

vegetables. It can give advance credit. Some amount is still left with it. We can also provide allowance for transport. *(Interruptions)*. We can provide all these facilities. The farmers can organise themselves into cooperatives. All what I wanted to say was that it would not be a good thing for the Government to do it. I did not say that in a light vein. We are prepared to help you. In the area which the hon. Minister has in mind, he may have a cooperative formed there and send the scheme to us. We have got the money, the entire amount has not been utilised. Even if a scheme is given to us before the end of the current Plan period, we can give the money that we have. There is no problem from our side.

SHRI RAMENDRA KUMAR: Do the Government propose to set up some Board for construction of roads in those areas during the year 1996-97 where cooperatives are already functioning for marketing fruits and vegetables so that the production of fruits and vegetables may get an impetus and the producers may get a reasonable return?

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA: We do not have money for building roads but, as I have said, we can assist in cold storage, transport, improved seeds etc. Whatever cooperative scheme you send, we will consider that sympathetically.

SHRI RAMENDRA KUMAR: Is it necessary to forward the scheme through State Government or can it be sent direct to your Ministry?

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA: Well, it will have to be sent through the State Government.

SHRI RAMENDRA KUMAR: Then, nothing will happen.

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA: State Governments also have powers. Both the Centre and the states function under the Constitution. However, the National Horticulture Board is also advancing funds directly. So, you can also bring it into the picture. Both arrangements are there, but don't say that you do not need State Government.

SHRI MAHENDRA SINGH BHATI: Sir, the hon. Minister has in his reply enumerated the reasons for low production. In part (iv) of his reply, he has said that 25 per cent produce is lost every year due to weak post-harvest and marketing infrastructure. I want to bring to the notice of the hon. Minister that a fruit called 'Kinu', which is a variety of 'Malta', was produced in large quantity in Ganga Nagar, Hanumangarh and Bikaner areas. Many people cultivated large orchards of this fruit, but they had to destroy their crops and their orchards due to continuous lack of marketing facility and had to suffer heavy losses. Therefore, I want to know from the Government whether it would provide all necessary

marketing facilities so that the old orchards may be revived again.

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA: We are prepared to consider this. But you may please send me specific proposals. We are prepared to extend specific assistance.

SHRI LAKSHMAN SINGH: The hon. Minister has said that the present production of fruits and vegetables is not adequate and we have to increase it. My submission is that the biggest problem in increasing the production of fruits and vegetables is costly seeds. The seeds of high breed varieties of fruits and vegetables are very costly. I want to know from the hon. Minister what efforts are being made to make high breed varieties of seeds available at reasonable rates.

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, so far as the question of making them available at cheaper rates is concerned, we will have to see what category of people are purchasing them. If the people belonging to very poor category are taking them, we are considering in what way we can supply these seeds cheaper to them. But, for the present, we cannot give you any assurance that we will make them cheaper. This is under our consideration, but if your contention is that everybody including the rich should get it free, it is not possible.

[English]

Railway Users' Consultative Committees

*525 PROF. [†]RASA SINGH RAWAT:
DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the measures being taken to increase participation of commuters in the functioning of Railways;

(b) the system prescribed for setting up of the Railway Users' Consultative Committees at the Station, Division and Zonal levels indicating the number of members therein;

(c) whether any system exists to monitor the implementation of the suggestions given by the consultative committee of Members of Parliament convened at the Division, Zonal level and Ministry of Railways levels; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) to (b) A Statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

STATEMENT

(a) In order to ensure increasing participation of commuters and other railway users in sustaining and

upgrading the level and quality of service to the customers, there is an institutionalised system of periodic consultation and interaction through various Passenger Associations and Railway Users' Consultative Committees. Various Passenger Associations formed to represent local interests with regard to different aspects of train services and facilities/amenities are free to interact with various levels of railway management i.e. at Station level, Divisional and Zonal levels as well as Apex level in the Railway Board's Office. In addition Railway Users' Consultative Committees at various levels are constituted to ensure participation of suburban and other commuters as well as other rail users and these Committees have formal representation from the Registered Passenger Associations. These Consultative Committees are as under—

- (i) Suburban Railway Users' Consultative Committees on Central, Western, Southern, Eastern and South Eastern Railways.
- (ii) Station Consultative Committees.
- (iii) Divisional Railway Users' Consultative Committees.
- (iv) Zonal Railway Users' Consultative Committees.

(b) The Station Consultative Committees at Zonal and Divisional Headquarters and also at selected stations serving important industrial and Commercial centres are set up by Zonal Railways. The Divisional Railway Users' Consultative Committees and Zonal Railways Users' Consultative Committees are set up by the Ministry of Railways after obtaining the recommendations from the respective General Managers and nomination of Members of Parliament from the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs.

The membership of these committees varies from station to station, division to division and zone to zone, inter-alia, depending upon their geographical size and jurisdiction.

(c) and (d) There are two types of Committees of Members of Parliament for Ministry of Railways viz. Consultative Committee for the Railways as a whole and nine Informal Consultative Committees for nine Zonal Railways.

The Consultative Committee of Members of Parliament discusses the policy matters relating to the Railways and their meetings are held thrice a year during inter session period with specific agenda. The suggestions made by the Members of Parliament in the meetings of these Committees are examined in depth and suitable replies sent to the Members of Parliament concerned by the Minister of Railways. A consolidated action taken statement is also prepared for circulation amongst all the Members of this Committee.

The Informal Consultative Committees function separately for each of the nine Zonal Railways. The meetings of these Committees are held during the session periods with no formal agenda. The Members of Parliament discuss the matters pertaining to the Zonal Railway concerned and give their suggestions/recommendations which are duly examined and the Members are informed of the action taken on the issues raised by them. The replies to them are sent by General Managers concerned and in some cases by the Minister of Railways.

There is no Consultative Committee of Members of Parliament for Railway Divisions.

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, although the hon. Minister has attempted to give a fairly detailed reply, it does not cover the point we wanted to clarify and for which we were expecting a satisfactory answer to come. The railways are regarded by the entire country as the veins carrying the blood of country's unity, being not only an agent of country's development, but also providing a public service to the people. They render passenger service and the people are the passengers. Thus, they are a public service. That being so, the people have certain expectations of the railways. For instance, it is very necessary to know what facilities are available to the travelling public in the form of drinking water, toilets, cleanliness of the compartments, waiting rooms at the stations and so on. The Railway Users Consultative Committees are set up so that a coordination may be established between the people's representatives and the railway officials and zones for knowing the situation and taking steps for providing the required facilities. But, within a month of the formation of this new Government, all the Committees were dissolved.

Sir, I am connected with Ajmer Zone. I received an invitation from the Ajmer Zone to attend a meeting on a particular date at specified place and time. I got the reservation done and when I was about to leave, I was informed that the Committee was dissolved and till today there is no information about the reconstitution of the Committee.

I want to know whether the Government have any specific plan to give proper representation to Members of Parliament in the Zonal Consultative Committees of the Zones from where they come as also to the Passenger Associations and other representatives of the people and by what time the Government propose to constitute the Passenger Committees.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Let the hon. Minister reply now. You have got second supplementary also.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, as the hon. Member has rightly said, in order to keep a

proper watch on the functioning of the Railways and give suggestions to them, there are different kinds of Consultative Committees in the Railways including the National Committee, Divisional Committees and Zonal Committees. Then there are Committees at Sub-urban and station levels. The object of all these Committees is the same. The Railways are a big structure having nearly 16 lakh employees. There is decentralisation of power. All the Committees are being constituted to keep a watch. The hon. Member has said that the new Government has dissolved all the Committees. In this connection, I would like to point out that the term of the Divisional Consultative Committees was upto 30.8.96. This Committee is constituted for two years. The next Committee is the Zonal Consultative Committee, which was upto 30.9.96. The Divisional and Zonal Committees have Members of Parliament also among their members. But the Parliament was dissolved. Otherwise also, their two-year term was nearing completion...*(Interruptions)*

VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI: They had only the Members of the Congress Party ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: Please listen, it is very important. When two years were completed and fresh elections to the House took place, naturally the new Members of Parliament will be the members of these Committees. In the other situation, its work will come to a standstill. We thought that the new Committees should be constituted at the earliest in their place. I assure you that all the Committees will be set up before first October.

VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI: They should be constituted without discrimination between parties. In the previous Committees, there were only Congressmen.

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: All right. We will constitute them without party discrimination...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: I have not allowed you, Joshiji. Mr. Minister, you do not have to answer him.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: Not only this, I had said during my speech on Railway Budget that we cannot put pressure on the senior Members of Parliament. But the Railway Consultative Committee has been formed and we are soon going to call its meeting. With the concurrence of all the members of the Committee, the Members of the Parliament can send suggestions with regard to stations etc. of their areas, and the Government will take action on them.

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the Government whether any norms have been fixed for the constitution of these Consultative Committees. It is often seen that the Government in power stuffs these Committees with people

following its ideology without taking advice of the concerned Members of Parliament or the concerned peoples organisations. Has the Government of the United Front formulated any norms or reviewed the existing norms in order that the committees may be set up in a proper manner and right information and suggestions may reach the Government? Besides, informal Zonal meetings such as those of Western Railway, Northern Railway etc. are held with the participation of the Members of Parliament where discussions go on for two or three hours. Thereafter, the Parliament Members give their suggestions to the hon. Minister. Is the Railway Ministry seriously thinking of giving proper weight to their suggestions and looking into their complaints?

Mr. Speaker, Sir, part (c) of my question is also related to this point. Three Zones fall in my constituency and, therefore, this problem is not my problem alone, but relates to all of them. The Railway Zones have been so constituted that my constituency of Ajmer is distributed among Ratlam Zone, Jaipur Zone and Ajmer Zone. In fact, Ajmer Zone extends upto Gandhi Dham in Gujarat, thus involving several hon. Members from Gandhi Dham and Ahmedabad areas of that State. Sir, in those meetings the problems of Ajmer and those of other districts are covered by Ajmer Zone...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: You are a professor. You should know what is the distinction between a speech and a question.

[Translation]

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT: I am only asking as to what norms have been fixed and if more than one Zone fall under the constituency of a Member, will the Members of Parliament coming from there be given representation in these Committees?

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: Under the norms of the Zonal level Railway management, the Zonal Railway Users' Consultative Committees include representatives of Local Chambers of Commerce and various Industrial Organisations, Agricultural Organisations, registered passengers' organisations and each legislative assembly. The representatives on the Consumers' Protection Committees include two Members of Parliament—one each from Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha—and some very important people whose names are proposed by the Minister. In the Divisional Railway Users' Consultative Committees, there are representatives of leading Chambers of Commerce and Industry which are not more than five years' old, representatives of agricultural organisations and every Railway Users...*(Interruptions)*

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT: There should be no political partisanship in the constitution of these Consultative Committees and efficiency and strong base should be the criteria in forming them *(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: So far as this new Government is concerned, I assure the hon. Member that not one Member of Parliament, belonging to any party or group, has so far accused us of being partisan. We will also not give any occasion for complaint to any hon. Member in this regard. My job is to make them effective. Unfortunately, we found that as a result of pressures exercised by the Parliament Members and various organisations, the size of the Zonal Committees swelled to 400-500 members. With such a large number of members, what can any one do? Therefore, we want to limit the number of members of these Committees so as to make them effective. The Committees have to meet in three or four months. We want to ensure that their meeting are called within the prescribed period and we are trying to see that a Member of Parliament is not made dependent on D.R.M. or anybody else. We will so tighten it up that the committee functions effectively. The Government will take the report of the committee seriously and also try to implement it

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Member should be precise and pointed in asking their questions; so also the Minister while replying. Please be precise.

[Translation]

SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT: I want to know from the hon. Minister what arrangements exist at present to implement or keep a watch on the suggestions of these committees which include Members of Parliament. Who are the authorised officers at Zonal level and whether there is a time-limit within which the position of implementation has to be conveyed to the Members? If there is no such time-limit, will the Government fix a limit, say of one or one and a half months after the meeting, within which it should be disposed of and 'Yes' or 'No' conveyed to the Members?

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: According to the present practice, there should be three meetings in a year of the Divisional and Zonal level committees. The National Committee should meet twice a year and the Station Committee three times in a year. The date of the next meeting is decided in the sub-urban meeting itself. Under the rules, the minutes of the previous meeting are placed before those meetings and action taken report is also presented. However, so far, there have been very few cases when meetings have not been held. But when there are 500-600 members, there is disorder. I assure the House that we shall convene the meetings within the prescribed period and the suggestions that emerge will be duly considered. A report on the action taken on those suggestions will be prepared and put before the next meeting.

SHRI MANIKRAO HODLYA GAVIT: Sir, the meetings of the Consultative Committee of the Members of Parliament are called only twice a year and they are told nothing about the proceedings of the meetings and the action taken on the suggestions made. Will the Minister take steps to increase the number of these meetings per year?

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: Sir, I have already informed the House as to the number of meetings of various committees that should be held every year. We have no objection in holding more meetings if that leads to greater efficiency and improvements.

[English]

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE: There is no consultative Committee of the Members of Parliament for the Railway Divisions. If there is one, it would be more effective because more number of MPs would be sitting there. Would the hon. Minister of Railways agree to this suggestion?

Why does the Ministry of Railways not hang up the proposals for each station in those stations so that the local people can also supervise them and force implementation in a standard way? Would the Hon. Minister agree to this also?

[Translation]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: The first suggestion is very good. The other suggestion is also quite good and therefore, we have decided to set up Watchdog Committees in place of the consultative committee so as to provide the maximum empowerment to the local people.

KUM. MAMATA BANERJEE: But these should be impartial. That does not happen. The men of the ruling party of the State dominate them.

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: As soon as I became the Railway Minister, I wrote personal letters to the presidents of all political parties to send a list of effective workers of their parties. Some parties have sent the names which are under consideration. We are taking other persons also irrespective of the parties. I will write to the party presidents again.

[English]

SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Sir, my specific question is this. This is an era of decentralisation of power. I would like to know whether the hon. Minister would be kind enough to convene the constituency-wise meetings of the Members of the Legislative Assemblies and the Railway Users Associations so as to discuss the problems faced by passengers and the other developmental activities. From the month of October

onwards, the rescheduling of the Railways is likely to go on. So, I would like to know whether a meeting would be convened before that.

MR SPEAKER: He wants to know whether you will be willing to convene the constituency-wise meetings.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: Sir, as I have said, when all the Committees including those of the Divisional and Zonal levels start functioning, we would as a matter of fact be covering even a lower level than envisaged by the hon. Member. We take the responsibility at our level. At the lower level, the officers below us will be responsible for monitoring.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

Child Abuses

*522. SHRI N.S.V. CHITTHAN: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any inquiry into the child abuses has been undertaken by the Union Government recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise; and

(c) the steps taken to check this menace?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA): (a) to (c) An Advisory Committee was constituted by the Government of India at the Central level in March 1994 to suggest measures to be taken for eradicating child prostitution. The recommendations made by the Committee have been sent to the State Governments for appropriate action.

The Government of India is attempting to bring about an overall improvement in the status of children, especially girl children, through better education, health care and empowerment of women. The National Human Rights Commission has also formed a Core Group to study the problem of child prostitution in Delhi and Karnataka and to work on preventive and rehabilitative strategies.

The perception of child labour as a harsh outcome of the socio-economic conditions prevailing in the country has led to an enhanced consciousness on the need to

tackle the problem of child labour in a multi-dimensional and integrated manner. Keeping in view the fact that legislation alone would not be sufficient to tackle the problem of exploitation of child labour, the Government formulated the National Policy on Child Labour which was announced in Parliament in August 1987. The action plan under the National Policy on Child Labour comprises a legislative action plan, focussing of general development programmes for benefitting children wherever possible and project based action plans in areas of high concentration of child labour engaged in wage/quasi-wage employment. With a view to fulfilling the constitutional mandate, a major programme was launched on 15th August, 1994 for rehabilitating child labour working in hazardous occupations. A high powered body, the National Authority for the Elimination of Child Labour (NAECL) was constituted on 26th September, 1994 under the chairmanship of Labour Minister.

India is a signatory to the World Declaration on the survival, protection and development of children. In order to implement the World Summit Goals, the Department of Women and Child Development has prepared a National Plan of Action in consultation with the concerned Central Ministries/Departments, State Governments and voluntary organisations. This Plan addresses health and family welfare related activities, removal of gender discrimination and special protection for economically, socially and physically disadvantaged groups.

[Translation]

River Pollution

*523. SHRI VIRENDRA KUMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have sought financial assistance from the foreign countries/agencies to make the Ganga and other rivers of the country pollution free,

(b) if so, the details of the schemes under which the assistance is expected, country-wise; and

(c) the time by which the amount of assistance is likely to be received?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (CAPT. JAI NARAYAN PRASAD NISHAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) A statement is enclosed.

STATEMENT

DETAILS OF THE SCHEMES UNDER WHICH ASSISTANCE IS EXPECTED

Sl. No.	Name of Scheme	Country from which assistance is expected	Time by which assistance expected
1	2	3	4
1	Ganga Action Plan Phase-II (Kanpur)	The Netherlands	1996-97