

Mr. Speaker: Why should he ask for assurances during the Question Hour?

Shri S. K. Patil: It is very difficult to give an assurance of that type, but we have got to choose between two things, a slight increase in the rates or the total stoppage of that convenience altogether.

Shri Kamal Singh: May I know whether the steamer service upto Buxar has been continued, and if it has not been continued, what steps Government are considering to continue this service?

Shri Mohiuddin: The Bihar service has been discontinued, and I am not aware whether the question of restarting it is under the consideration of the company.

Shri Liladhar Kotaki: May I know whether the Government of Assam have brought to the notice of the Government of India the situation arising out of the increase in freight rates and whether they have submitted any proposal to the Government of India to solve the problem?

Shri S. K. Patil: The Government of Assam are naturally very anxious when these things happen, not only, as I said, with reference to the increase in freights but the whole position of these steamer companies, whether they are going to continue or not. I promised, and I repeat it, that the whole question, including even those places where it is stopped, is under investigation, and very soon we shall come to a decision as to what the future course should be.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: I am thankful to the hon. Minister for the reply he has just now given. But during the last session, the then Minister of Transport gave an assurance that the steamer service which was operating in Bihar would not be discontinued. May I know why the service was allowed to be discontinued, and on top of that, freight rates were allowed to be increased?

Shri S. K. Patil: The hon. Member knows that we have not got so direct a control over these foreign companies as to say when they should continue and when they should discontinue. Surely, the licence is with us. But the whole question is under investigation, because the companies, according to them, are making heavy losses. *Prima facie*, it may be so, but it is a matter for investigation. Therefore, as I promised—and I do it once again—the whole question, after it is gone through and we come to a decision as to how we are going to help those companies to continue the service and even keep the freights within reasonable limits, will be decided in the next few weeks.

Shri Hem Barua: The hon. Minister was kind enough to say that during the last two years these companies approached Government and acquainted them of their losses, according to them. In the meanwhile, they were increasing the freight rates, by 12½ per cent. in 1957 and by 10 per cent. in 1958. May I know what steps were taken during these two years to see that the freight rates were not increased and to ascertain that they were actually suffering losses?

Shri S. K. Patil: The only alternative was to give them a subsidy. That is exactly what they are demanding. It is difficult for Government to give a subsidy like that without preliminary investigation. The other alternative was stoppage. Therefore, it was really a very serious matter, and Government could not contemplate that. Now we have to wait for some time till we go into the question and come to a decision.

बांस का फल

*१८६२. श्री चासर : क्या खाद्य तथा कृषि मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या यह सच है कि बांस का फल एक खाद्य पदार्थ है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो क्या सरकार ने इस सम्बन्ध में कोई गवेषणा की है;

(ग) यदि हां, तो गवेषणा का क्या परिणाम निकला है;

(घ) क्या सरकार ने बांस के फल के एक खाद्य पदार्थ के रूप में प्रयोग के सम्बन्ध में कोई योजना बनाई है; और

(ङ) यदि हां, तो उस योजना का स्वरूप क्या है ?

सहाकार मंत्री (डा० प० शा० देशमुख) :

(क) से (ङ). बांसों में लगभग तीस साल के जीवन के अन्त में केवल एक बार ही फूल तथा धान से मिलते जुलते फल लगते हैं। यह खाने में आता है मगर घटिया किस्म का है और सिर्फ बहुत कमी की अवस्था में ही खाया जाता है। इस वजह से कि यह खाद्य पदार्थ सिवाय लम्बे अरसे के अलावा नहीं मिलता और इसका इकट्ठा करना भी अनाधिक है इस क्षेत्र में कोई अनुसन्धान का काम नहीं किया गया है।

Mr. Speaker: Is it bamboo shoot or bamboo fruit?

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri A. P. Jain): He is talking about fruit.

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: It is more a question of bamboo grain.

Mr. Speaker: The answer in English may also be read.

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: (a) to (e). Bamboos flower and bear fruit resembling paddy only once at the end of their life-time of about 30 years. The grain is edible though of poor quality and only eaten in conditions of great scarcity. Considering that the grain is in any case not available except after long periods and collection is uneconomic, no research work has been undertaken in this field.

Shri Hem Barua: There is a news item in the papers to the effect that

bamboo fruits that look like mangoes were discovered in a village near Bagu in Assam. May I know if Government propose to analyse the food value of these fruits which look like Bihar mangoes?

Mr. Speaker: Does the hon. Member seriously contend that it is born out of bamboo?

Shri Hem Barua: Yes, it is given in the papers like that, that once in 50 years they yield fruits like mangoes.

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: There is a fruit born of the bamboo which is somewhat similar probably in look to mango, and which is also in size very small. I do not think it is worthwhile going into that.

Mr. Speaker: Mango is produced from it?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: The size is 4" by 2" (Interruptions).

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Minister and hon. Members are joining in the temptation.

Shri Tyagi: In view of the fact that bamboo fruits only after 30 years and once in a lifetime, may I know if Government will give this scheme of 'bamboozalisation' of food lowest priority?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: There is no intention to do anything like what the hon. Member has suggested.

Shri A. P. Jain: 'Tyagiisation'.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members may taste the fruit and then come to the House.

Development of Inland Water Transport in Kerala

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*1863. { Shri Narayanankutty Menon:
Shri Warior:

Will the Minister of Transport and Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any proposals from the Kerala Government for the Development of