

oil in this country, and particularly in view of the requirements of our own refineries, may I know whether the Iraqi delegation has assured us or has given some indication that it will supply crude, or whatever it is, in sufficient quantities and at very reasonable prices ?

SHRI H. R. GOKHALE: Sir, this is a question somewhat different from the main question. But I anticipated that this might be asked. As I have said earlier in this House, some kind of an agreement has already been reached with Iraq with regard for the supply of crude to this country. And for three years, 1972-73, 1973-74 and 1974-75, an arrangement for the supply of 1.950 million tonnes has already been arrived at. But I am sorry to repeat what I said on the last occasion when this question was raised, that it is not in anybody's interest in this country to discuss the price structure. We are operating in a very highly competitive field.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI : In general, along with the Iraqi contract, whatever the prices may be, I would like to know whether it is a fact that the recent Malaviya Committee which has given its report to the Government has stated that a very powerful and independent status should be given to the Oil and Natural Gas Commission and whether the Government has taken any decision on that.

SHRI H. R. GOKHALE: Yes, Sir. The Malaviya Committee has made recommendations suggesting more or less a three-tier organisation for dealing with our exploration programmes, and has emphasised the need for giving a very high status to this organisation. We are very carefully considering these proposals. But we have not yet taken a decision.

SHRI BALACHANDRA MENON : In view of the fact that there is an ever rising need for more oil in our country, will the Government see to it that it comes to a firm agreement with the Arab countries and mainly with Iraq so that oil is not sabotaged by the foreign oil companies ?

SHRI H. R. GOKHALE : Yes, Sir. We have made and partly succeeded in that direction and we will continue our efforts.

STLPS TO MEET WAGON SHORTAGE *421.

SHRI SITARAM KESRI: SHRI BHOLA PRASAD: SHRI A. G. KULKARNI | SHRI V. R. PRASHAR: SHRI S. B. BOBDEY :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether any study has been conducted about the inordinate delays in the movement of wagons at different stations;

(b) whether any scheme has been formulated for the smooth movement of wagons to meet the shortage of wagons; and

(c) if so, what are the details in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI T. T. PAI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Movement of wagons is under constant and continuous watch at all levels. Work Studies of yards are conducted from time to time with the objective of improving mobility of wagons and optimising their utilisation so as to make more wagons available for traffic within the same resources. Schemes adopted for better usage and availability of wagons are long-distance marshalling of wagons, loading of traffic in block rakes, mechanisation of big yards electrifying and dieselising important trunk routes, expansion of terminal facilities, etc.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI : Sir, there is an oft-repeated complaint about shortage of wagons whereby the industry is usually threatened with closure. Particularly I have myself addressed a letter to you regarding the acute shortage of wagons for the supply of coke to the small-scale sector in various parts of this country and foundries are threatened to be closed down. Apart from this, you are thinking of pulling extra tariff for wagons which are going to be kept for long periods without unloading and those things which you are doing are all right. The point is whether you will consider allotting more wagons for coke supplies, because, for want of that the

*The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri A. G. Kulkarni.

foundrie, are threatened to be closed down any time now.

SHRI T. A. PAI : I am aware of this complaint. We are concerned with the scheduled movements as directed by the State Governments. I am sure the State Governments must be having a Director of Small-scale Industries.

As for arrangements by railways for the movement of coke, especially for small-scale industries, it would be very difficult for the railways to think of only small units. Unless this is done in a block system, it would not be possible for us to meet the demands. I fully appreciate that this demand will have to be better met than now.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI : I quite appreciate Mr. Pai's apprehension. I have not asked for individual units. What I say is the State Directors of Industries of Maharashtra, Mysore and Gujarat have requested you for block allotment. I would like to know whether you will make block allotment and whether you will assure us so that we will move the Government again.

SHRI T. A. PAI : Yes, Sir. Every endeavour will be made to see that these requirements of the small-scale industrial units are fully met so that they do not have to buy them in the black-market.

SHRI PRANAB KUMAR MUKHERJEE : In view of the fact that there is shortage of wagons and the Ministry of Railways practically did not place any orders for wagon manufacture on the wagon manufacturing industries in West Bengal and certain other States. I would like to know from the Minister whether he is in a position to tell the House what the total quantity would be of wagons to be produced in the next Plan period. And in that connection I would also like to know whether he has received any representation from the Government of West Bengal regarding one wagon manufacturing concern. Bengal Engineering, which is lying closed since 1971. If so, have they received any representation and what action they are going to take on that?

SHRI T. A. PAI : We have already placed orders with the wagon manufacturers for 40,000 wagons. It will take ordinarily the next three years for them to fulfil that.

We have already assured them that there will be continuity of these orders. But unfortunately some of these units remain closed and the Railways are thinking of taking over one of them and running it officially. In spite of this talk of wagon shortage, as a result of steps that we have taken the Railways have been able to lift in the first seven months of the current year 3.58 million tonnes more of revenue earning traffic compared to the same period in the last year in spite of only 1800 meter gauge wagons and 1,000 broad gauge wagons on an average to move traffic to Banghi Desh territory.

SHRI DWIJENDRALAL SEN GUPTA : Is the hon. Minister aware that the Standard Wagon Company of Bumpur, Kulti, and the Howrah Burn Company, Calcutta are going to be closed for want of orders for wagons?

SHRI T. A. PAI : Most of these units are not able to manufacture wagons at the cost at which their competitors are going to do. To the extent they are willing to take up this work at the prices quoted by their competitors, even now the Railways will be willing to place orders with them.

SHRI KALYAN ROY : This point has been discussed quite many times. There has been acute shortage of wagons to move coal from Dhanbad and Assansol coal belts. Can the Minister tell us what is the average daily supply of wagons in these two belts this year in relation to last year? Is it not a fact that the supply position has deteriorated resulting in accumulation of coal at pitheads?

SHRI T. A. PAI : As against 9 million tonnes of coal at the pitheads, it has now been reduced to 6 million tonnes....

SHRI KALYAN ROY : I did not ask for that at all. What is the average number of wagons that you have supplied to move coal in the Dhanbad and Assansol belts in relation to the supply position during the same period in 1971?

SHRI T. A. PAI : This is not about last year. But compared to the year before last the wagons are short by 200 wagons per day. This can be remedied in the course of another two-three months.

श्री जगदीश प्रसाद मायुर : इस सदन में आप के पूर्व जो मंत्री थे इस विभाग के उन्होंने पिछले सभी सत्रों में वेगन शार्टेज का केवल एक कारण बताया कि पूर्वी क्षेत्र में ला ऐंड आर्डर की स्थिति बहुत खराब रही। पहली बार आपने उस कारण को नहीं दोहराया है और इसके लिए मैं आप को धन्यवाद देता हूँ। अब आप यथास्थिति पर आये हैं। मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या इस वेगन शार्टेज का एक बड़ा कारण आप के विभाग में कर्मचारियों में फैला हुआ करप्शन नहीं है? व्यापारियों को अपना माल सप्लाई करने के लिए इंडेंट देने के बाद भी वेगन नहीं मिलते जब तक कि उन की मांग पूरी नहीं होती, यथास्थिति जब तक नहीं बनती उन को वेगन नहीं मिलते और वेगन मिलने के बारे में बार-बार इस प्रकार की शिकायतें आप के पास आती रही हैं। तो क्या आप के पास मुख्य-मुख्य स्टेशनों का कोई असेसमेंट है कि किस स्टेशन पर कितने वेगन की आवश्यकता पड़ती है अथवा उसकी कोई योजना आप एक दो वर्ष में बनायेंगे जिस से इस प्रकार के करप्शन की शिकायतें भविष्य में न हों?

SHRI T. A. PAI: When we refer to the shortage of wagons it is always with reference to the demand for movement of goods in the country. Two or three years ago, when movement of goods, particularly movement of foodgrains, took place from ports to the interior areas, the movement was always one way. With the Green Revolution that has taken place in some parts of the country, the movement is otherwise. When the coal was taken from coal belts to Northern India, the wagons used to return empty. Therefore, the coal also could be moved faster. How they are moving goods while returning. Therefore the question of shortage of wagons cannot be answered in a straight-forward manner. Sometimes wagon shortage can also be more profitable. Sometimes you can have artificial shortages so that the profitability is maintained. The Railways are taking every care to prevent such shortages being encouraged.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr. Malaviya. Last question.

SHRI HARSH DEO MALA VIA : Sir, has the attention of the Government been drawn to the holding up of wagons at Gadra station in Bihar where the offE refuse to locate the wagons and the merchants have to go about the yards for locating their wagons and then they have to grease their palms also to get the wagons ? Sir, it is a very serious complaint that we I have heard at Muzzafarpur. I would like to know this from the hon. Minister,

SHRI T. K. PAI: Sir, I have not been informed of this. I will take note of the details and I will get it investi-

MR. CHAIRMAN : Question Hour is over. Now, the Short Notice Question.

12 NOON

SHORT NOTICE QUESTION AND ANSWER

चलती रेल गाड़ियों में डकैती और हत्या की घटनाओं में वृद्धि

1. श्री सुरज प्रसाद : क्या रेल मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या यह सच है कि चलती रेल गाड़ियों में डकैती और हत्या की घटनाओं में वृद्धि हो रही है ;

(ख) क्या यह भी सच है कि बरीली में 4 डाउन आसाम मेल के अन्दर सशस्त्र डाकुओं ने हाल में 2 महिलाओं सहित 10 व्यक्तियों को घायल कर दिया था ; और

(ग) यदि हाँ, तो सरकार ने यात्रियों की जानमाल की सुरक्षा करने के लिए क्या कार्यवाही की है ?

••[INCREASE IN INCIDENTS OF DACOITY AND MURDER IN RUNNING TRAINS]

1. SHRI SURAJ PRASAD: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the incidents of dacoity and murder in running trains are on the increase;

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