

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Shahnawaz Khan): (a) Every effort was made by the Government to persuade the Government of Pakistan to agree to the proposal that the Railway in the Dominion in which the consignments were held up under orders of the Civil Authorities, should take responsibility for claims arising out of such detentions. The Government of Pakistan did not agree to the proposal and treated such consignments as evacuee property. As the performance of the contract has been rendered impossible by reason of the statutory powers exercised by the Government of Pakistan, the Indian Railways, as such are not liable to pay any compensation.

(b) Complete information is not available, as in many cases the monetary values of the claims were not specified by the claimants.

Shri K. C. Sodhia: Were there any similar complaints about East Pakistan?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: We have no information.

IMPORT OF RICE FROM BURMA

*1149. **Shri K. P. Sinha:** Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) whether negotiations with the Government of Burma for the supply of rice have been completed;

(b) if so, the quantity of and the price at which India is to get rice from the Government of Burma in 1953;

(c) whether any negotiations were going on for the supply of more rice on barter system; and

(d) if so, the quantity of rice for which such negotiations were going on?

The Minister of Agriculture (Dr. P. S. Deshmukh): (a) No.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d). Negotiations for a barter deal are expected to be completed by the end of April.

Shri K. P. Sinha: What commodities are we to supply in exchange of rice?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: As a matter of fact no negotiations have yet been started. So, it is not possible to say which commodities will be exchanged.

Short Notice Question and Answers.

HAIL STORM IN NORTH BIHAR

Shri S. N. Das: Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the severest hail storm in fifteen years swept over a very large part of North Bihar specially the district of Darbhanga causing damage to standing rabi crops, mango and lichi crops of the area; and

(b) if so, what is the total number of villages affected and the extent of damage caused to the various crops?

The Minister of Agriculture (Dr. P. S. Deshmukh): (a) Reports of damage from hail storm have been received from a large part of North Bihar causing damage to wheat, mango and lichi crops.

(b) The damage was fairly widespread, but it is not possible to give the exact area affected.

Shri S. N. Das: May I know, Sir, whether it is a fact that the hail storm was followed by a dust storm causing heavier damage?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: I am afraid, Sir, in the information supplied to me dust storm has not figured yet.

Shri G. P. Sinha: Is there any report of loss of life?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: Not to my knowledge.

Shri L. N. Mishra: May I know whether it is a fact that besides some fruit crops damage was also caused to the rabi crop?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: According to my information, Sir, most of the rabi crop has already been harvested but wheat crop was damaged considerably in the affected area.

Shri S. C. Deb: May I know from the hon. Minister whether such storms damaged any crops or caused loss of life in the State of Assam?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: This question refers to Bihar. I have no information about Assam.

Shri S. N. Das: May I know whether it is a fact that a large number of labourers who used to support themselves by harvesting rabi crops are out of employment and are unemployed?