

Shri Nagi Reddy: What was the harvest price?

Mr. Speaker: The Minister has stated that the present price is half a rupee or a rupee less than the harvest price.

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: I am prepared to give the prices. In Kakinada it was Rs. 18-12-0 at the time of the harvest. Today it is Rs. 18-4-0, four annas less. I have got the figures for other places also.

Shri Ranga: May I know whether Government has received co-operation from the mill-owners and whether they found any obstruction on the part of anybody in the process of locking?

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri A. P. Jain): We have not received any co-operation from the mill-owners. On the other hand, they have been trying to create all kinds of troubles to us.

Shri Ranga: May I know whether the officers who had gone there to lock up these godowns containing rice and paddy experienced any difficulty and did they find people taking away paddy stealthily or hoarding it stealthily?

Shri A. P. Jain: In fact, we have not locked any godowns. All that we wanted them to do was to send us some returns of the stock. They had nothing else to do. When the question of procurement arose, they created all kinds of obstruction.

Shri Ranga: May I know whether the mill-owners...

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Minister says that there was no co-operation and they did not submit the returns.

Shri Venkatasubbaiah: May I know the comparative prices for the previous years from 1945?

Shri Ranga: Is it not a fact that the officers as well as the police who had gone there to the various godowns, did not find any difficulty to find the godowns and to seal them?

Shri A. P. Jain: We have not sealed any godown. The whole process is like this. We ask the mill-owners to declare their stock of rice and paddy. They have to declare their stocks. Then, if the authorities send procurement notice, they have to comply with it. Of course, in complying with the procurement notice they have created all sorts of trouble.

Shri Venkatasubbaiah: My question has not been answered.

Mr. Speaker: It won't be answered. The hon. Minister cannot give figures for so many years off-hand.

Shri Tangamani: Since S.Q. No. 1670 and 1690 are on the same subject, I request that they may be answered together.

Mr. Speaker: Yes.

Explosion at Asansol

*1670. **Shri Supakar:** Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether the report of the enquiry into the serious explosion of a wagon at Asansol Railway Station on the 31st July, 1957 resulting in the death of 13 persons and injury to others has been completed; and

(b) if so, the action taken thereon?

The Minister of Railways (Shri Jagjivan Ram): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A statement is placed on the Table of the House. [See Appendix V, annexure No 37]

Wagons Explosion at Katpadi Station

*1690. **Shri Tangamani:** Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether the report of the enquiry of the explosion at Katpadi station in the Southern Railway on the 21st August, 1957 has been received;

(b) what is the amount of compensation paid to families of the deceased; and

(c) what steps, if any, have been taken to prevent recurrence of such incidents?

The Minister of Railways (Shri Jagjivan Ram): (a) While the report of the Magisterial Enquiry has not been received from the State Government, a copy has been received by the Chief Inspector of Explosives.

(b) No claims for compensation have been received from the families of the deceased so far.

However, wife of Tranship Porter, Shri Bhawan Prasad, who was killed in the accident, has been paid Rs. 100 as an interim relief.

(c) A statement has been placed on the Table of the House in connection with Question No 1670. [See Appendix V, annexure No. 37]

Shri Supakar: May I know whether there is any rule or regulation for keeping fire-work packages of a non-violent variety separately from packages of fire-works like toy pistol caps, which explode merely by dropping?

Shri Jagjivan Ram: If the hon. Member looks into the statement that has been placed on the Table, he will find that if the proper proportion of the chemicals is maintained and caps are manufactured according to the proportion of the chemicals they are not so inflammable as to detonate with a little jerk, or if they fall. There are rules laying down which type should be booked separately from each other.

Shri C. R. Pattabhi Raman: Is it not a fact that these explosions are due to particular types of paper crackers which explode by themselves; in other words they are self-igniting.

Shri Jagjivan Ram: It has been mentioned in the statement what they were and how far they were explosives.

Shri Tangamani: The hon. Minister stated that only one person has been given interim relief of Rs. 100. In Katpadi eight persons were killed. May I know whether early steps will

be taken for paying them an interim payment without waiting for demand for compensation?

Shri Jagjivan Ram: I will issue instructions that interim relief should be paid immediately.

Shri Supakar: May I know if before the 4th September, 1957 there was any rule that the unloading of explosives and fire-works must be done away from the station and if so if that rule was observed in the case of any of these three cases of explosions?

Shri Jagjivan Ram: There are definite rules about loading and unloading and transport of these things. As far as we can say, the rules were observed, but I will not again say so, because we have not received the final report that in all these cases all the rules were fully observed.

Shri Sadhan Gupta: May I know whether there is a system of checking consignments of fire-works to ascertain whether prohibited fire-works or explosives are booked along with fire-works, and if so, whether that procedure was observed in connection with the explosions at Asansol and Katpadi?

Shri Jagjivan Ram: I do not think at present as far as these fire-works are concerned, there is any rule laid down of their being checked by the Department of Explosives. Of course, according to the Railway Act the consignors have to certify that they do not possess any dangerous or unauthorised chemicals.

Several hon. Members rose—

Mr. Speaker: We have set apart two hours for this discussion.

Shri Supakar: The statement says that after the explosion at Asansol the packages were found to contain qualities of composition of a forbidden character. May I know whether when a consignment is consigned from a particular station no care is taken to see before despatch that it is of a safe variety?

Shri Jagjivan Ram: As I have said, no check is done by the railways as such. We have under the Red tariff certain instructions which material can be consigned with which material in the wagon or which material of the fire-works cannot be sent in the same wagon. There are detailed instructions. But individual items are not checked by the railways.

Shri Dasappa: Examination showed that in certain packages the contents were full but they were loose, while in the case of certain packages the original crating was broken. Are any precautions taken to see that when these goods are received they are properly packed and the covering also is safe.

Mr. Speaker: There is a two-hour discussion on this subject. If hon. Members go on taking away the time of the House like this I will cut off these two hours. Hon. Members must co-operate with me. I have always been indulgent. Whenever I find that some time has to be given, I have always provided it. I am not going to allow the hon. Member.

Shri Dasappa: I do not want an answer; but it will help the discussion.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members must try to get through the work.

Comet

*1671. **Shri Raghunath Singh:** Will the Minister of Transport and Communications be pleased to state whether it is a fact that a comet was seen in various places in India in the evening of Tuesday, the 20th August, 1957?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Communications (Shri Humayun Kabir): Yes, Sir.

श्री रघुनाथ सिंह : क्या इस विषय में कोई साइंटिफिक एन्क्वायरी हुई ?

श्री हुमायूँ कबीर : कामेट को २० अगस्त से २५ अगस्त तक दिल्ली में देखा गया और दूसरी जगहों में भी देखा गया और प्राबन्धवशान किया गया ।

Some hon. Members: The answer may be given in English as well.

Shri Humayun Kabir: I said that the comet was observed in Delhi between the 20th August and 25th August; in India as a whole it was observed for about three weeks starting from the 20th August. At different observatories observations have been taken.

श्री भयान दर्शन : क्या गवर्नमेंट के विशेषज्ञों ने इस बात पर विचार किया है कि चूंकि यह धूमके या पुच्छल तारा पश्चिम दिशा में उदय हुआ और वही प्रस्त भी हो गया, इस लिये भारत पर इसका बुरा प्रभाव नहीं पड़ेगा, बल्कि भारत के पश्चिम के देशों पर पड़ेगा ?

Shri Humayun Kabir: I shall leave the answer to that question to the ingenuity and imagination of the hon. Member himself.

Several hon. Members rose—

Mr. Speaker: If hon. Members have noticed it at various places, why do they ask the Minister?

हिमाचल प्रदेश में आलू की फसल

*१६७३. **श्री पद्म देव :** क्या साक्ष तथा कृषि मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या सरकार को इस बात का पता है कि हिमाचल प्रदेश की आलू की फसल, जो कि वहां की प्रमुख नकदी की फसल है, निकट भविष्य में तैयार होने वाली है ;

(ख) क्या यह सच है कि आलू के निर्यात में किसानों को कठिनाइयों का सामना करना पड़ता है ;

(ग) किसानों को इस संबंध में सहायता देने के लिये क्या सरकार द्वारा कोई कार्यवाही की जा रही है ; और

(घ) यदि हा, तो तो वह क्या है ?