

SHRI D. THENGARI : To deal with this problem does the Government propose to amend the provisions of the Indian Penal Code because the present provisions are found to be inadequate ?

SHRIMATI MARAGATHAM CHANDRASEKHAR : I take this information.

SHRI DEOKINANDAN NARAYAN : May I know if there are gangs o'f goondas indulging in this profession throughout India and may I know if they are caught or arrested or brought under control ?

SHRIMATI MARAGATHAM CHANDRASEKHAR : I have no information available with me at present.

SHRI AKBAR ALI KHAN : Will the Government take the matter more seriously because this is a crime which has to be nipped in the bud ? In view of the seriousness of what has happened in Kerala and other places will the Government come out with some legislation which will provide deterrent punishment?

MR. CHAIRMAN : Will you come out with a legislation ?

SHRIMATI MARAGATHAM CHANDRASEKHAR : We will look into it.

SHRI B. K. GAIKWAD : May I know whether the Government has any information at its disposal of the number of boys and girls kidnapped during the last year?

SHRIMATI MARAGATHAM CHANDRASEKHAR : No, Sir.

CONVERSION OF ANKLESHWAR—RAJPIPLA NARROW GAUGE RAILWAY LINE INTO BROAD GAUGE

*735. SHRI M. C. SHAH : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have received any recommendation from the Government of Gujarat regarding converting of Ankleshwar—Rajpipla narrow gauge Railway into broad gauge in the Fourth Five Year Plan; and

(b) if so, what is the decision in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (DR. RAM SUBHAG SINGH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Conversions to be taken up in the Fourth Plan have not yet been finalised. However, due to limitation of funds, it is unlikely that the conversion of this section will be taken up in the near future.

SHRI M. C. SHAH : What is the total mileage of narrow gauge railway in our country and what will be the amount required if that narrow gauge line is to be converted into metre gauge or broad gauge as circumstances require ?

DR. RAM SUBHAG SINGH: I require notice for giving the correct figure but I think it is about 2700 miles. About this Railway we are in correspondence with the Gujarat Government and we are awaiting their final view because the Railway Board has intimated to them—and this is for a particular purpose for taking building materials to Narmada Valley—that it will be examined from that point of view.

SHRI M. C. SHAH : Sir, I wanted general information about the narrow gauge railway and may I know whether in the Fourth Plan there is any phased programme Statewise to convert the narrow gauge into metre gauge or broad gauge if conditions require ?

DR. RAM SUBHAG SINGH : That is the policy that there should be a uniform railway in the country but it cannot be done straightway because the broad gauge as well as the metre gauge are virtually having the same kilometreage; the metre gauge is about 3,000 kms. less as compared to broad gauge and this narrow gauge is about 2700 miles. The policy is that it should be ultimately converted to the gauge of its zone but as you know the Fourth Plan has not yet been finalised and for new lines allocation on an *ad hoc* basis is contemplated to the tune of only Rs. 61 crores. So one can imagine how many miles of railways can be converted from narrow gauge or how many miles of new lines can be laid, unless and until this allocation of Rs. 61 crores, which is for five years and not for one year, is sufficiently enhanced.

श्री बाबा साहेब सावनेकर : मैं मामनीय मंत्री जी से जानना चाहूंगा कि कौन-कौन से स्टेट्स ने ब्राडगेज के लिये सेंट्रल गवर्नमेंट से मांग की है।

डा० राम सुभग सिंह : इसके बारे में सूचना चाहिये क्योंकि यह प्रश्न केवल एक छोटी लाइन के बारे में है और शायद कोई स्टेट ऐसी नहीं है जिसने नई रेल लाइन की मांग नहीं की।

SHRI M. C. SHAH : May I know whether there is a general policy decision that in future the country should have one gauge only, that is, broad gauge, and if that is true when the narrow gauge is to be converted, will it be converted into broad gauge ?

DR. RAM SUBHAG SINGH : Yes, Sir. That is what I said that ultimately that will be the objective. In 1957 a general type of a survey was made and at that time it was reported that the conversion will cost at least Rs. 1000 crores. That was in 1957 and so it was not possible to convert them.

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL : Has the hon. Minister taken into account the fact that the Government, particularly the Department of Railways, has a large sum of money deposited with it, on which they have been sitting tight for years, by some of the former Princely States of Gujarat before merger for the purpose of conversion of these railways and the conversion of this railway assumes greater importance because of the oil find and the prospect of the Narmada scheme being taken in hand ?

DR. RAM SUBHAG SINGH : Regarding some of the funds that were deposited by the former Princely States, I will find out the position, because I have no information regarding them just at the moment, but regarding the other matter, namely, the oil find, the Railways are very much alive to the need to cater to the requirements of the oil find, the Baroda oil refinery, etc. It is not that we are not constructing new railway lines in Gujarat. A big railway project is under construction at the moment in Jhund, Kandla and other places.

SHRI T. V. ANANDAN : Is it a fact that same States do come in the way of the Railway Ministry when they want to convert NG into BG and, if it is a fact, will the Minister take strong action to see that in the interests of the nation all the NG lines are converted into BG and not give any room for the States to have their own way ?

DR. RAM SUBHAG SINGH : As you know, some of the NG lines are owned by companies like Martin-Burn, etc. and some of them are being run by the Railways, by our Ministry, on some basis, on some conditions*. Those which are being run by private companies have a dual type of management because they are owned by the District Board and when the private companies have to sell them, it is the district board, local board or the State Government which will have to purchase it from those companies and then hand over the NG lines to the Railway Ministry. So, there is some complicated procedure, but according to the needs of the time and requirements of the area the Railways are going ahead.

SHRI JOSEPH MATHEN : Is there any time-limit fixed for the nationalisation of the entire railways in this country ?

DR. RAM SUBHAG SINGH : Already the big Railways have been nationalised and the Railways are one of the biggest public undertakings of our country. Regarding other things, some of them are being run at a loss and I do not know whether the House would like that these antiquated railways should be nationalised. It would be better to have new lines, BG lines, if our funds permit.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : The issue is not whether the antiquated railways should be nationalised, but as the Railways are very important from the general, public point of view, why should this not be nationalised and brought within the overall scheme of State-owned Railways, rather than leave it in the hands of private individuals ?

DR. RAM SUBHAG SINGH : We do not want that anything should be left to anybody, because we want to proceed on such a basis that the best interests of the nation are served. Even in the State of

West Bengal, we have finalised an engineer-survey of two or three NG lines for their conversion and in some areas a new BG line is being contemplated independent of that. In other areas even the NG lines are being subsidised by the Railway Ministry with a view to rendering suitable service to the people of that locality.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : He has said that they are subsidising and at the same time they are running at a loss. When I say take them over, they say they are running at a loss and then he says they are subsidising. Is it not all the more reason why these railways * owned by private individuals should be nationalised and run as State Railways ?

DR. RAM SIBHAG SINGH : Had the hon. Member listened to me carefully earlier, he would not have raised this question, because it is not the Railway Ministry which can straightway own it or take over any railway and nationalise it. There are district boards and State Governments. There is a periodical contract and after seven years or ten years a particular district board is entitled to take it over. If the hon. Member has got any influence there in his district board or State Government, he should impress upon them to take it over and have it handed over to us. We will be too happy to do that.

736. [The questioner (Shri Bansi Lal) was absent. For answer vide col. 4318 infra.]

EXPORT OF ONIONS TO CEYLON

*737. SHRI M. RUTHNASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received a representation from the Tuticorin-Ceylon Current Exporters and Importers Chamber in regard to the troubles experienced by the exporters of onions to Ceylon at the other hand; and

(b) if so, what action Government intend to take in the matter ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI MANUBHAI SHAH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The matter is under consideration.

SHRI M. RUTHNASWAMY: May I know what is the volume of export and the value of export ?

SHRI MANUBHAI SHAH : The value of exports as far as Ceylon is concerned is about Rs. 1,90,00,000 and to the whole world about Rs. 3 crores.

SHRI DEOKINANDAN NARAYAN : May I know, Sir, whether onion is exported from Nasik district also ? May I know to which foreign countries it is exported and what was the value of the onion which was exported last year and is it not a fact that the onion producers in Nasik are facing trouble, because they are not getting railway wagons to export to Bombay ?

SHRI MANUBHAI SHAH : Well, Sir, the major destination in respect of onion from the hon. Member's district is Ceylon and wagons are available in plenty. But if there are any specific difficulties in respect of movement and if the hon. Member draws our attention to it, we shall take it up with the Ministry of Railways.

SHRI C. D. PANDE : The exports to Ceylon are under a scheme of aid or loan to Ceylon. Is onion also one of the items exported which will come under this scheme ?

SHRI MANUBHAI SHAH: Yes, Sir.

SHRI P. K. KUMARAN: What are the difficulties which the exporters in Tuticorin come across in exporting onions to Ceylon ?

SHRI MANUBHAI SHAH : The difficulty is one of undercutting by too many exporters. Therefore, we are thinking as to how this price fluctuation ranging from Rs. 184 per tonne to Rs. 512 per tonne, which neither does good to us nor to the foreign buyer, could be avoided. This is under consideration.

SHRI B. K. GAIKWAD : May I know if the hon. Minister has received any representation from the onion producers that they are not getting export licences to export onion, particularly from Nasik District in Maharashtra State ?

SHRI MANUBHAI SHAH: There is no licensing system. We have left this commodity, as most other commodities, without any licensing system. The net result has been too many people trying to rush in for too little sale and undercutting each