

Fire at Alexandra Docks, Bombay

- *100. {
 Shrimati Maimoona Sultan:
 Shri Ram Krishan Gupta:
 Shrimati Ila Palchoudhuri:
 Shri A. M. Tariq:
 Shri Assar:
 Shrimati Mafida Ahmed:
 Shri P. C. Borooah:
 Shri Muhammed Elias:

Will the Minister of **Transport and Communications** be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a big fire broke out at Alexandra Docks in Bombay on the 16th May, 1961;

(b) if so, whether large consignments of American rice and wheat were destroyed;

(c) if so, the estimate of the food-grains destroyed;

(d) whether the cause of the fire has been investigated; and

(e) if so, the result thereof?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur): (a) Yes. At about 5-30 a.m. on the morning of 16th May, 1961, a series of explosions occurred in the rear of No. 11 Alexandra Dock originating from the drainage gutter. The explosions were immediately followed by a fire which enveloped the shed. The Municipal Fire Brigade and the Port Trust Auxiliary Fire Services were immediately summoned at the first sign of alarm. The Municipal Fire Brigade brought the fire under control by about 7-30 a.m.

(b) and (c). According to the information obtained from the Department of Food, there was a stock of 1817 tons of rice and 4029 tons of wheat in the shed where fire broke out. Out of these quantities it was possible to salvage 1678 tons of rice and 3197 tons of wheat as sound grain. Thus 139 tons of rice and 832 tons of wheat were damaged by fire. The figure of 139 tons includes 22 tons of rice totally destroyed.

(d) and (e). It would appear that the fire was caused by sweepings of

Chilean Nitrate which were lying in the gutter, coming into contact with rain water flowing down the drain and the formation of pockets of gas as a result, which exploded. A detailed investigation into the cause of fire is being conducted by the Police in consultation with the Chief Inspector of Explosives. The results of their investigations are awaited.

Interest Charges on Loans Advanced for Bhakra Dam Project

- *101. {
 Shri Ram Krishan Gupta:
 Shri Chuni Lal:
 Sardar Iqbal Singh:
 Shri A. M. Tariq:

Will the Minister of **Irrigation and Power** be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Punjab Government have requested the Central Government that the terms of payment of interest charges on the loans advanced for Bhakra Dam Project be modified;

(b) if so, the details of the proposal; and

(c) the action taken thereon?

The Deputy Minister of Irrigation and Power (Shri Hathi): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Punjab Government have submitted a proposal to the Planning Commission that the interest on loans advanced by the Government of India for the irrigation portion of the Bhakra Nangal Project should be charged at 3 per cent. from the very beginning.

(c) The proposal is under consideration of the Planning Commission.

Diesel Locos

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 Shri Subodh Hansda:
 Shri Ram Krishan Gupta:
 Shri Chuni Lal:
 Shri T. B. Vittal Rao:
 Shri Nek Ram Negi:
 Shri S. C. Samanta:

- *102 { Shri B. Das Gupta:
 Shri Aurobindo Ghosal:
 Shri P. C. Borooah:
 Sardar Iqbal Singh:
 Shri A. M. Tariq:
 Shri Warrior:
 Shri Negi Reddy:
 Shri Kodiyan:
 Shri Maniyangadan:

Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to refer to the reply given to Starred Question No. 1895 on the 3rd May, 1961 and state at what stage is the proposal to set up a plant to manufacture diesel locomotives in India in the public sector?

The Deputy Minister of Railways (Shri Shah Nawaz Khan): The project report submitted by the expert committee has been approved by the Ministry of Railways and the Planning Commission. Action is being initiated for setting up a factory for the manufacture of Diesel Locomotives in the Public Sector.

Intensive Food Production Programme

- *103 { Shri Harish Chandra Mathur:
 Shri Bhakt Darshan:
 Shri B. Das Gupta:
 Shri Aurobindo Ghosal:
 Pandit D. N. Tiwari:

Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) what progress has been made in implementation of the intensive food production programme in the seven Selected Districts in the country;

(b) what programme has been drawn up; and

(c) whether it is a fact that work is suffering even in these districts not only for lack of funds but because there is no link between financial grants and necessary supplies?

The Minister of Agriculture (Dr. P. S. Deshmukh): (a) to (c). A statement is laid on the Table of the House. [Placed in Library, See No. LT-3025/61].

Joint Steamer Companies

*104. **Shri Indrajit Gupta:** Will the Minister of Transport and Communications be pleased to refer to the reply given to Starred Question No. 1640 on the 20th April, 1961 and state:

(a) the amount of subsidies paid to the Joint Steamer Companies annually;

(b) the purpose of these subsidies;

(c) net profits and reserves of the Joint Steamer Companies during the 5 years of the Second Plan period;

(d) whether the Companies have recently demanded that they be allowed to increase their fares; and

(e) Government's reaction in the matter?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur): (a) Prior to 1958-59, the Central Government has not given any grant to the Companies. During the last three years from 1958-59, the following grants have been sanctioned:

1958-59—Rs. 5,00,000

1959-60—Rs. 8,74,324

1960-61—Rs. 6,40,472.

In addition, the Companies receives annually a sum of Rs. 5,000 and Rs. 9,500 from the State Governments of Assam and West Bengal respectively.

(b) These grants are intended to reimburse a part of the expenditure incurred by the Joint Steamer Companies on river conservancy work in Assam, Sunderbans and Cachar areas.

(c) The net trading results of the Joint Steamer Companies during the years 1956 to 1960 were as under:—

1956—Loss 55.0 lakhs

1957—Loss 14.16 lakhs

1958—Profit 27.88 lakhs

1959—Loss 4.98 lakhs

1960—Loss 43.14 lakhs.

Information about reserves has been called for and is awaited