

Availability of Railway Wagons

*290. { Shri Kodyant:
Shri A. K. Gopalan:

Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of India have received complaints from grain exporters of Punjab regarding the non-availability of wagons to despatch grains to Bihar;

(b) whether it is a fact that no wagons are being allotted for carrying grains from the rail-heads on the Northern Railway in Punjab to stations on North-Eastern Railway in the scarcity affected parts of North Bihar; and

(c) if so, the steps Government have taken to remedy the situation?

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

(b) No.

(c) Foodgrain traffic sponsored by the Central or State Government is moving to Bihar under high priority within the overall capacity *via* the different transshipment points. Traffic in food-grains to Bihar on Trade account has also been upgraded from priority class 'E' to priority class 'D'.

Pandit D. N. Tiwary: The answer given to part (a) of the question is "yes". May I know what was the nature of the complaints and how they were remedied?

Shri Shah nawaz Khan: The nature of the complaint was that they were not getting enough wagons; we say that wagons are being supplied.

Pandit D. N. Tiwary: In view of the fact that there is always a bottleneck in North Bihar, may I know whether the Government is considering the desirability of providing a ropeway for easy transshipment from this side of the river to the other side where the river has got very short width?

Shri Shah nawaz Khan: The hon. Member is fully aware of the reasons for the bottleneck. We have to carry wagons across the rivers; sometimes the goods have to be transported. The only suitable method of clearing this bottleneck is the construction of a bridge and the hon. Member knows that the Ganga Bridge is being constructed both for road as well as rail traffic I would request the hon. Member to have a little more patience and we shall do it.

Shri Supakar: What quantity of foodgrains has been transported from Punjab to North Bihar?

Shri Shah nawaz Khan: I can give the hon. Member that information. In the month of June, we transported 732 metre gauge wagons from Punjab to North Bihar.

Shri Gajendra Prasad Sinha: May I know how many wagons were indent-ed by the Government of Bihar, out of which how many were allotted to them?

Shri Shah nawaz Khan: The number which I have just given, i.e. 732, is the number of wagons moved from Punjab to North Bihar. In addition to this, a very large number of wagons are moved to North Bihar from other parts of India. Also, imported food-grains as desired by the Government of Bihar are despatched by the Ministry of Food from Bombay and Calcutta. So far I might say that we have been meeting the situation fairly satisfactorily and there has been no serious hold-ups.

Steel Foundry, Chittaranjan

*291. Shri T. B. Vittal Rao: Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) the stage at which the erection of a steel foundry at Chittaranjan Locomotive Works is;

(b) when it is likely to go into commission; and

(c) the estimated cost of the same?