

which the passenger services will be run can be controlled by the Eastern Railway.

Shri S. N. Das: May I know by what time the Committee is expected to submit its report?

Shri Alagesan: I have already replied that the report is expected by the middle of next month.

Shri B. K. Das: May I know whether this contemplated railway will be a steam-operated one or electrically-operated one?

Shri Alagesan: I cannot answer definitely just now. I think it will be a steam-operated railway.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: Are we to understand that this new railway is being constructed to cover only that part of the line which is under the Port Commissioners?

Shri Alagesan: That is the very limited objective.

Shri A. C. Guha: Is there no scheme for diverting the suburban railways also along with the circular lines?

Shri Alagesan: With reference to diverting or extending the suburban railway only this work is being undertaken.

Shri A. C. Guha: May I know if any part of the proposed scheme has been given effect to pending the report of the Enquiry Committee?

Shri Alagesan: No, Sir.

Shri Meghnad Saha: Do the terms of reference include an examination of the proposal by the Bengal Government for a tunnel between Sealdah Station and Howrah?

Shri Alagesan: It does not come under this.

FOOD SCARCITY AREAS

***138. Shri Lakshman Singh Charak:** (a) Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state how many villages and Districts in each State have been declared famine areas up to the end of January, 1953?

(b) What steps have the Central Government in consultation with the respective State Governments taken to combat this famine?

(c) What are the main reasons of famine in these areas?

(d) How many areas have State Governments declared as famine areas so far?

(e) Is it a fact that a Famine Commission has been set up to investigate the position in the famine areas?

(f) Who are the personnel of the Commission and what are its terms of reference?

(g) Has any preliminary report been submitted by the Commission to the Central Government?

The Minister of Agriculture (Dr. P. S. Deshmukh): (a) 'Famine' in the technical sense contemplated in the different Indian Famine Codes has not been declared in any area in India. But scarcity conditions are existing in parts of States of Madras, Bombay, Mysore, Madhya Pradesh, Madhya Bharat, Saurashtra, Rajasthan, Hyderabad and Vindhya Pradesh.

(b) Relief in scarcity areas is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments. The Government of India have, however, been giving financial and/or technical assistance in special cases to certain States.

(c) Scarcity is caused by failure of crops due to drought or scanty rainfall and/or by other natural calamities like flood and cyclone.

(d) Nil.

(e) to (g). No famine Commission as such has been appointed by the Government of India. Teams of Central Government Officers have been specially deputed to study in detail the nature and extent of distress prevailing in chronically scarcity affected areas and to recommend suitable measures for providing relief on a permanent and semi-permanent basis. The teams have already visited Mysore, Bombay, Madras, Hyderabad, and West Bengal and submitted their reports which are under consideration.

Shri Dabhi: May I know the names of individuals or organisations who have represented before that Committee which visited Gujarat, and whether Government would be pleased to place on the Table a copy of the recommendations?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: It would be a huge document. I do not think it would be worth while or necessary. It may not be advantageous also to give all those details.

Shrimati A. Kale: May I know whether the Government is aware that due to scarcity of rain in the State of the hon. Minister and myself, viz. Madhya Pradesh, there being a deficit of 11" the people are suffering greatly and no attempt has been made to supply water?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: I am aware of the conditions there. There is great scarcity of drinking water, but I do not think any efforts have been spared either by the State Government or by the Central Government to give whatever assistance is possible.

Shrimati A. Kale: I know that there is a so-called water scheme in government files, but no concrete action has been taken.

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Kidwai): That comment will be conveyed to the Government concerned.

Shri S. N. Das: What is the total population affected by this scarcity, and what is the total area?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: I have not got the figures. It will be rather a large population.

Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava: How have these areas been known? Either the States have reported their names, or some other enquiry has been made. May I know whether the Punjab State has reported or not.

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: We have not had any report from Punjab, but so far as the others are concerned, there has been public demand and we have taken notice of it even without the State Governments telling us.

श्री एस० आर० भारतीय : जिस समिति ने महाराष्ट्र का दौरा किया है उस ने महाराष्ट्र के लिये किन किन योजनाओं की सिफारिश की है ?

श्री किडवाई : इस की इत्तला तो मेरे पास नहीं है ।

Shri Velayudhan: May I know whether there was any demand from any State for declaring certain scarcity areas as famine areas, so that relief may be afforded on the basis of the Famine Code?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: There could not be any demand made to the Central Government, because the declaration of scarcity areas is done by the State Governments.

Shri T. N. Singh: Are Government aware of the fact that in certain districts of Eastern U. P. there has been failure of rains consecutively for the last three or four years? In those areas Government had planned three years ago to construct tubewells for which the Government of India had given

the contract; if so, may I know what progress has been made, and if no progress has been made or only a little progress has been made, what action is being taken in this regard?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: Tubewell construction is going on in all those areas which were selected for this purpose. Since the question refers to chronically famine-affected areas, I may say that in Bombay the progress is not very encouraging in U. P. the progress is fairly good.

Shri Nambiar: May I know whether certain districts in the Madras State such as South Arcot, Ramnad, Tinnevely and Coimbatore have been declared as famine areas or not?

Shri Kidwai: The question should be asked in the Madras Legislature.

Shri Nambiar: Are the Government of India aware that these districts are famine-affected, and are they in a position to give any relief, and whether any relief has been sought?

Shri Kidwai: We are not in a position to give any information which is not available to the Madras Legislature.

Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy: May I know whether in certain scarcity areas, particularly certain districts in Mysore, procurement is done, and has there been any representation made to the Central Government in this behalf?

Shri Kidwai: We have not received any representation.

Shri Nanadas: May I know whether the Central Government propose to create a Rs. 30 crores fund known as the Famine Fund?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: The suggestion by the Planning Commission is to spend this amount of Rs. 30 crores within the next three years on major irrigation works.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I will proceed to the next question. The whole country is famine-stricken. Hon. Members are aware that this is a very general question. If they ask what are the famine-affected areas, what are the districts affected, what are the villages affected, and so on, it will take a whole year to go on mentioning the conditions in each village. Therefore, in the interests of the business of the House, I would suggest that inasmuch as the country as a whole is interested in this subject, Government may from time to time circulate a statement to hon. Members giving information about whatever steps are being taken to meet the famine conditions. The other day we had a half-an-hour dis-

cussion (during the last session) regarding Maharashtra famine areas. Madras is affected and so also other parts.

Shri Kidwai: We can place a statement on the Table of the House every fortnight.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: That will ease the situation.

Sardar A. S. Saigal: We want that it should be circulated to Members.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Certainly it will be circulated to Members.

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: In the Press it will be available far earlier than we can give it.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Next question.

SUGAR FACTORIES

*139. **Shri S. C. Singhal:** (a) Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state whether the sugar factories have started production late in the Punjab and U.P. and if so, what is the reason for it and how will it affect the production of sugar?

(b) Is it a fact that the sugar mill-owners have paid in sugar to the cane-suppliers for the price of the cane and the mill-owners purchased the same sugar back from the cane growers at reduced prices?

(c) How much money do the sugar mill-owners owe to the cane growers at present?

The Minister of Agriculture (Dr. P. S. Deshmukh): (a) Yes. The main reason for late starting of the sugar factories in U. P. and Punjab this season is that the cane crop in areas of most of the factories is poor. It was, therefore, not necessary for factories to start early to crush the available cane. Further, as recovery of sugar in the early part of the season is low, most of the factories delayed crushing in order to obtain higher average recovery.

The loss in production due to late starting of factories in U. P. and the Punjab is about 78,000 tons. The total production in these States upto 31st January last year was 3.58 lakh tons as compared with 2.80 lakh tons this year.

(b) Yes. The sugar factories have paid for cane in the form of sugar in cases where such mode of payment was acceptable to the cane suppliers. No case of the factories purchasing back

such sugar from the cane growers at reduced rates has, however, been brought to the notice of the Government.

(c) In U.P., the arrears of cane price in respect of 1951/52 season on 31st January, 1953, totalled Rs. 1.5 crores. In the Punjab, where there is only one factory, the amount remaining unpaid was only Rs. 23,000.

Shri T. N. Singh: In view of the supplementary grant of the order of crores made by Parliament for this purpose, why are the payments of these labourers still being withheld and does not yet cleared up?

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Kidwai): Government has not distributed the whole amount yet. Payment is being made as we receive the bills of sale. Corresponding payment to cane growers will be made every week.

Shri T. N. Singh: Is there any prospect of early clearance of these dues as a result of Government action?

Shri Kidwai: They must be cleared this month.

Shri N. Sreekantan Nair: Are Government aware that the millowners have created a scarcity in South India and on that ground there was a news item published by the P. T. I. in the South Indian papers that Government intend controlling the export of sugar and gur?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: Government have no information.

Shri S. N. Das: Arising out of answer to part (b) of the question, are Government aware of the quantity of sugar given to the sugar-cane growers and the price?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: We have no complete information; but we believe that the quantity was very small.

TRANSFER OF COMMERCIAL OFFICE FROM GORAKHPUR TO CALCUTTA

*140. **Shri R. N. Singh:** (a) Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state whether Government are aware of the inconvenience and hardship that has been caused to the public of the three districts of Banaras, Sonopore and Samastipur as a result of the transfer of the commercial office of the former O.T. Railway from Gorakhpur to Calcutta and are they aware of the delay involved in dealing with their claims from a distant place like Calcutta?