avenues of promotion/appointment to the Society's staff in the supervisory cadre. In accordance with the Recruitment Rules recently framed, 6 posts of Under Secretaries (representing 50 per cent of the sanctioned strength) are now held by the Society's staff, as against 3 posts held by them till recently.

4. In para 12.19 of Chapter XII of their Report, the Committee have, *inter alia*, recommended that "before steps are taken to absorb these employees into the Department of Agricultural Research and Education, their pending claims regarding permanency and seniority should be settled." Decisions on the reorganisation of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research in the light of the recommendations of the I.C.A.R. Inquiry Committee, have recently been taken and a statement indicating the decisions has been laid on the Table of the Sabha on 12th November, 1973. The Government of India and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research have always given sympathetic consideration to all reasonable demands and grievances of the Research side staff. Due and sympathetic consideration will similarly be given by the authorities to all genuine grievances in the context of the recent decisions taken on the reorganisation of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research.

Import of Rice from Nepal

2196. SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DAS MUNSI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) how many neighbouring States

have offered or already sent wheat or rice in India; and

(b) whether Nepal has sent rice to India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE):

(a) and (b). Wheat and Rice have neither been offered nor sent to India by the neighbouring countries on Government to Government basis. However, a certain quantity of Nepalese rice moves to India through the trade channel every year.

Study of Azheikkal Port, Kerala

2197. SHRI C. K. CHANDRAPPAN: Will the Minister of SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT be pleased to refer to the reply given to the Unstarred Question No. 92 on 13th November, 1972 regarding development and expansion of minor ports in Western Coast and state:

(a) whether Government have completed the feasibility study and traffic survey of the Azheikkal port in Kerala;

(b) whether steps have been taken to develop this port into a medium sized harbour providing all weather facilities for deep sea fishing and medium sized cargo vessels and all railway vessels;

(c) if so, the broad outlines thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons for delay?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI KAMLA-PATI TRIPATHI): (a) The Government of Kerala have reported that these have been completed.

(b) Detailed investigations have been initiated by the State Government and it will take some time to prepare a project report.

- (c) Does not arise.
- (d) Does not arise.

Office of Freight Investigation Bureau at Cochin

2198. SHRI C. K. CHANDRAPPAN: Will the Minister of SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT be pleased to state:—

- (a) whether a final decision has been taken about the setting up of a Branch Office of the Freight Investigation Bureau at Cochin;
- (b) if so, the decision taken;
- (c) if not, the reasons why the decision has not been taken so far; and
- (d) when it is likely to take a final decision?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI KAMLA-PATI TRIPATHI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A Branch Office of the Freight Investigation Bureau has already been set up at Cochin and has been functioning since February, 1973.

(c) and (d). Do not arise.

Action against Director of Aralam Farm for Filing Petition against Government of Kerala

2199. SHRI C. K. CHANDRAPPAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to refer to the reply given to Short Notice Question No. 5 on 30th August, 1973 regarding the crisis in Aralam Farm and state:

(a) the action taken against the official of the Farm for filing writ-petition against the State Government of Kerala; and

(b) if no action has been taken, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE): (a) The

Director of the Farm who filed the writ petition against the Government of Kerala, has since been transferred from the farm. A Committee of officers of the Central and State Government has been set up to examine the working of the Central State Farm, Aralam. One of the terms of reference of the Committee is 'to examine the administrative practices adopted by the management of the Farm with special reference to the purchase of materials, sale of agricultural produce, personnel policy including recruitment, disciplinary action etc.' Further action, if any, against the concerned officer will be considered and taken in the light of the findings of the Committee.

(b) Does not arise.

Steps to Conservation of Forest and Grassy Lands

2200. SHRI RAMKANWAR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to make special efforts to conserve forests and grassy lands and save the country from soil erosion; and

(b) progress, if any, made in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. SHER SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) In the recent years the concept of soil and water conservation has undergone a radical change. To derive conservation has undergone a radical change. To derive maximum protective and productive benefits from such measures, the programme will be undertaken on a watershed basis whereby all kinds of lands i.e. agriculture, forest and lands would be treated for conserving soil and raise their productivity.

This programme will be executed in the State. Centrally sponsored and