

come out with any conclusion with regard to the reduction of the outlay for the Second Five Year Plan in regard to the ports?

Shri Raj Bahadur: It is our constant endeavour to improve the work of the ports and therefore to improve the management thereof. I think that though there were strains and stresses to which these ports were subjected during the course of the congestion in the months of July and August last, but the port management have stood well and they cleared up the congestion by the payment dates fixed.

Shrimati Tarkeshwari Sinha: The second part of my question has not been answered.

Mr. Speaker: I have allowed a number of questions.

Shrimati Tarkeshwari Sinha: That part of the question has not been answered.

Mr. Speaker: It would not be answered.

Shrimati Tarkeshwari Sinha: I asked whether the Government would reduce the outlay.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member has got a lot of information regarding this matter, but all the doubts cannot be cleared up here. The hon. Lady Member asked about opinions. Question Hour is not intended for eliciting opinions, but only facts. I have allowed one question of opinion and again another question of opinion. I disallowed the third question of opinion.

Railway Sleepers

+

*59. { **Shri N. E. Munisamy:**
Shri Raghunath Singh:
Shri S. C. Samanta:

Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government of India have entered into an agreement with the Burmese State Timber Board for the purchase of railway sleepers worth Rs. 85 lakhs; and

(b) if so, how is the payment to be made?

The Deputy Minister of Railways (Shri Shah Nawaz Khan): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The mode of payment is the subject matter of further negotiation. It will be made in such currency as is mutually agreed upon between the two countries concerned.

Shri N. E. Munisamy: May I know the quantity to be purchased by the Government of India, the rate at which it is to be purchased, and also how the price compares with the open market price?

Shri Shah Nawaz Khan: The number of sleepers purchased is 4,35,500, and the price, as I have said before, is approximately Rs. 84 lakhs. It compares very favourably with the price of timber in other places.

Shri N. E. Munisamy: May I know whether any provision has been incorporated in the terms of the agreement to the effect that in the case of non-fulfilment of the terms of the agreement, a penalty is to be levied, or we should get any compensation from the Timber Board?

Shri Shah Nawaz Khan: I think the hon. Member's fears are unfounded. It has been agreed that the entire quantity would be supplied in the course of one year; that is, 25 per cent. within the first six months and 35 per cent within the next three months and the balance within the three months following. The whole supply would be made in the course of one year.

Shri Thimmataiah: May I know the policy of the Government in regard to the purchase of the sleepers? Are they to be purchased through negotiations or through tenders?

Shri Shah Nawaz Khan: The hon. House is aware that there is a very acute shortage of wooden sleepers, and we have deputed an officer to go round all the States and make every possible endeavour to secure the maximum

amount of timber available in the country. When they are not available, we have to look outside.

श्री रघुनाथ सिंह : यह जो स्लीपर होंगे वे कौन सी लकड़ी के बने होंगे, चीड़ के होंगे, देवदार के होंगे, सागवान के होंगे, किस लकड़ी के होंगे ?

श्री साहलनाथ झा : ये मुस्तालिफ किस्म की लकड़ियाँ हैं, जिनकी मुझे भी बहुत अच्छी तरह जानकारी नहीं है। कुछ के नाम हैं पीयाकाड़ो (Pyiakado), पाडोक (Padauk), थितिया (Thitya), इन्गियन (Ingyin)।

Shri V. P. Nayar: The hon. Deputy Minister has said that there was great shortage for wooden sleepers in our country. May I know whether the specific recommendations of the Estimates Committee, appearing in the 21st Report, to meet the shortage in the requirements of wooden sleeper have been implemented and, if so what has been the action of the Government in particular to the recommendation asking the Railway Ministry to set up creosote plant in order to use the unconventional varieties of timber available in India in large quantities?

The Minister of Railways (Shri Jagjivan Ram): The hon. Member is mistaken in thinking that any variety of timber is available in India in abundance. We have set up the creosote plant and the hon. Member is aware that it is in the vicinity of his own State.

Shri V. P. Nayar: That is not the point. May I say that I happened to have the honour of serving in that particular Estimates Committee. The report of the Committee is before me. It is not a question of one creosote plant. The recommendation was for several creosote plants scattered throughout the country so that the varieties of timber, apart from teak, could be utilised.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member is using this question Hour as a Resolution hour. The hon. Member is asking how many creosote plants are there and whether that number is enough. Why should he go on giving an idea as to what the Estimates Committee said?

Shri Jagjivan Ram: I was going to explain it. We have been exploring all the possibility of utilising indigenous timber available in the country, and it is only in case when we find that the indigenous timber is not enough for the requirements of the railways that we go outside the country.

Shri V. C. Shukla: Sal timber is much utilised for railway sleepers. May I know if timber other than sal has been found successful as railway sleepers?

Shri Jagjivan Ram: The experts are always after these things and they are experimenting as to which variety we can utilise for the railway sleepers and we are adding to the number of the woods.

Some Hon. Members rose—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Members may reserve their remarks for the Railway Budget.

Drought in Orissa

+

*60. { Shri Panigrahi:
Shri Sanganna:
Shri Supakar:
Shri Surendranath Dwivedy:

Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) what concrete steps the Government of India have taken through the State Government for rendering help to the people of drought affected areas in the State of Orissa; and

(b) whether the State Government has submitted any proposal to the Central Government for meeting the difficult drought situation in the State?