

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 Bibhuti 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?

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

(b) and (d). The Government Inspector has submitted his Preliminary Report.

His provisional finding is that the accident was caused by the failure of the Guard and Motorman of No M. 22 Up (one of the trains involved) to comply with the procedure to be observed after passing an Automatic Singal at danger

(c) Yes

Shri Feroze Gandhi: Is it a fact that the Government Inspector of Railways has passed severe strictures against the Railway Administration and commented on the "ineffectiveness of supervision, which resulted in such lapses and breach of safety regulations", in connection with the accident in December, 1953, because all these accidents are of a similar nature?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: After every serious accident, the Government Inspector of Railways carries out an enquiry and then he makes his recommendations drawing pointed attention to any lapse, that there might have been. We take immediate steps to comply with those recommendations and do everything possible to reduce the incidence of accidents in the future.

Shri Tyagi: What about the strictures?

Shri Feroze Gandhi: Whenever the view of the signal ahead is not clear, the driver is required to follow the stop-and-proceed regulations. May I know whether it is a fact that in all these accidents, the driver failed to follow those rules?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: That was so. The procedure that has been laid down is very clear. But, unfortunately, this rule was not observed. Although it is very clearly laid down, and great emphasis is laid on this rule being known to every person who is concerned,

sometimes the failure of the human element leads to the ignoring of this rule by the people concerned.

Shri Feroze Gandhi: I think there is no question of failure of the human element at all. The Government Inspector of Railways, when he reported on the first accident, submitted a report, and in regard to the rest of the accidents also, he says that he has been repeating those very recommendations. If, as the Minister says, those recommendations had been accepted, and his decisions had been carried out, the word 'again' would never have come in the subsequent three reports.

Shri Goray: That is failure of the human element on their side.

The Minister of Railways (Shri Jagjivan Ram): It is true that all the three accidents took place due to the same reason, namely the failure of the human element, and every time, we have fulfilled whatever recommendations were made by the Government Inspector.

In this case also, the section that relates to the precaution to be observed at such places is quite clear. I shall read it out for the benefit of the hon. Member. It is as follows:

"Where an automatic signal is found to be 'ON' and where the next stop signal cannot be seen clearly due to curvature, fog or other reasons, the guard shall proceed on foot in advance of the train, and the driver should follow with his tram at a walking pace behind him, in response to the guard's or fireman's signal, the train shall stop to pick up the guard or fireman at the point where it can be seen and the line head is clear after the next stop signal."

This is the reason why the accident has taken place. I do not know what further precautions we on the railways' side could take, except emphasising the necessity of observance of these rules on the part of the drivers of the motor-cars of the railways. We have been doing that.

[Shri Jagjivan Ram]

already in spite of that, there have been failures on the part of drivers and unfortunate accidents have happened.

Mr. Speaker: The hon Member evidently wants to know whether after the report of the Government Inspector drawing attention to this particular clause or regulation, any special measures have been adopted to instil into their minds the need for observing this rule and that failure to observe it would result in some danger

Shri Feroze Gandhi: The Government Inspector of Railways has recommended that where the starter signal is not visible to the guard, all stations on the electrified Harbour Branch shall be equipped with repeaters. May I know whether this has been done?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: Yes, this has been done not only in that particular case, but in all places where there is the necessity for such repeater signals

Shri Feroze Gandhi: I would like to know when it was done, because four accidents of a similar nature have taken place

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: As soon as the recommendation was made, it was given effect to immediately, not only in that particular place, but in all other places where similar repeater signals were required

Shri Feroze Gandhi: Does the Minister mean to say that after the accident of December, 1953, these recommendations were made, and the Inspector goes on repeating the same recommendation? We do not know whether the Inspector is right or what the Minister is saying is right

Shri Tyagi: Human failure on the part of the Railway Board

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: We have carried out these instructions. That is all that I can say.

Mr. Speaker: If every time the recommendations had been carried out, then where was the need on the part of the Inspector to go on making the same recommendation again?

Shri Tyagi: It is on account of his human failure

Shri Jagjivan Ram: It sometimes so happens. These precautions are taken and have been taken. Before this accident, signal was provided. There was no defect on that score before the recent accident

Shri B. C. Kamble: May I know whether Government will be pleased to place the report of the Inspector on the Table of the House?

Shri Jagjivan Ram: As soon as the Inspector submits his reports to the Ministry of Communications, it is published

Shri Manay: Is it a fact that there was considerable delay in rendering medical aid to the sufferers? If so, what are the reasons for the delay?

Shri Jagjivan Ram: There was no delay at all. As a matter of fact, medical relief reached the place within 20 minutes

Shri Feroze Gandhi: I would just like to read three sentences, with your permission, from the report of the third accident. This is in connection with what the Minister has stated just now. The Government Inspector of Railways states

"Recommendations previously made in similar accidents on this section were repeated as for example, exercise of regular periodical checks to enforce compliance of the rule at places where the view up to the signal head is restricted and automatic signal is passed "

In view of this, how does the Minister state that the recommendations were carried out? I have read from the third report dealing with the third accident which took place in 1955

Shri Jagdivan Ram: It does not say that the defects about signals have not been removed. He says about periodical checks, and I will read what steps we have taken.

Mr. Speaker: Is a matter of this kind to be thrashed out only during the question hour by supplementaries? In that case, only one question can be disposed of.

Shri Feroze Gandhi: I agree I would suggest a discussion.

Mr. Speaker: There are other devices like half-hour discussion one hour discussion, one-and-a-half our discussion two-hour discussion etc.

Shri Feroze Gandhi: Yes.

Corneal Grafting

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*48. { **Shri V P. Nayar.**
Shri Easwara Iyer

Will the Minister of Health be pleased to refer to the reply given to Starred Question No 1142 on the 16th August, 1956 and state what progress has been made in regard to legislation regarding the setting up of eye banks and corneal grafting?

The Minister of Health (Shri Karmarkar): The State Governments have been addressed for their views on the desirability of enacting Central Legislation on Corneal Grafting and Eye Banks. Replies in the matter are yet to be received from some of the State Governments. A final decision will be taken in the matter after the outstanding replies from the State Governments have been received.

Shri V P. Nayar: In August 1956 also, the then Minister of Health stated that the matter had been referred to the State Governments. I want to know which of the States have so far reported and which have not.

Shri Karmarkar: The States which have not replied are Kerala

Shri V. P. Nayar: What about his State?

Shri Karmarkar: and four other State Governments.

Shri V P. Nayar: May I know whether the attention of Government has been drawn to a private member's Bill introduced in the Bombay Legislature on this subject? If so, do Government propose to have legislation on the pattern set in that Bill?

Shri Karmarkar: We shall consider all the patterns. It is a fact that the idea was provided by a private member who introduced a Bill in the Bombay Legislature. On the Government themselves offering to introduce a Bill, I understand the Bill was withdrawn by Dr Sathaye, the member concerned. I also understand that the Bombay Government propose to have such a Bill considered in their Legislature.

Shri V P Nayar: In answer to the original question last year, the hon Health Minister stated that Government were pursuing the matter in regard to a news item which appeared in the press about grafting by the cornea of chicken. Do I understand that Government have further pursued the matter, and are in a position to make a statement on that?

Shri Karmarkar: We have, however been advised by experts that the question of hetero-transplantation in keratoplasty is a dead chapter in the history of corneal transplantation. We do not propose to revive the same.

Telephone Traffic

*49. **Shrimati Ila Falchoudhuri:** Will the Minister of Transport and Communications be pleased to state

(a) whether it is a fact that for about three weeks beginning from the last week of May 1957 telephone traffic between Delhi-Calcutta, Delhi-Bombay, Delhi-Madras, Calcutta-Bombay Calcutta-Madras, and vice versa had been subject to heavy delays,