

that the State Government had to pay on account of the rise in prices, whether any help was rendered by the Central Government?

Shri A. M. Thomas: The quota fixed for Kerala for the calendar year 1960 was first 1,30,000 tons. As per increase on three occasions, finally, we have agreed for a quantity of two lakh tons for the calendar year. Then, subsequently, because of breaches on the railway tracks, there has been difficulties in the railway movement in respect of rice from Andhra Pradesh and Madras, and they have also increased the rations to three measures for a time, and so, they needed about six thousand tons more. So, we have now agreed to supply them 2,06,000 tons.

With regard to the subsidy, the State Government, on its own initiative, has reduced the price. We supply at the rate of Rs. 16, but they are now selling, I think, at the rate of Rs. 15. That was not done at our instance. Even when we gave it at the rate of Rs. 16 there—it is mostly the Burma rice that is supplied to Kerala—we incur a loss of Rs. 3 to Rs. 4 per maund of rice, and that will come about or more than Rs. 2 crores by way of subsidy, and so it will not be possible for the Central Government to bear any further loss on account of the subsidy that the State Government incurs.

Shri Warrior: May I know whether paddy and rice available in Kerala were transported to Madras State because there was deficiency in the Madras State owing to floods and that is the reason for the rise in the price of rice in Kerala?

Shri A. M. Thomas: That is so. We should not grudge that because the main sources of supply of rice for Kerala are Madras and Andhra. Because of the floods in Madras region, some rice was transported from Malabar region to Madras. Because of that also rice prices went up in Malabar.

Shri Warrior: May I know whether these rice taken from Malabar was at

Governmental level or private level and whether the rice was sold at Madras at a higher price?

Shri A. M. Thomas: Madras, Andhra, Kerala and Mysore are in one zone, so that there is absolutely no movement restriction.

Shri Maniyangadan: May I know whether the price of rice now prevailing in Kerala is more or less compared to the price at this time during the last two years?

Shri A. M. Thomas: Because of the floods and other things I mentioned, this year the price of common variety—the wholesale price—went up to Rs. 24-4-0, but it has now come down to the level of Rs. 21 or Rs. 22. Last year also at this time, the price prevailing was about Rs. 21 to Rs. 22. It has reached that level now.

Shri B. K. Gaikwad: May I know whether it is also a fact that as soon as foodgrains come into the merchants' godowns, the prices go high? If so, can Government put some restriction on it and order merchants not to receive more than 5 per cent. profit?

Shri A. M. Thomas: It is a matter of detailed control on distribution. As the House knows, with regard to hoarding by merchants, the Reserve Bank has got certain restrictions on the advances to be made by banks. So, indirectly there are checks.

Increase in Railway Fare

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*910. { **Shri Muhammed Elias:**
Shrimati Parvathi Krishnan:
Shri S. M. Banerjee:

Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Railway fare in Howrah Amta and Howrah Sheakhala Light Railways is being increased from 1st December, 1960;

(b) if so, the reason for the same; and

(c) the amount to be increased?

The Deputy Minister of Railways (Shri Shahnawaz Khan): (a) to (c). There has been no general increase in fares on these railways. However some fares have increased while others have decreased as a result of the adoption of the metric system with effect from 1-12-1960. This has involved the distance being reckoned in kilometres instead of in miles and the rounding off of fares in units of 5 nP instead of in annas as before. The maximum increase is 13 nP in case of upper class and 8 nP in the case of lower class.

Mr. Speaker: Even for small increases in postal rates, the matter comes up here. Why should not hereafter a convention be established that whenever railway rates are increased, it must come to this House?

The Minister of Railways (Shri Jagjivan Ram): There is no increase in the rates; it is just rounding off and in rounding off, somewhere we lose and somewhere we gain. As has been stated, there was not rise.

Shri Sampath: Can the hon. Minister show one instance where the rounding off has resulted in less fare?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: Yes, certainly.

Mr. Speaker: I am sure the hon. Minister does not take away what remains out of the rounding off. It goes only to the State.

Shri Muhammed Elias: This railway belongs to a private company, Messrs. Martin Burn & Company. They increased the fares last October when they introduced the metric system. They increased the fare also again in December. The maximum increase is not 13 nP, but is far more. The fare is far more than the broad-gauge fare. This is a metre-gauge railway. It is stated in their circular that they have increased the fare according to the Railway Board's instructions. Will Government persuade the company not to increase the fare?

Shri Jagjivan Ram: The company have to see that they run the line

economically. If they are running at a loss, any prudent management will see they do not run at a loss.

Shri Muhammed Elias: This company is not running at a loss. They have declared 8 per cent. dividend to the shareholders this year. They are using old engines and carriages, exploiting the passengers and depriving them of the other amenities given to broad-gauge passengers. We have been demanding the nationalisation of this railway line. When every railway in India has been nationalised, why not this railway also?

Shri Jagjivan Ram: The policy is not to nationalise narrow gauge at present.

Shri Hem Barua: There is a persistent demand for the nationalisation of the light railway run by private companies and for taking over by the Indian Railways. Instead of being integrated with the Indian railway system, they are running a private show, charging excessive fares from the public.

Mr. Speaker: It is a matter of policy which cannot be disposed of in a question. Hon. Members should wait till the budget session. Or, if they are impatient and if they want to have this matter thrashed out even earlier, they can ask for a discussion. This is a matter of general policy; therefore hon. Members will wait for the budget session.

Shri Goray: Is it not a fact that some light railways have been taken over by Government? It is not a policy that no light railway should be taken over.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members will kindly understand that it is a matter of policy; the question of nationalisation in general and why a particular railway has not been taken over, etc. do not come up here. Those matters cannot be discussed in a question. I allowed this question on the increase of fare. The hon. Member said that the increase was at the instance of the Railway Board. I thought the rail-

way belonged to the State and so, I said, the hon. Minister does not pocket it, but it goes to the State as a whole. If it is a private concern that takes it, of course, hon. Members on behalf of those travellers are entitled to say that this is exorbitant. This matter will be looked into by the hon. Minister.

Shri Hem Barua: Does the Minister have any control over the light railways? If they have any control, why is it that they cannot control the increase in fare and all that?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member must follow what is happening in the House. The hon. Member himself said that these are done on the orders of the Railway Board and the hon. Minister kept quite. So, it is not as if Railway Board has no control. The Railway Board found, as the hon. Minister has replied, that they must increase the fare in case it is uneconomic. The hon. Member said they are declaring 8 per cent. dividend. I cannot allow a discussion on this matter and settlement of this dispute here.

Shri Hem Barua: You were pleased to say that they are uneconomic. But who has established this aspect of the matter? Was there any inquiry conducted?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member always thinks it a privilege to develop every small matter into a huge discussion. If he wants, let us have a separate discussion. What is the meaning of occupying the entire Question Hour over this? If he wants that this railway should be taken over, by all means, let him ask for it; let him wait till the budget session. If the fare has been increased, let us have a discussion. Hon. Members know that every day I am telling them what the rules contain. Still, they want to utilise the Question Hour for this purpose. I am really surprised.

Shri Muhammed Elias: May I request you to allow a two-hour discussion on this?

Mr. Speaker: I am prepared to allow 20 hours, but it is not on oral applications.

Hon. Members may have a half-hour discussion some day. Let the Government also explain as to why it has been increased.

Shri Shah Nawaz Khan: May I make a submission? In fairness to that railway company, I would like to submit that there has been substantial decrease in many cases. And if hon. Members would like to know, I can refer it out.

Mr. Speaker: What is the overall balance?

Shri Shah Nawaz Khan: Neither profit nor loss, just rounding them off.

Mr. Speaker: Let the hon. Minister say it in the half an hour discussion. What I am saying is that I fully appreciate the Government is doing a lot for this country since 1950. Of course, some hon. Members might not have been young during the previous decade. The youngsters in the previous decade got through the fray because they were anxious that an economic content should be given to the freedom for which they have been responsible. It is not as if those people merely went to jail and suffered, never expecting to come back. Therefore, every person who suffered on a previous occasion is anxious that an economic content should be given to the freedom and he is proud that the Government is doing something. But if there is really some difficulty somewhere, I am prepared to allow a discussion on it from time to time, and I am allowing it already. The hon. Minister said there is no loss or gain to the company in this case. It is in the interest of the Government itself to explain the position in the House. I am afraid, here and there, there is want of some publicity; otherwise, what is being done is perfectly all right. Now, the half an hour discussion will stand.

Shri Muhammed Elias: Half an hour will not be sufficient. I have got much material at my disposal.

Mr. Speaker: Let us see.

Shri Hem Barua: They are exploited by this company.

हरिद्वार के निफ्ट रेल दुर्घटना

*६११. श्री भक्त दर्शन : क्या रेलवे मंत्री २ अगस्त, १९६० के तारांकित प्रश्न संख्या ५३ के उत्तर के सम्बन्ध में यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या हरिद्वार में २० मई, १९६० को हुई रेल दुर्घटना की जांच की रिपोर्ट इस बीच तैयार हो गई है ;

(ख) यदि हां, तो क्या रिपोर्ट की एक प्रति और उस पर किये गये निर्णयों का एक विवरण टेबल पर रखा जायेगा ; और

(ग) घायल यात्रियों को अब तक कितना प्रतिकर दिया गया है अथवा देने की मंजूरी दी गई है ?

The Deputy Minister of Railways (Shri S. V. Ramaswamy): (a) to (c). A statement is laid on the Table of the Lok Sabha.

STATEMENT

The report of the joint inquiry into the Railway accident which occurred at Hardwar on 20th May, 1960, has been finalised by the Railway Administration. The accident was due to failure of Railway staff. Suitable departmental action is being taken against the staff at fault.

It is not proposed to place a copy of the Departmental Enquiry Report on the Table of the Sabha.

No claim for compensation has so far been received from the victims of the accident.

Shri Bhakt Darshan: In the statement, it has been said that the accident was due to the failure of the railway staff and that suitable departmental action is being taken. Who are those officials and what action has actually been taken?

Shri S. V. Ramaswamy: The cabin signal man set the point wrongly and the engine driver drove at an excessive speed. The cabin signal man has been reduced to a pointsman and the engine driver's increment has been withheld for two years.

Shri Bhakt Darshan: May I know from the hon. Minister whether any arrangements have been made by the railways to see that such accidents do not take place in future?

Shri S. V. Ramaswamy: We always take precautions to see that there are no accidents.

श्री प्रकाश बीर शास्त्री : क्या मैं जान सकता हूँ कि हरिद्वार के निफ्ट परमों रात्रि में भी कोई रेल दुर्घटना हुई है. यदि हुई है, तो क्या माननीय मंत्री जी को उसका विवरण प्राप्त हो गया है ?

Shri S. V. Ramaswamy: I do not know anything about that accident. A separate question may be put.

Shri Tangamani: From the statement I find that a copy of the report of the enquiry will not be laid on the Table of the House. May I know whether at least a summary of the major findings of this enquiry will be laid on the Table? Also, will compensation be paid now itself or are they waiting for a demand to come?

Shri S. V. Ramaswamy: As there is no claim for compensation, that does not arise. As regards the report, it is a departmental enquiry. It is only when it is a statutory, enquiry as in the case of an enquiry by the Government Inspector of Railways, or in pursuance of the Commission of Enquiry Act, that a copy of the report is laid on the Table of the House.

Shri Bhakt Darshan: Even though no demand was received for compensation, were any arrangements made by the railway staff to attend to the injuries of those passengers and were they sent to their destinations at the cost of the Government?