

than what it is, and what is the difference between the two?

Shri S. K. Patil: For that I would require notice

Shri H. C. Mathur: May I know what necessitated the further examination by the French experts at a late stage?

Shri S. K. Patil: Whenever we are in doubt, we get problems examined by experts. When we are spending hundreds of crores of rupees, it is always necessary that a second opinion should be taken. It does not mean any particular thing.

Shri H. C. Mathur: That is exactly my question. What gave rise to your doubts which necessitated examination and obtaining of a second opinion?

Mr. Speaker: In this particular case

Shri S. K. Patil: In this particular case, it was thought that this type of grouting might perhaps strengthen the dam. Therefore, our engineers felt that they might get their opinion strengthened by some expert opinion outside. That has been done in most of the cases.

Price of Foodgrains

- *46. { [†]
 Shri Shree Narayan Das.
 Shrimati Ila Palchoudhuri:
 Shri Bhakt Darshan.
 Shri S. V. Ramaswamy:
 Pandit D. N. Tiwary.

Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to lay a statement showing.

(a) the present position with regard to wholesale prices of foodgrains prevailing in important mandis and retail prices in important centres in various States;

(b) the price fluctuations since the beginning of the year up-to-date;

(c) steps taken since the last session of Parliament to check the rising prices, and

(d) the extent to which such steps have borne fruit?

The Deputy-Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri A. M. Thomas):

(a) and (b) Two statements showing (i) the wholesale prices of foodgrains in certain selected centres in different State, and (ii) the weekly index numbers of wholesale prices of foodgrains in 1957 are placed on the Table of the Sabha [See Appendix I, annexure No. 13] Information regarding retail prices is not available

(c) Following special measures have been taken since the last session of the Parliament

(i) formation of three wheat zones with effect from 13th June, 1957 and restrictions on the export of wheat from these zones,

(ii) restrictions on the export of wheat products from Bombay and Calcutta cities to ensure larger supplies for the population of these cities,

(iii) restrictions on the export of rice from greater Bombay,

(iv) creation of Southern rice zone comprising the States of Andhra Pradesh, Madras, Mysore and Kerala with effect from 9th July, 1957, and

(v) further restriction on advances by banks against foodgrains

(d) The formation of the wheat zones has had a salutary effect on the prices of wheat in these zones. The prices in Punjab and Madhya Pradesh have declined by eight annas to one rupee per maund and in other areas also they are showing downward tendency. The other measures taken have helped in checking the upward trend in the prices and with the recent formation of the Southern rice zone, the prices of rice are expected to ease down in this Zone.

Shri Shree Narayan Das: From the statement it appears that the prices of rice have not fallen to any extent. May I know what special steps are

being taken besides the formation of the Southern Zone to make the price of rice fall?

Shri A. M. Thomas: It is expected that with the formation of the Southern Zone, the price of rice will appreciably go down. During the last two or three days there has been a fall to the extent of one to two rupees per bag in Andhra after the introduction of the zone.

Shri Shree Narayan Das: May I know whether any, and if so the extent to which, steps have been taken to bring hoarded rice into the market and if not why no action has been taken to use the powers given by Parliament recently?

Shri A. M. Thomas: When such restrictions on movement have been introduced, we expect hoarded stock will come out, especially when prices go down.

Shri S. V. Ramaswami: While we find from the figures that the fall is not very steep, may I know whether this fall is only a temporary reaction to the steps taken by the Government, or whether it shows a firm downward trend?

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri A. P. Jain): Hon. Members will remember that this is the lean period for rice, and until the next crop usually the price of rice in this part of the year shows a tendency to rise. This year a further rise has been arrested. In fact, in some places there is a decline, though not a sharp decline. It is rather difficult to say what the future trends are going to be, but we hope to hold on to the price line.

Shri C. D. Pande: May I know if Government is aware of the wide discrepancy between wholesale and retail prices and also that in certain States the sales tax is so high that the prices become higher than they should be?

Shri A. P. Jain: It is a fact that there is a difference and sometimes a substantial difference between the wholesale and retail prices, and wherever there is sales tax, particularly when it happens to be a multi-point sales tax, the incidence of the tax is

heavy and it raises the price quite considerably.

श्री नरयण नरयण : क्या गवर्नमेंट के ध्यान में यह बात आई है कि सरकार द्वारा कीमते गिराने के लिए इतने प्रयत्न किये जा रहे हैं, तो भी अविकाश जनता को उममे लाभ नहीं पहुच रहा है और उस को दस रुपये और पंद्रह रुपये मन तक भाड़ा देना पडता है, खासकर पर्वतीय इलाको मे। इसलिये क्या ट्रांसपोर्ट कोस्ट को सम्भल ईज करने के बारे मे विचार किया जा रहा है ?

श्री अ० प्र० जैन : जहा पर रास्ता खराब है, वहा भाड़ा ज्यादा होता ही है और हमेशा से ही चला आया है, यह कोई नई बात नहीं है। पर मुझे पता चला है कि उत्तर प्रदेश गवर्नमेंट ने कुछ पहाडी इलाकों को सम्भल दी है।

Shrimati Tarkeshwari Sinha: May I know the amount of bank advances that have been given against speculation in foodgrains during the last six months, and how far the advice recently given by the Reserve Bank to the banks not to give advances against agricultural commodities and foodgrains has borne fruit?

Shri A. M. Thomas: In spite of instructions issued by the Reserve Bank, it has been noticed that at the end of April, 1957 advances against paddy and rice, at Rs 22 crores were about 97 per cent higher than the corresponding level in 1955, and 84 per cent of the abnormally high level in April, 1956. So, the instructions which were formerly issued have now taken the shape of directives, so that the banks would be compelled to follow those directives.

Shrimati Ha Palchoudhuri: In view of the fact that in spite of all efforts by Government, prices do not seem to have fallen, may I know what effect the recommendations of the Foodgrain Prices Enquiry Committee have had on future control of prices, and if they have made any recommendations,

whether Government have done anything about those recommendations?

Shri A. M. Thomas: It is not correct to say that prices have not shown a downward trend. The latest figures with me indicate that out of the 65 centres in respect of which figures have been collected, rise has been recorded only in 24 per cent of the areas; there has been fall to the extent of 33 per cent, and the price was steady to the extent of 41 per cent so that it is not correct to say that it has shown an upward trend in all cases.

Shrimati Tarkeshwari Sinha: May I know whether these directives that have been given or are proposed to be given by the Reserve Bank will apply only to the scheduled banks or the non-scheduled banks also?

Shri A. M. Thomas: Directives have been issued to three non-scheduled banks also. And it is under consideration whether directive have to be issued to the other non-scheduled banks also.

Shri Panigrahi: May I know which of the States in India have asked for food subsidy in order to sell rice and wheat in their areas at reduced prices?

Shri A. M. Thomas: We are subsidising the sale of wheat as well as rice through the fair price shops. Wheat is being sold at the rate of Rs 14 per maund.

Shri Panigrahi: I wanted to know which States have asked for grants subsidies.

Shri A. P. Jain: This subsidy applies to all the States. We are issuing to all the States at a uniform rate, wheat at the rate of Rs 14 and rice at the rate of Rs 16.

Several Hon. Members: rose—

Mr. Speaker: This question affects all sections of the community and all places. Again and again, this question of rise of prices in each one comes up. Before the session starts, or soon after the session, may I suggest that the Minister of Food and Agriculture may

have a small conference—the Hall is here—of all the Members, and allow them to ask questions to which he can give answers. If, still, there are certain doubts, I shall take them up.

So far as this question is concerned, I have already allowed about eight or nine hon Members to ask supplementary questions. Still, there are ten more hon Members who are rising, and after they finish, others may rise.

Shri Radhelal Vyas: I want to ask one question regarding the wheat zone.

Shri A. P. Jain: On the last occasion, I held conferences with the Members of the different States. I propose to do so again. In fact, I was thinking of doing so, and I shall do so shortly.

Mr. Speaker: If, still, hon Members are not satisfied, I shall allow them to ask questions later on. Next question.

Shri Tangamani: In regard to the southern States, I want to ask one question.

Mr. Speaker: I have called the next question.

Train Collision in Bombay Suburban Service

- *47. {
 Shri Feroze Gandhi:
 Shri M. M. Gandhi:
 Pandit M. B. Bhargava:
 Shri Anirudh Sinha:
 Shri Radha Raman:
 Shri Bibhutl Mishra:

Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state

(a) whether it is a fact that two local trains came into collision on the Harbour Branch of the Central Railway on the 2nd June, 1957 between Wadala Road and Sewri Station,

(b) if so, the causes of the accident,

(c) whether it is a fact that three similar accidents occurred on the 29th December, 1953, 4th June, 1954 and 9th September, 1955, and

(d) whether the Government Inspector of Railways has submitted his report on the accident of 2nd June, 1957 and if so, what are his findings?