

son is travelling, he is on urgent duty and going to a place and he is under suspicion then also would they send a letter to him whether the requisition slip was given by him? He will not get the ticket and will not be able to go to his destination and attend to his work. So, what sort of procedure is being followed? The point is whether they are following a procedure which can give real relief to the *bona fide* passengers. That is number one.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think number one is long enough... (Interruptions) Who is answering his number one?... (Interruptions)

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: He is not sitting. Why are you worried? ... (Interruptions) ...

Sir, transfer of reservations, cornering of seats and operation of unauthorised agents was of grave concern to the Government and the people at large in this country. To curb these malpractices we have recently amended the Indian Railways Act, 1980—of course, that will be the latter part. But special drives and checks are essentially needed. From March 5 to 22nd of April, the special checks which have been conducted on the Northern Railway have revealed that there were 190 cases of transfer of reservation out of which 113 have been prosecuted after having been detected. There were a number, nearly a thousand, of reservations which were false; they have been cancelled. So effective steps have been taken by the Government to curb this malpractice.

SHRI AMARPROSAD CHAKRABORTY: Sir, it has been admitted by the Minister that the Northern Railway is corrupt, but the general question is that this corrupt practice is being continued with the connivance of some of the officers in all the Railways. Then why pick out only the Northern Railway? What steps are being taken in the other Railways?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do you want that the other Railways should also be controlled...?

SHRI AMARPROSAD CHAKRABORTY: We want that this should be

curbed. Why only the Northern Railway? Steps should be taken for all the Railways. What steps have been taken in that regard? This step is not sufficient.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think this has been answered, Mr. Chakraborty.

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: Identical directions have been given to the entire Railways to effectively put checks to curb this malpractice. It is not merely on the Northern Railway; it is persisting in all the Railways. The Act relates to the entire Railways and the Government is concerned with the entire Railways; no segregation inside the Railways.

Effect of dieselisation and electrification of trains on mechanical staff

*45. SHRI M. S. RAMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that due to rapid dieselisation and electrification, 'A' and 'B' class staff of the Mechanical Department of the Railways have been rendered surplus;

(b) if so, whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to give them conversional training in the Electrical and Diesel Departments of the Railways; and

(c) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) None belonging to Group 'A' and 'B' (Class I & II) of the Mechanical Department has been rendered surplus.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

Cost price of imported wheat

*46. SHRI VITHTHALBHAI MOTILAL PATEL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the cost price of imported wheat is higher than its support price declared by Government; and

(b) if so, what is the cost price of imported wheat?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRIES OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The estimated C & F value of imported wheat per tonne works out to US \$213.47 in case in US wheat and US \$ 212.11 in case of wheat from Australia. The average landed cost, inclusive of Ocean freight, Insurance and incidental expenses of unloading of imported wheat from U.S.A. and Australia is estimated at Rs. 203.65 and Rs. 202.40 per quintal respectively (taking 1 US \$ Rs. 9.22).

SHRI ERA SEZHIYAN: Sir, the hon. Minister, Mr. Kalp Nath Rai is crossing the floor. Nobody should intervene between the person who is addressing the question and the Chair. Shri Kalp Nath Rai's trying to cross the floor is a very serious matter. (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Keep quiet. Order, please. (*Interruptions*) In fact, everybody is talking. As the moment, they are getting excited over something else. Only you and I are interested in keeping order; nobody else.

SHRI VITHTHALBHAI MOTIRAM PATEL: Mr. Chairman, the Minister has already admitted that the price of the imported wheat is more than the price of the indigenous wheat, the support price. May I know from the Minister why the farmers are not paid equal to the imported price?

SHRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN: It is not possible, Sir. We are procuring wheat in our country. Our price is fixed at Rs. 142 per quintal. This is based on the suggestion made by the Agricultural Prices Commission. When they recommend the price the inputs, fertilizer, all the expenses and the requirements of the farmers and every thing, are taken into consideration. Then it has been fixed. We cannot compare the imported wheat price with the price of Indian wheat we procure.

SHRI VITHTHALBHAI MOTIRAM PATEL: Sir, everybody knows that the

Agricultural Prices Commission is not considering all the aspects while formulating the price formula and that the farmers are not getting a remunerative price. Everybody knows it. If you can pay to the foreign farmers Rs. 50 or Rs. 60 more per quintal, why do you not give that price to the Indian farmers? They will grow more. Will the Government consider this suggestion?

SHRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN: Sir, the difference works out to Rs. 45 per quintal. That is the price. We cannot give more than the price fixed by the Government to our farmers. Our farmers' condition is quite different from those U.S. farmers. We do not import always. Every year we are not importing, but once in a while when the Government feels it is important that we should build up our buffer stocks. We have imported in the year 1981-82. It was following a drought year. Our buffer stock was less. Our stock should be 15 million tonnes, but we had only about 9 million tonnes. There might have been failure of monsoon in some parts of the country. All these things were considered, and to be on the safe side, to keep the people satisfied, we imported wheat. We cannot play with the lives of the people. That is why it is important. When the price was found to be cheaper in the world market we have imported the wheat, Sir.

SHRI N. P. CHENGALRAYA NAIDU: I cannot understand the Minister. The prices of wheat for building up buffer stock and that for consumption within the country need not be different. Here, Indians are black people, the agriculturists. In America they are white people. So, the Government wanted to pay more to the white people who produce wheat in America than the black people who produce wheat in India. Why you are importing is because there is shortage. Even to build buffer stock you are importing. When you are in shortage, why can you not give more incentive to the agriculturists and produce more in our country itself? Why are you interested in helping the American farmers? Why you are not interested in the Indian farmers, I cannot understand. These people, Sir, everytime say that the Agricultural Prices Commission does it. I want to know whether the Agriculture Prices Commission is

superior to these Ministers. They say that they cannot do it. If that is so, we can call the Members of the Agricultural Prices Commission here so that we can put questions to them. I want to know whether, in view of the shortage in our country, the Minister is going to increase the price.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He has explained it already, that the price in India is fixed by the Government taking into consideration the Indian conditions and you cannot ask that price to be paid which under compulsion we have to pay to the American farmers.

SHRI N. P. CHENGALRAYA NAIDU: I am saying about the Indian prices. Even the Indian price fixation is not correct, Sir. That is why there is shortage. If they give incentives, they will produce more. Whether the Government is willing to increase the price, I am asking, Sir, instead of importing.

SHRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN: The price has already been considered and fixed. Recently it has been considered. The Cabinet has also considered it. Earlier it was only Rs. 117, then, in these two years we have increased by Rs. 25 per quintal.

SHRI N. P. CHENGALRAYA NAIDU: What about the other price that has gone up? For that you do not care.

SHRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN: We have given twenty-five rupees more.

SHRI ARABINDA GHOSH: May I know from the hon. Minister the total production of wheat in the country and the total consumption for domestic use? If there is no shortage, what is the necessity of importing wheat from abroad at enhanced prices, wasting unnecessarily our foreign exchange?

SHRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN: Sir, the production in the country in 1978-79 (production year) was very good. In 1979-80 production went down and in procurement also we were able to get only 5.9 million tonnes, whereas in 1978-79 our procurement was eight million tonnes. In 1980-81 our procurement was only 6.6 million tonnes. Therefore, we had to import wheat to have a buffer stock. Our commitment of social responsibility is there.

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN: Mr. Chairman, I fully understand the point of view of the Government that it is a procurement price that they have fixed and the procurement price is related to the size of the buffer stock that the Government thinks must be maintained at all times in order to keep a tab on the prices and also to supply to the public distribution system. Therefore, I will not say that there should be equality or parity between the prices of imported wheat and the local production. That I fully understand. However, the fact is that last year they made out a target for procurement and they failed to meet that procurement target. The primary reason why the Government failed to meet the procurement target was the fact that the procurement price of wheat was fixed at an unrealistically low level and the farmer did not wish to part with his surplus at that price. Therefore, are they satisfied that with the procurement price of Rs. 142 that they have fixed this year, they will be able to get as much as they want for the public distribution system and for the buffer stock?

SHRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN: Sir, even if we increase the price, the procurement will be the same because when we were giving Rs. 115 in 1978-79 (production year), the procurement was eight million tonnes, and when we increased it by Rs. 13 and paying Rs. 130 in 1980-81 our procurement was only 6.6 million tonnes. Therefore, less procurement is not because of the price.

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN: That was because the value of the rupee had fallen. This price of Rs. 142 is much less in value. (Interruptions)

SHRI N. K. P. SALVE: There is no question that the Government must not discriminate in favour of the agriculturists of a country from where we are importing wheat. Our farmers are entitled to a fair and reasonable price. But it has to be appreciated that cereals constitute a very important weightage in the consumer price index. It is not possible to pay a high price for wheat and at the same time complain that the Finance Minister is not able to contain inflation. Therefore, the correct approach has to be that there is no reliance whatsoever on imported wheat.

A fair price has to be paid to the agriculturists in India and we should be completely self-reliant so far as production of wheat is concerned. I do not for a moment accept that if you pay a higher price, there will be incentive for higher production. That myth has been exploded and thrown into the limbo of exploded theories. Therefore, I want to know from the Minister what precise steps are being taken to ensure that we have a larger procurement of wheat in India and lesser dependence on imported wheat.

SHRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN: We are importing wheat. We are procuring wheat in sufficient quantity. Our procurement is going on very well. Also, though we have fixed Rs. 142 as the procurement price, our issue price is Rs. 145. We are issuing only at Rs. 145. That the honourable Member should understand. We are not selling at a higher price in the market.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Conversion of G.T. Express and Rajdhani Express into double deckers

*47. **SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI:**

SHRI RAMACHANDRA BHARADWAJ:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to convert the Grand Trunk Express and the Rajdhani Express into double decker trains;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard;

(c) by when these double decker trains are likely to be introduced; and

(d) what steps Government have taken or propose to take to ensure safety of travel by the proposed double decker trains?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) No Sir. There is only a

proposal to double-head these trains viz., haul them by twin engines in order to augment the number of coaches on such trains.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Public Distribution System

*48. **SHRI N. K. P. SALVE:**

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE:

Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state what decision has been taken to bring in more items of consumption under the public distribution system and to strengthen it by opening more fair price shops in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRIES OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN): Under the New 20-Point Programme, it is proposed to extend and strengthen the public distribution system by opening more fair-price shops. Special attention is to be given to meet the requirements of people living in far-flung areas, and also of industrial workers and students living in hostels. It is proposed to open about 50,000 new fair-price shops in the country during 1982-83.

There is no proposal to supply any more items of consumption under public distribution system by the Central Government. The States have however, been given the option to include other such items by arranging for their procurement themselves.

Agricultural Land

*49. **SHRI JAGDAMBI PRASAD YADAV:**

SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the total agricultural land in India and its break-up as single crop, two crops and three crops land respectively;

(b) the details of the crop-wise production during the last three years;

(c) the percentage of land provided with irrigation facilities by Government