

Shri P. C. Borooah: May I know whether the question of formation of a price determining authority on the lines of the Tariff Commission came up for discussion before the FAO and ECAFE meetings held recently in New Delhi and if so with what results?

Shri A. M. Thomas: We are not aware of the details of the discussion there. This and other allied matters were discussed at the international conference.

Shri Hem Barua: In view of the fact that the Minister said at the FAO and ECAFE meeting to the effect that it is the middleman who is fleecing the consumer as well as the producer, may I know what steps Government have so far taken or have visualised to eliminate this odd phenomenon?

Shri S. K. Patil: I have given the answer. What we have done for the emergency is a good pattern for the future too. We know exactly what the price for the producer is. We exactly know at what stage the price will go up and the reasonableness of it. If at any time it goes beyond that either we may control it or we may have fair-price shops.

Shri Indrajit Gupta: Although, as the Minister says, the general all-India index of foodgrains may not show an upward trend, may I know if there are some particular individual States where the trend has been upward, which are those States and did any of the State Governments go in for direct purchase of foodgrains during the last harvesting season?

Shri S. K. Patil: Yes; one such State is the State to which the hon. Member belongs. It is more due to misfortune, because that State had a little less production and unfortunately last year, the State which feeds that State with rice every year—I am talking of Orissa—had less production. This happens once in five or ten years. Therefore, the natural phenomenon is that the prices are although it is not so in the fair-price slightly higher there than in others, shops. We have asked the State to

increase the number of fair-price shops as much as the situation demands.

Shri Indrajit Gupta: The second part of my question has not been answered. I asked whether the State Governments went in for direct purchase during the last harvesting season.

Shri S. K. Patil: No. So far as Calcutta is concerned, purchasing has no meaning there. It will worsen the situation. So far as Orissa is concerned, in spite of their difficulties, I am supplying Orissa with other rice, so that the normal trade between Orissa and Calcutta should not be blocked, thereby affecting prejudicially the chances of the Calcutta market.

Shri Hem Barua: I want a clarification. He said that he is proposing a price determining authority. He has not said anything about eliminating the middleman, which was my question.

Shri S. K. Patil: I do not want to eliminate the middleman. I eliminate the middleman if he is an obstruction. If I eliminate one, I will have to substitute it by my own man. Therefore, I keep a watch at every stage. So long as they behave well, I have not the least intention of eliminating them.

Shri Tyagi: May I know if the all-India index is built up on the basis of prices ranging in the retail market or in the wholesale market?

Shri A. M. Thomas: It is based on wholesale prices.

Electrification of Trains

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Shri S. C. Samanta:
Shri B. K. Das:
Shri M. L. Dwivedi:

Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether the electrification and doubling of lines from Kharagpur to Tatanagar has been completed;

(b) when it is expected to run the electric trains; and

(c) whether all the station platforms have been raised and extended for this purpose?

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Railways (Shri Shahnawaz Khan): (a) and (b). Since 15th of January electric trains are running on the single line section Tatanagar-Nimpura and the existing double line patches between Nimpura-Kalaidkunda, Tatanagar-Salgajari and Kokpara-Chakulia. In the remaining portions, work of doubling the tracks is in progress and is expected to be completed by September, 1964. These additional tracks are likely to be brought under electric traction by September, 1965.

(c) Raising of platforms is not considered necessary. Extension of platforms will be undertaken at Jhargram and Gidni stations.

Shri Subodh Hansda: May I know the number of bridges that have so far been constructed for doubling that line?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: I do not have the exact number of bridges with me, but all the bridges that were to be constructed have been constructed.

Shri Subodh Hansda: The hon. Deputy Minister said that it is not necessary to raise the platforms. But there are some stations where the platforms are at the ground level. May I know whether Government is considering the question of raising the platforms at those stations?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: Sir, initially.....

Mr. Speaker: That is a suggestion that they might consider.

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: That will be kept in view when the question of passenger traffic is taken up later on.

Shri S. C. Samanta: May I know how many stations were re-modelled for this purpose and how many were not touched?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: On the single line section, Sir, electrification is mainly for carrying the goods traffic, and it is only with that object in view that re-modelling of yards and stations have been done. When both the lines are doubled, then the point raised by the hon. Member will be considered.

Dr. K. L. Rao: May I know whether electrification, in addition to the doubling of the line, will speed up the traffic; and, if so, whether similar steps would be adopted in the congested areas like the coastal southern strips?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: Yes, Sir, that is the intention.

Shri B. K. Das: May I know what percentage of passenger traffic is expected to be carried by the specific trains in these lines?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: We hope that all the traffic that is offered would be carried.

Dr. Ranen Sen: May I know when the electrification from Howrah to Kharagpur will begin?

Mr. Speaker: That would be a different thing altogether.

Dr. Ranen Sen: The question is about electrification of trains.

Mr. Speaker: Not in the whole of India. The hon. Minister might supply that information to the hon. Member afterwards.

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: No, Sir; I can give the information just now. It will begin in September, 1965 and we hope to commission it by December, 1966.

Mr. Speaker: Would that give any satisfaction to the hon. Member? Let us go to the next question.