

by hundreds of executive officers of all the State Public Works Departments concerned will not be commensurate with the result.

LOCUSTS SWARMS

383. Shri Muniswamy: Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that locusts swarms have been noticed flying over Rajasthan; and

(b) if so, what steps have been taken to prevent the menace?

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Kidwai): (a) Yes.

(b) A statement giving the information is placed on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

Action taken and going to be taken to meet the locust menace.

Action taken—

The Central Locust Organisation which is responsible for control operations in the scheduled desert areas in Rajasthan, Punjab, Pepsu, Bombay, Saurashtra and Kutch have divided it into three Circles, each in charge of an experienced Entomologist, with headquarters at Bikaner, Jodhpur and Palanpur. At other places which are important from the point of view of locust strategy, particularly along the Indo-Pakistan borders, there are outposts at about 60 points, which are equipped with poison, hand and power dusting and spraying machines and motor transport. The strength of the Organisation has recently been increased temporarily to meet the menace. Some additional insecticides and equipment have also been purchased. Many of the places have been equipped with radio transmitting facilities for quick and timely activity.

As regards the States which are threatened with locust invasion, the preparations have been made more or less on the above lines, according to the requirements of the State concerned.

Action to be taken—

Under the Point Four Programme of the U.S.A. three small aeroplanes will be arriving in India (Jaisalmer) by the middle of this month, for locust spraying operations. The following equipment is also being obtained under a recent Agreement concluded with the Technical Co-operation Administration in India:—

- (i) 75 light vehicles.
- (ii) 50 power sprayers.
- (iii) 25 power dusters.
- (iv) 8 wireless sets.

Pending the arrival of the equipment from U.S.A. arrangements are being made with the Defence Services and T.C.A. authorities to obtain on loan some vehicles and jeeps from them respectively. Some power sprayers and dusters are also being purchased from stocks in India, which will be financed from the T.C.A. funds.

MERCY PETITIONS

384. Shri Muniswamy: Will the Minister of Home Affairs be pleased to state:

(a) how many petitions for mercy from condemned prisoners were received during the year 1952 up-to-date and

(b) how they have been disposed of?

The Minister of Home Affairs and States (Dr. Katju): (a) 99.

(b) In 18 cases the sentence of death was commuted to transportation for life and in one to 7 years' imprisonment. The remaining 80 cases were rejected.