

CULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the most widely grown wheat variety 'Kalyan Sona' is susceptible to yellow rust disease ;

(b) if so, the annual loss suffered on this account ; and

(c) the steps taken to eradicate the evil ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ANNASAMBE P. SHINDE) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) There was practically no loss. The incidence of rust has been very little so far.

(c) Research efforts are in progress to identify varieties resistant to yellow rust. Through extension efforts farmers are being educated to grow other rust resistant varieties.

National Employment Fund

*708. SHRI TEJA SINGH SWATANTRA : Will the Minister of LABOUR AND REHABILITATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are considering the question of creating a National Employment Fund of Rs. 1,000 crores by levying half percent surcharge on taxes as suggested by Seminar on Employment in Bangalore held in 1970 ; and

(b) the amount that will be spent for under-employed and unemployed agriculture workers ?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRI R. K. KHADILKAR) : (a) Government are not aware of the seminar or the suggestion ; nor is any such proposal under consideration.

(b) Does not arise.

Short Supply of Wagons to Collieries in Raniganj Asansol Coal Belt and Retrenchment of Wagon Load Workers

*709. SHRI MANORANJAN HAZRA : Will the Minister of LABOUR AND REHABILITATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether due to short supply of wagons to the different collieries in Raniganj Asansol coal belt, large number of wagon-load workers are either retrenched or made casual ;

(b) if so, the total number of such workers ;

(c) whether Government have taken up this matter with the Railway Ministry ; and

(d) if so, the decision taken thereon ?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRI R. K. KHADILKAR) : (a) No such specific case has come to notice.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The question of wagon shortage has been taken up with the Railway Ministry, who are primarily concerned.

(d) The wagon shortage in the area is reported to have resulted, *inter alia*, from deterioration of the law and order situation and theft and pilferage. The Railway Ministry have been in touch with the State Government to concert measures for improving the situation.

Collieries closed in Jharia Coal Belt in Bihar

*710. SHRI MOHAMMAD ISMAIL : Will the Minister of LABOUR AND REHABILITATION be pleased to state :

(a) the total number of collieries locked out or closed in Jharia coal belt in Bihar since the 1st January 1970 ;