

to Bagdogra on the 27th March, 1964; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Transport (Shri Mohiuddin):

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A charter flight involving overflying Pakistan territory can be operated only with prior permission of the Pakistan authorities for overflying East Pakistan. Since it had to be operated at short notice, the Indian Airlines Corporation felt that it would not be possible to obtain prior permission of the Civil Aviation authorities in Pakistan. It was thereoperated from Delhi *via* Bagdogra to Gauhati.

Cargo Vessel from Poland

*1121. { Shri A. V. Raghavan:
Shri Pottekkatti:
Shri Vishwa Nath Pandey:
Shri Rajdeo Singh:
Shri P. C. Borooah:

Will the Minister of Transport be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Shipping Corporation of India has contracted to buy four modern cargo vessels from the Centromor Organisation of Poland; and

(b) if so, when the vessels will be delivered?

The Minister of Shipping in the Ministry of Transport (Shri Raj Bahadur): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The vessels are scheduled to be delivered on the 31st March, 1966, 31st May, 1966, 15th July, 1966 and 31st August, 1966.

Potato Crop

*1122. **Shri C. K. Bhattacharyya:** Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) whether a widespread epidemic has damaged nearly half the potato crop of West Bengal;

(b) whether the total loss due to crop failure is estimated to be about Rs. 20 crores;

(c) whether the State Government of West Bengal approached the Central Government for import of suitable chemicals for saving the standing crop; and

(d) whether the Central Government declined to help the State Government in this?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (Dr. Ram Subhag Singh): (a) No official intimation has been received from the State Government.

(b) No estimates of damage have been received.

(c) and (d). No, Sir. During 1963, however, the State Government requested for augmenting supplies of raw materials of imported fungicides; and compared to 1962-63, a substantially larger amount of foreign exchange had been allocated during 1963-64 to the trade for the formulations of the required chemicals. To meet the immediate requirements of the Government of West Bengal, foreign exchange has been allotted for this purpose to the State Government and efforts are being made for obtaining an additional allocation.

Import of Burmese Rice

*1124. **Shri P. C. Borooah:** Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to refer to the reply given to Starred Question No. 731 on the 24th March, 1964 and state:

(a) the cost at which 1,50,000 tons of Burmese rice is being purchased;

(b) the foreign exchange that will be required on this import; and