

Shri S. C. Samanta: May I know whether the hon. Minister has received any representation from the West Bengal seed users that the seed potato that is available in the country takes more time than the seed that is brought from Rangoon?

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: They wanted seed potato from Burma. We examined the matter and it was felt that because of the tight foreign exchange situation, we must make use of the indigenous seed potato as far as possible.

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri A. P. Jain): We consulted our experts and we were advised that the contention of the potato seed merchants of West Bengal was not correct. Indian seed was good as the Burmese seed.

Shrimati Da Palchoudhuri: Considering the fact that the time for planting potato in West Bengal is practically over immediately after Diwali, now that this potato is going to be sent to West Bengal, is there any plan to conserve it by cold storage methods, so that it may be possible to plant it with effect?

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: Whatever potato we send after the sowing period is meant for table purposes.

Third Class Passengers' Amenities Committee

+

*1169. { Shri D. C. Sharma:
Shri T. B. Vittal Rao:

Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to refer to the reply given to Starred Question No. 951 on the 17th August, 1957 regarding the Third Class Passengers' Amenities Committee and state:

(a) whether Government have since received the report of the Committee;

(b) if so, how many of the recommendations therein have been implemented; and

(c) how many are yet to be implemented?

The Deputy Minister of Railways (Shri Shahnawaz Khan): (a) Yes.

(b) and (c). The Committee have made 15 major recommendations. These have been accepted by the Board and orders have been issued to Railways to implement them.

Shri B. S. Murthy: May I know how many minor recommendations have been made?

Mr. Speaker: The Question Hour is over.

The Minister of Irrigation and Power (Shri S. K. Patil): In answer to a supplementary to S.Q. No. 1167 about the allotment of money in the Second Five Year Plan I said that the amount is Rs. 11 crores. But the correct amount is Rs. 7 crores. I want that correction to be made.

SHORT NOTICE QUESTION AND ANSWER

Theft in Lucknow Mail

S. N. Q. No. 5. Shrimati Da Palchoudhuri: Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that an American lady who was travelling by the 30 Down Lucknow Mail from Delhi to Lucknow in a Ladies' reserved compartment all alone, on the night of November, 23, 1957, was robbed of her money and a few other belongings, and was also severely beaten and injured;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the lady passenger reported the matter to Railway authorities at Kafurpur Railway Station, on the Northern Railway;

(c) if so, the details of the action taken so far in the matter; and

(d) the steps Government propose to take in future to ensure safety of unescorted women passengers?

The Deputy Minister of Railways (Shri Shah nawas Khan): (a) Yes.

(b) She did not make any report at Kafurpur where there is no stoppage of the train. She reported the matter at the Government Railway Police Station, Moradabad.

(c) A case under section 392 I.P.C. has been registered and its investigation has been taken up by the Government Railway Police, Moradabad.

(d) Central Government have already taken the following steps within the competence of the Railway Ministry to ensure safety of all women passengers travelling by train:—

(i) a separate compartment for ladies is reserved on all important trains.

(ii) safety catches have been provided on all doors inside the Railway compartment of 1st class.

(iii) shutters have been protected by providing iron bars and latches.

(iv) alarm chains have been fixed in every compartment.

(v) Guards of trains and Conductor Guards are required to keep whatever watch they can at all halting stations.

(vi) Police guards are provided to escort important trains during night.

This is essentially a law and order problem within the competence of the State Governments and Railway Ministry cannot do anything more.

Shrimati Na Palchoudhuri: The gentlemen in the next compartment also affirmed the fact that the dacoit or marauder, whoever it was, has not been able to jump off the train. May I know why, in spite of the lady saying that she might have been able to identify the man, no attempt was made to search the train?

Shri Shah nawas Khan: When the lady reported the matter to the police, they immediately tried to look for the person. But they could not find him.

Shri Sinhasan Singh: Has the lady mentioned in the statement how the man got into the compartment?

Shri Shah nawas Khan: It appears that one of the doors was left open and the catches were not applied from inside. According to the lady's own statement, she was under the impression that her husband, who had come to the station to see her off, had applied the safety catch of one of the doors that was left open.

Shri M. L. Dwivedy: How can he apply that?

Shri Sinhasan Singh: How can the husband do that from outside?

Mr. Speaker: It was her impression.

Dr. Sushila Nayar: The hon. Minister has stated that ladies compartments are attached to important trains. I would like to know what are these important trains and whether the hon. Minister would consider issuing orders for attaching ladies compartments in every train, because ladies are very greatly inconvenienced for lack of ladies compartments in many trains.

Mr. Speaker: We are going away from one question to another question.

Shrimati Parvathi Krishnan: Recently there have been a large number of robberies on running trains and there have been complaints that the catches that are provided are most ineffective and, therefore, the dacoits are able to open them from outside. In view of that, has the Ministry considered the question of taking some action in the matter?

Shri Shah nawas Khan: We are taking every precaution that is possible, to provide safety, not only to lady passengers, but to all passengers. There had been cases where lady passengers have been assaulted and in some cases it has come to light

that these robbers, or whatever they are, hide underneath the berth and come out at night.

Shrimati Parvathi Krishnan: He has not answered my question.

Mr. Speaker: He has stated that every action is being taken.

Shrimati Ha Palchoudhuri: Considering the fact that this particular lady was beaten severely when she tried to pull the chain, or thought of pulling the chain or even when she looked at the chain, would it not be possible in the ladies compartment to have the chain near the seat so that it could be pulled easily?

Shri Shah Nawas Khan: The alarm chain is situated very conveniently. If any person wants to pull it, it can be pulled easily from the place where it is situated at present.

Shri Joachim Alva: Are Government aware of cases that are not reported to the police, wherein passengers are molested or robbed, and the passengers are afraid to go to the police because they are long distance passengers and so they will be greatly inconvenienced if they report the matter to the police and, if so, has the Government instructed the railway prosecutors to speed up such cases so that the passengers may be enabled to record their evidence without any delay?

Shri Shah Nawas Khan: We are not aware of any such cases.

Kumari M. Vedakumari: May I know whether Government have any proposal to have women conductors in the long distance trains to look after the comforts of the lady passengers?

Mr. Speaker: We are proceeding from safety to convenience.

Shri Shah Nawas Khan: We have no such proposal at present.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Foodgrain Prices

*1126-A. { **Shri Shree Narayan Das:**
Shri Radha Raman:

Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to lay a statement on the Table showing prices of foodgrains at present in important market centres of different States giving retail prices also and state;

(a) the extent of seizure of foodgrains by the Centre or various States under powers given by the Essential Commodities Act; and

(b) the total quantity of foodgrains supplied during the year to various States and the extent to which they met their demands?

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri A. P. Jain): A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha showing present whole-sale prices of foodgrains in certain important centres. [See Appendix IV, annexure No. 45.] Retail prices are not readily available.

(a) Under the Essential Commodities Act about 83,000 tons of foodgrains have so far been requisitioned by the Central and State Governments.

(b) About 27,42,000 tons of foodgrains were supplied to various States up to the end of November to meet their reasonable demands in full.

Guna-Ujjain Rail Link

*1129. **Shri T. B. Vittal Rao:** Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to refer to his reply to the half-an-hour discussion held on the 24th August, 1957 regarding Guna-Ujjain Rail Link and state:

(a) whether the traffic and engineering survey reports of the Guna-Ujjain rail link have since been received and examined by the Railway Board;