

Weekly Notes

Bank Disputes Award

AFTER protracted proceedings for sixteen months, the second All-India Industries (Bank Disputes) Tribunal has declared its award. The salary scales fixed by the Tribunal are lower than those in the Sen Award. Banks have been classified into four categories, as against three in the earlier Award. Banks with Rs 25 crores or more of "working funds" now come in the same category; thus the big scheduled banks have been put on a par with the Exchange Banks. The Indian banks may not appreciate this rise in their status.

But on the all important question of bonus, to which the bank employees had been looking forward eagerly, the Tribunal has postponed its decision, judging from the press summary of the Award. The provision in the Banking Companies Act which prohibits profit sharing has apparently put the Tribunal on its guard on the question of bonus. It has only suggested a scheme for distribution of bonus, press reports mention "legal difficulties" in this connection. Whether the Tribunal has recommended amendment of the Banking Companies Act, so as to allow the employees to get a share in the profits made by the banks, is not yet known. The intention of the Banking Companies Act in prohibiting profit sharing was to prevent the return of the managing agency system through the back door. Surely the Act did not want to debar bank employees from enjoying a share in the profits,

What Price Burma Rice

THE climate in which the Indo-Burmese rice negotiations begin next week is much more pleasant than it has ever been before and much more congenial to this country which is no longer in dire need of rice. While requirements this year are estimated at about 900,000 tons, internal procurement may easily go up to 1,200,000 tons yielding a surplus of some 300,000 tons. To this is to be added a carryover of 167,000 tons, including 22,000 tons obtained from Pakistan and 15,000 tons repaid by Ceylon. Besides, under existing arrangements with Burma India is to buy 150,000 tons of rice at a price of Rs 30 per md. The surplus over the estimated requirement may therefore, be of the order of 600,000

tons, ie, about 2/3rds of the requirements.

The Kidwai delegation, in these circumstances, is to try and obtain 500,000 tons of rice for building up reserve stocks to meet unforeseen contingencies, provided Burma rice can be had at a reasonable price. The maximum which the delegation is willing to pay is believed to be between Rs 20 and Rs 22 per md. though it has been suggested that the sale should take place at the internal price of Rs 15 prevailing in Burma. The alternative price of Rs 20 is on the basis of the 1950 export price. It will be recalled that the Burmese Government raised the export price of rice on February 17, from 55 to 60 per ton, although the world rice position had improved considerably this year. The object was to raise funds for her national development programmes.

The Government of India, however, appears to have made up its mind not to accept again the high price demanded by Burma. If no agreement is possible on this issue, the delegation will explore possibilities of increasing India's exports to Burma. India has been consistently running a heavy adverse balance of trade with Burma for some years. On the other hand if an agreed price is fixed, this will also apply to the 150,000 tons which India is to get under existing arrangements.

Millowners Meet

SHRI G D SOMANPs address at the Annual General Meeting of the Millowners' Association was significant for its recognition of the basic change from a seller's to a buyer's market which has taken place and of the shrinkage in world trade in cotton textiles with simultaneous increase in domestic production in many of the importing countries. What was even more important was the admission that there was need for positive action on the part of the textile trade to maintain its position in the future.

Shri Somani stressed the need for greater efforts to satisfy the overseas buyer and for a systematic survey of every sizable overseas market. To achieve the former, the Bombay Millowners' Association has drawn up an export contract for cotton piecegoods, which provides

various safeguards for the overseas buyer with regard to the quality of the product, inspection and arbitration.

It is also good to know that the Association proposes to introduce the use of certain quality numbers and ask all those who desire to use these quality numbers to ensure that the goods are in accordance with the specifications laid down and to get them inspected and passed before they are stamped with these numbers. While this ought to reduce the chances of sharp practices which cause bad relations, it is obvious that these proposals cannot by themselves ensure increased export.

Shri Somani also spoke about the need for research. The Millowners' Association with help from the Cotton Textile Fund, is going to establish a Cotton Textile Research Institute in Bombay at a cost of one crore of rupees, half of which is to be contributed by the mills themselves,

MB Survey of Cottage Industries

COTTAGE industries provide sustenance to not less than 7½ lakh persons or about 10 per cent of its population in the State, according to the Government of MadhyaBharat which has been conducting survey of these industries. The more important ones are textiles, leather, pottery, woodworking, metal, oil pressing and others, the number employed under each being as follows

	Nos employed
1. Textiles including Kinning, spinning, weaving, dyeing, printing, rope-making, etc.	23,914
2. Manufacture of leather and leather goods ..	24,052
3. Workers in clay ..	20,609
4. Workers in wood ..	16,927
5. Workers in metal of all types ..	16,083
6. Oilseed pressing ..	12,546
7. Bamboo and baskets ..	5,418
8. Miscellaneous ..	31,443
Total	63,992

The efforts of the Government have so far been concentrated on the development of and the stabilisation of employment in these industries, and the creation of new industries and employment suited to local resources and markets.