

Some hon. Members rose—

**Mr. Speaker:** The moment something is asked with respect to agriculture or food the whole field of agriculture is thrown open. This question is with respect to rabi crop, insecticide, water and canals.

**Shri Braj Raj Singh:** In view of the information given by the hon. Minister to the effect that the kharif crop has been on the whole satisfactory, may I know whether there has been any appreciable decline in the prices of foodgrains in the country specially in west Uttar Pradesh?

**Shri A. P. Jain:** Yes, Sir. The prices of kharif foodgrains have gone down quite substantially.

**Shri Tangaman:** Before the next question is called, may I submit that there are two other questions, viz., No. 736 and No. 753, sponsored by different hon. Members which deal with the same subject as Q. No. 730?

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Minister may answer all these questions together.

**Shri Vidya Charan Shukla:** Though they relate to railway sleepers, they relate to different contracts and cannot be clubbed together.

**Mr. Speaker:** Shri Shukla is common to all the questions, I believe. All the questions may be answered together.

**The Deputy Minister of Railways (Shri S. V. Ramaswamy):** Q. No. 753 is entirely different.

**Mr. Speaker:** Let us get through all these together.

#### Railway Sleepers

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- \*736. { Shri V. P. Nayar:  
Shri Padam Dev:  
Shri Vidya Charan Shukla:  
Shri Kodliyan:  
Shri Jinachandran:  
Shri Pocker Sahib:  
Shri Rami Reddy:

Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) what efforts are being made by

Railways to increase the indigenous sources of supply of railway sleepers;

(b) whether it is a fact that the West Coast Sleeper suppliers of Kailai, Kozhikode offered to supply sleepers; and

(c) if so, at what rates and how the rates compare with the price paid for imported sleepers?

**The Deputy Minister of Railways (Shri S. V. Ramaswamy):** (a) Efforts have been made by the Railways to increase the indigenous procurement of sleepers by exploitation of inaccessible areas hitherto untapped, acceptance of a number of non-durable species after treatment, relaxation of specification etc. for wooden sleepers; increasing the capacity of cast iron sleepers specially by encouraging small firms, and by extending the use of concrete sleepers in yards.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House. [See Appendix III, annexure No. 76].

#### Railway Sleepers

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- \*735. { Shri Vidya Charan Shukla:  
Shri Ram Krishan:

Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether any assessment has been made with regard to the total requirements of sleepers (both wooden and iron) for construction of new lines and to replace old ones on the railways during the rest of the Second Plan period;

(b) how Government propose to meet these requirements of iron and wooden sleepers; and

(c) whether the requirements of sleepers for the Third Five Year Plan have been estimated and its supply planned?

**The Deputy Minister of Railways (Shri S. V. Ramaswamy):** (a) Yes, Sir.