

APEEJAY SHIPPING LINES

*505. **SHRI MADHU LIMAYE** : Will the Minister of **FOOD AND AGRICULTURE** be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the evidence given by the former Director General of Food in the election petition against Shri George Fernandes before Justice Kantawala of Bombay High Court in September, 1967;

(b) whether the Food Department or any of its officers referred the matter of the Apeejay Shipping Lines' circular letter to its Ship Commanders received in the Food Ministry in 1962, to the—Transport Ministry for opinion and action; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION (SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) The record does not show any specific reasons for not referring the matter to the Transport Ministry, but evidently all necessary precautionary action to safeguard the Government's interests having been taken in the Department of Food, no further action was perhaps deemed necessary.

STATUTORY RATIONING IN DELHI

*506. **SHRI KANWAR LAL GUPTA** : Will the Minister of **FOOD AND AGRICULTURE** be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to end statutory rationing in Delhi; and

(b) if so, the decision taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION (SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE) : (a) and (b). The Government of India has accepted the suggestion of the Delhi Administration that with effect from 21st February, 1968, indigenous wheat and rice may be allowed to be sold in the open market in addition to Government grain under the rationing system.

APEEJAY SHIPPING LINES

507. **SHRI MADHU LIMAYE** : Will the Minister of **FOOD AND AGRICULTURE** be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the evidence given by the former Director General of Food in the election petition against Shri George Fernandes before Justice Kantawala of Bombay High Court in September, 1967;

(b) whether the Director General of Food ever tried to determine whether the Apeejay Shipping Lines' Circular to the Shipping Commanders represented an attempt to cheat; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION (SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). The records of the case do not show that the then Director General of Food tried to determine this issue personally. Since, however, the Circular did disclose an attempt to cheat, immediate action was taken to foil any such attempt.

PRICES OF FOODGRAINS

*508. **SHRI D. N. PATODIA** : Will the Minister of **FOOD AND AGRICULTURE** be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that despite a good crop and reported satisfactory progress of procurement of foodgrains, the prices of foodgrains have not come down appreciably and in fact the price of rice has been rising in some States; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION (SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE) : (a) No, Sir. Compared to the pre-harvest peak prices the prices of cereals as a group have fallen by 10.5% and pulses as a group by 15.1%. There are variations in the degree of fall in prices of rice in various States. They have, however, not registered a rise in any State.

(b) Does not arise.