

RECLAMATION OF LANDS IN THE PUNJAB

*1084. **Shri D. C. Sharma:** Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) the area of land reclaimed and jungles cleared so far by the Central Tractor Organisation in the Punjab; and

(b) how much land is at the disposal of the Central Government there at present?

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Kidwai): (a) 13,521 acres have been reclaimed. No jungle clearance has been carried out by the Organisation in the Punjab.

(b) There is no land at the disposal of the Government of India for reclamation purposes.

Shri D. C. Sharma: May I know if the hon. Minister has the break-up of these figures, so far as the different districts of the Punjab are concerned?

Shri Kidwai: I have not got any break-up, because the work was done by the Punjab Government.

Shri D. C. Sharma: May I know if the Government has taken any particular care about those districts where there is the question of erosion?

Shri Kidwai: We have asked for information.

RAILWAY OFFICERS DELEGATION TO U.S.S.R

*1085. **Shri Gidwani:** Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a delegation consisting of officers of the Indian Railways visited Soviet Union to study the working of the Russian Railway system;

(b) if so, whether the delegation has returned and submitted its report; and

(c) the nature of the report, if submitted?

The Deputy Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Alagesan): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). The Delegation returned to India on 20th August, 1954 and submitted an interim report. The final report is under preparation.

Shri Gidwani: Can the Government give us any recommendation that has been submitted by the Delegation regarding the removal of congestion in the trains and the stoppage of ticketless traffic and the provision of sleeping berths in third class compartments?

Shri Alagesan: Certain interim recommendations made by the Delegation relating to the provision of sleeping berths in third class compartments have been accepted and the details are being worked out.

Shri Alva: In view of the grave railway accident that has occurred only yesterday where the valuable lives of several students were lost, has the Government seen the observation made by the Delegation that the most striking thing about the Soviet Railways is their magnetic and automatic locking arrangements and controls about collision and when do Government mean to fulfil these recommendations in the report?

Shri Alagesan: All the recommendations of the Delegation will be gone into and whatever remedies are possible will be adopted.

Short Notice Question and Answer

MOVEMENT OF FOODGRAINS IN FLOOD-AFFECTED AREAS

S.N.Q. No. 12. Shri P. G. Sen: Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the foodgrains booked at Katihar on the 13th August 1954 reached Sonali (a distance of 11 miles) after 4 days despite the fact that the railway authorities concerned were requested for the speedy movement of foodgrains to the flood-affected areas;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the action taken against the officials

responsible for the delay in despatch of the loaded wagon; and

(c) whether any instructions have been issued for expeditious movements of foodgrains etc. by Railways to the flood-affected areas?

The Deputy Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Alagesan): (a) and (b). One wagon containing foodgrains booked from Katihar to Sonaili on the 13th August reached destination on the 17th. Of the 39 wagons of foodgrains for flood-affected areas despatched from Katihar during August, this was the only one which suffered detention in the Katihar Yard which holds over a thousand wagons at a time. The matter has been taken up with the two members of the yard staff responsible for it.

The local Railway authorities were not approached by any one for the expeditious despatch of this or any other wagon but the North Eastern Railway administration, on their own, had issued general instructions, to ensure the most speedy transit of wagons containing traffic for the flood-affected areas.

(c) Yes.

Shri P. G. Sen: May I know whether the instructions were given before the incident or after it?

Shri Alagesan: These instructions were given much earlier; in fact, they were given on the telephone and then confirmed by telegram.

Shri P. G. Sen: Is it a fact that the General Manager of the North Eastern Railways was approached by the S.D.O., Katihar and Shri Sukh Dev Narayan Singh, M.L.A. at Sonaili station for the expeditious movement of the foodgrains on the 31st July 1954?

Shri Alagesan: I have no information on the question whether a particular Member of Parliament or other person approached the General Manager.

Shri P. G. Sen: The hon. Minister visited the area in connection with the opening of Moolganj line and it was probably on the 1st and then I myself approached the D.T.S. for this purpose.

Shri Alagesan: It is no question.

Shri P. G. Sen: My point is how he says that the authorities were not approached.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member says that he approached the Railway authority and wants to know whether it is not a fact.

Shri Alagesan: My point is that the authorities were not approached.

The Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri L. B. Shastri): The report which we have received from the General Manager is that no one approached them and, therefore, we depend upon the reply received from the General Manager.

Shri L. N. Mishra: Are Government aware of the fact that a number of wagons containing clothes and grains sent from Bombay for Jhanjharpur for distribution to the people in the flood-affected areas did not reach the area even after the lapse of 22 days?

Shri Alagesan: I have no information on that point, but I may inform the hon. Member that on a request from the Bombay Citizens' Famine Relief Committee, the Railway Board, as a special case, agreed to grant free transport by parcel or passenger trains, for three wagons or vehicle loads of wheat, flour, fried rice and other food-stuffs from Bombay, but I do not know anything about what the hon. Member is referring to. These are the instructions issued by the Railway Board.

Pandit D. N. Tiwary: Is the hon. Minister aware that the railway authorities do not do anything or take any action but simply say that steps are being taken, and is he aware that no action is being taken on any representation made to them?

Shri Alagesan: I would very respectfully deny the allegation.

Shri L. B. Shastri: I might add one sentence. I received a telegram from the Chief Minister of Bihar—I got it only a few days ago—and he has expressed complete satisfaction with the work done by the North Eastern Railway especially, in regard to the movement of foodgrains and other commodities in that area.

The Deputy Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Alagesan): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A statement is laid on the Table of the House. [See Appendix VI, annexure No. 55.]

(c) and (d). The Committee is expected to submit the report very shortly.

THEFT OF TELEPHONE CABLES

***1061. Shri S. C. Samanta:** Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some telephone cables were stolen recently from underneath a Central Calcutta Street;

(b) if so, when;

(c) how many and for how much time the connections were out of order;

(d) whether any investigations have been made; and

(e) if so, what are the results thereof?

The Deputy Minister of Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur): (a) Yes.

(b) 25th June, 1954.

(c) 172 telephone connections were put out of order. They were set right in one to two days.

(d) The police have made investigations.

(e) The results of the investigations are awaited from the police.

PLANTATIONS LABOUR ACT

***1065. Shri V. P. Nayar:** Will the Minister of Labour be pleased to state whether Government propose to assist by way of subsidies the small proprietary plantation estates, so that they are in a position to implement the provisions of Plantation Labour Act, 1951?

The Minister of Labour (Shri K. K. Desai): No, Sir.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

जंगल वाली भूमि

*१०४५. सेठ गोविन्द दास : क्या साख तथा कृषि मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि पिछले १० वर्षों में किन किन राज्यों में जंगल वाली भूमि का क्षेत्र कम हो गया है ?

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Kidwai): Complete statistics of the area of Forest lands during the last 10 years in various States, are not available. On the basis of available data there does not appear to be any declining tendency of Forest areas visible in any State.

RAILWAY APPRENTICES AND MECHANICS

***1056. Ch. Raghbir Singh:** Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Railway Board appointed a Committee in November 1952 to review the existing facilities for theoretical and practical training to apprentices and mechanics etc.;

(b) if so, the names of the Members of that Committee;

(c) whether the Committee has submitted its report; and

(d) what are its main recommendations?