

paper, now infrastructural support is being given. The wagon supply has been increased to 250 wagons per day from 170 wagons. About raw material I have already mentioned. Fiscal concessions have been given. Basic excise duty has been reduced on writing and printing paper by Rs. 425 per tonne. And for using non-conventional raw materials to the extent of 50 per cent or more, there have been concessions on that count. Various fiscal steps have been taken to encourage the production.

श्री बाबूराव परांजपे : तेंदु पत्ते से बीड़ी बनती है। आम तौर पर मध्य प्रदेश और अन्य प्रदेशों में तेंदु पत्ता बहुत बड़ी मात्रा में हो रहा है। क्या इस प्रकार का कोई शोध कार्य हो रहा है कि इस पत्ते से कागज बन सकता है? मैं, एक क्राफ्ट पेपर की छोटी मिल चलाता रहा। मैंने तेंदु पत्ते पर शोध का प्रयास किया था और उसमें यश भी मिला था। मैं चाहूंगा कि मंत्री जी बताएं कि क्या इस सम्बन्ध में किसी प्रकार का कोई शोध कार्य चल रहा है? अगर नहीं चल रहा है तो क्या चलाया जा सकता है क्योंकि तेंदु पत्ता कागज बनाने के लिए इस देश में बहुत बड़ी मात्रा में उपलब्ध हो सकता है?

श्री विश्वनाथ प्रताप सिंह : मान्यवर, बग़ास और पुवाल के शोध की जानकारी मुझे है। तेंदु पत्ते के बारे में जानकारी नहीं है। यह पता नहीं था कि शोध कार्य करने वालों को बीड़ी पीने वालों का सामना करना पड़ सकता है।

श्री राम विलास पासवान : इतने बढ़िया कामर्स मिनिस्टर को यू०पी० क्यों भेजा जा रहा है?... (व्यवधान)

Electrification of Railway Lines in Kerala

*439. PROF. P.J. KURIEN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railways have any long-term plan for electrification of railway lines in the country ;

(b) the criteria adopted in electrification

of railway lines ;

(c) whether electrification of railway lines has not been done in Kerala ;

(d) whether the Government of Kerala has requested the Railways to electrify at least some sectors ; and

(e) if so, the steps being taken in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI A.B.A. GHANI KHAN CHOUDHURY) :

(a) No, Sir.

(b) The main criterion for taking up Electrification of a Section is the needs of operation and the relative priorities of different Sections.

(c) and (d). While there is no electrification of railway line in Kerala as of present, there had been some demands for the same.

(e) Due to funds constraint and relative priorities, no electrification of lines is programmed as of present in Kerala.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN : Sir, my question is whether the Railways have any long-term plan for electrification of railway lines in the country. To this, the answer is an emphatic no. I find it difficult to believe it but since I know the Minister is an honest person, I do not disbelieve him. However, I would like.....(Interruptions).

AN HON. MEMBER : Sir, he is awarding certificate.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN : I would like to ask the hon. Minister why is he not having a long-term plan for the electrification of railway lines? The National Transport Policy Committee has recommended that every year 350 kilometres of railway lines should be electrified in a phased manner. The Cabinet Committee on Conservation of Energy have also recommended that the electrification should be accelerated and every year thousand kilometres of railway lines should be electrified. I would like to know whether the Minister is not aware of this? If, instead of diesel engines, electric engines are used, the operational cost can

be reduced by 15 to 20 per cent. In view of all this, why is it that he is not having a long-term plan for electrification of railway lines? What is his reaction to the recommendations of the National Transport Policy Committee and the Cabinet Committee on Conservation of Energy?

SHRI A.B.A. GHANI KHAN CHOUHDURY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member seems to be knowing a lot on this subject. It is true that the National Transport Policy Committee, in their Report in 1980, submitted that the electrification of at least 350 kilometres railway lines per year should be done in the next ten years in a phased manner. Again, the Cabinet Committee on Energy-Conservation have also recommended an accelerated rate of electrification of 1000 kilometres of railway lines per year from 1984-85 onwards. The Ministry of Railways has accepted this recommendation and has created the necessary infrastructure for achieving the rate of 1,000 km per annum during the Seventh Five Year Plan. However, there is one big "if", and that is, if the fund is available. If actual implementation has to be done, funds must be given for implementing the recommendations of the Cabinet Committee on Energy. Now the plan resources limitation makes it necessary to give priority to the sections that carry the heaviest density of traffic so that the maximum of saving in working expenses, in consumption of diesel oil is effected by the investment made for electrification. First we gave priority to Delhi-Calcutta route. Now we are working on Delhi-Bombay and then Delhi-Madras. Once this is completed, then we will switch on to other pockets.

Electrical traction requires heavy initial investment but running expenses are cheaper, as compared to coal or diesel traction. Investment in electrical traction is found to be remunerative only when high density routes are there. It has been assessed that routes above 22 million gross tonnes per route km qualify for such investment. The total route km under electrical traction in the Indian Railways as on date is 6,250, which is only 10 per cent of the entire route that we have. The outlay for investment in 1984-85 is Rs. 160 crores. For electri-

fication of 1,000 km, we require Rs. 250 crores per annum. If this money is given to us, certainly we are ready for this rate of construction.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN : I must thank the Minister for giving very clear and specific answer to my question. I wanted to know the priorities for selecting railways for electrification. But it is not very clearly spelt out.

AN HON. MEMBER : Malda.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN : He has stated that the main constraint is paucity of funds. He has also given sufficient hint that once we electrify the lines, we are saving diesel which we are importing. So, I will make a suggestion—it is not a question—that some of the funds from the Petroleum Ministry can be diverted to this Ministry, so that we will be able to save foreign exchange on the import of diesel. Coming to my second supplementary question, he has correctly given some priorities for electrification. But, is he adhering to those priorities? He has stated that 6,000 km have already been electrified. I may say for his information—I am sure, he is already aware of it—that not a single km of railway line is electrified in Kerala. He has stated in the answer "No programme at present for electrification of lines in Kerala."

The Railway authorities know that the Trivandrum-Ernakulam railway line is having the maximum density passengerwise and goods traffic-wise also. You can verify it. Again the revenue is also maximum in the Trivandrum-Ernakulam Section. Also, Sir, the Kerala Government is prepared to give electricity at a cheaper rate because we produce electricity from hydro-power and not from the thermal power. In view of all this, why is it that you have not provided even a single kilometre to be electrified in Kerala? If your present priorities are such that Kerala is excluded, I would ask you to kindly recast your priorities so that Kerala is also included.

SHRI A.B.A. GHANI KHAN CHOUHDURY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is a criterion. The criterion, as I said, is density of traffic. Now we have to take it in

a phased manner, because we do not have money. I do not say we will not do electrification in Kerala. That is not my answer. But what priorities at the present moment we have, we have given and where we are working, that too I have stated. Delhi to Calcutta route has been completed. Now, we are trying to complete Delhi to Bombay and then Delhi to Madras. Once this is completed we will concentrate on other routes. The reason is that one has to act according to the availability of funds.

Now, with regard to the argument whether the petroleum fund can be diverted, that is for the Ministry of Planning and the Ministry of Finance, because it is they who have to do this. I can only assure the hon. Member that I will take note of his suggestions that the electric charge will be very less. But the question of investment remains. So, we have to look into that part of the story too.

SHRIMATI SUSEELA GOPALAN : Sir, the hon. Minister has said the resource constraint is the main reason for not taking up electrification programme in Kerala. Sir, it is not only in regard to the electrification programme, but even in regard to the on-going schemes Kerala has been discriminated against. The Hon. Minister has said that he has summoned the General Managers and asked them to complete the on-going schemes in other centres, but with regard to Kerala, here he is discriminating against even in regard to the on-going schemes. He is not taking them up. So, I think it is not only with regard to electrification, but also with regard to the on-going schemes that Kerala is subjected to discrimination.

SHRI A.B.A. GHANI KHAN CHOU-DHURY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I refute this charge. Basic difficulty is funding. Recently I have been to Kerala and I have talked to the Chief Minister of Kerala and requested him to send the priority schemes. Sir, every State is anxious to have more land, more workshops, more electrification. It is quite natural, but because of funding position I have told them to give some sort of priority.

SHRI M. SATYANARAYAN RAO : So far as South is concerned, first of all I

would like to say that I should not be considered as a parochial person. But, Sir, injustice has already been done to south so far as construction of new railway lines is concerned and also so far as electrification of lines is concerned. You know the distance between Delhi and Trivandrum is large. But taking into consideration the distance and also the fact that you are contemplating introduction of fast trains between Delhi and Trivandrum and other places, I would say that electrification of this route has not been completed. My information is that electrification of the line is completed only upto Agra and from Vijaywada and Madras.

The rest of the line is not at all electrified. If this is the case, then the hon. Minister has promised in this House that he is going to introduce the fastest Expresses from Delhi and from Bombay to Trivandrum and all that. How is it possible when the fund is not there? You have not completed even the doubling of lines. That is why there is so much of delay in coming from South to North. Is he going to complete the electrification and also doubling of the lines?

SHRI A.B.A. GHANI KHAN CHOU-DHURY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have spelt out the target. I have never said that this has been completed. I beg not to be misunderstood. I have said that our present target is from Delhi to Bombay and from Delhi to Madras. If this is completed, we will consider other sections and the question of the fund is a basic constraint. I have explained to the hon. Member personally about the basic constraint of funds. If we have the necessary infrastructure, then what can be the objection for electrification of the line in a particular region? I don't understand. (*Interruptions*). The only point I have read out is that if you want to electrify one thousand kilometres we require Rs. 250 crores per annum. That fund is not there.

टर्बाइन सैटों का आयात

*440. श्री नरसिंह मकवाना : क्या उद्योग मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :