

RAJYA SABHA

Monday, the 2nd March, 1970 (11th Phalguna, 1891 (Saka))

The House met at eleven of the clock, Mr. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

♦151. [Transferred to the 10th March, 1970].

CIRCULAR RAILWAY IN CALCUTTA

•152. SHRI CHITTA BASU: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to refer to the reply to Starred Question No. 7 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 17th November, 1969 and state:

(a) the progress so far made in respect of the work for the final location survey for a Suburban Dispersal Line from Dum Dum to Princep Ghat;

(b) the other steps that have been taken for the early completion of the Circular Railway in Calcutta; and

(c) the time by when the Circular Railway is likely to be completed?

- THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI ROHANLAL CHATURVEDI): (a) The Final Location Survey for a Suburban Dispersal Line commenced in October, 1969. About twenty percent of the field work has been done. The work is expected to be completed by April, 1971.

(b) No section of the Circular Railway other than that from Dum Dum to Princep Ghat is under investigation at present. However, Techno-Economic Feasibility Studies are in progress for a Metropolitan Railway Transport System for Calcutta.

(c) The Final Location Survey for the Suburban Dispersal Line, which will be completed by April 1971, will yield data on the basis of which de-

cisions can be taken regarding the construction of this line. The construction of the Suburban Dispersal Line is expected to take about 4 years from the date of commencement of the work.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: From the reply it appears the location of suburban dispersal line from Dum Dum to Princep Ghat is not under examination or is it also included in the proposed Techno-Economic Feasibility Studies for the rapid transit system of Calcutta?

SHRI ROHANLAL CHATURVEDI: Sir, the Dum Dum to Princep Ghat line is under final location survey. There are two things. The first is the final location survey of this Dum Dum—Princep Ghat line. Then there is the techno-economic feasibility survey for two sections, east to west between Sealdah and Howrah, a distance of approximately five to six kilometres and a north-south corridor which will pass through Chittaranjan Avenue, Jawaharlal Nehru Road, Ashutosh Mukerjee Road via Kalighat towards Diamond Harbour Road. These are two things, the techno-economic feasibility study and the final location survey for the suburban dispersal line which are under progress.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: May I know from the hon. Minister whether he can assure this House that on receipt of the Report of the techno-economic feasibility study no avoidable time will be unnecessarily spent for starting the construction of the particular project and may I also know whether the Government will assure the House that the staff rendered surplus from the electrification scheme and in other construction divisions will be given employment in this project of the Calcutta Metropolitan Railways Organisation?

SHRI ROHANLAL CHATURVEDI: As far as the question of delay is concerned I can give this assurance

that from our side there will be no delay. As for the other point . . .

SHRI CHITTA BASU: Do I understand that the finance question will not stand in the way?

SHRI ROHANLAL CHATURVEDI: After the study is complete it has to be done in consultation with the Finance Ministry and the Planning Commission but this much I can assure that from our side there will be no delay. We are trying our utmost to complete the work as early as possible as far as the final location survey is concerned.

As for the other point mentioned by the hon. Member I think it is too premature to say what staff will be employed in this particular project. At present we are on the feasibility study.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: My question was very specific. Some railway workers are going to be rendered surplus after the completion of the electrification work roundabout Calcutta and some, including casual workers, are likely to be rendered surplus after the completion of assigned work in other divisions. My point is, now that a new organisation is going to be set up in Calcutta, whether the Minister can assure the House that the staff rendered or likely to be rendered surplus will be given alternative employment in this new project.

SHRI ROHANLAL CHATURVEDI: When the main construction starts, naturally preference will be given to those who are rendered surplus elsewhere.

SHRI M. K. MOHTA: May I ask the hon. Minister as to what steps the Government is going to take to protect the railway property on this proposed extension line because what is the use of spending good money in building new lines if they are going to be destroyed by unsocial elements soon thereafter?

SHRI ROHANLAL CHATURVEDI: Sir, it is really a very moot point and the best that we can do is we inform the Home Ministry, and inform the State Government . . .

SHRI BANK A BEHARY DAS: Appeal to the good sense of the State Government.

SHRI ROHANLAL CHATURVEDI: . . . , and ask for their cooperation. And the House is also seized of the position. What else can the Ministry do?

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: For the last 15 or 16 years we from West Bengal have been pressing for the expedition of this work. From the rate at which it is progressing it seems that there would be public transport service opened to the moon before we have that circular railway line in Calcutta. In view of the inordinate delay may I know whether the Government is going to set any time limit for the completion of the various stages of the work and for actually commissioning the circular railway?

SHRI ROHANLAL CHATURVEDI: I have already said that by April, 1971 we will complete the survey and get the Report.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I did not ask when the Report will come or when the survey will be completed. People do not travel on the Report of a Committee; you know very well.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just listen; he wanted to say something more.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA; I wanted to know when the railways will begin to move.

SHRI ROHANLAL CHATURVEDI: This is a highly technical study but we can assure the House that as soon as the study is completed we will take four years for completing the construction on this suburban dispersal line.

श्री राज नारायण : क्या हाइली टेक्नीकल है इसमें ? अंग्रेजी के शब्द से लोगों को बड़े भ्रम में रख रहे हैं ।

SHRI THILLAI VILLALAN: I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether any survey for putting up circular railway in any place other than Calcutta is in progress. I want to know whether any such survey has been made for a circular railway in Madras.

SHRI ROHANLAL CHATURVEDI: No, Sir.

DR. DEBIPRASAD CHATTOPADHYAYA: I want to know from the hon. Minister what allocation had been made in the last year's budget for this circular railway in Calcutta and whether that allocation made has been utilised. There is a Press report that the work regarding this is not being carried out according to schedule. Now, finally, I would like to know whether the hon. Minister is prepared to set a categorical time-limit for the completion of the proposed circular railway because it is extremely urgent.

SHRI ROHANLAL CHATURVEDI: As I said, twenty per cent progress has already been made and we are not lagging behind as far as our work in connection with the final location is concerned. The total money sanctioned by the Planning Commission and earmarked completely for all the metropolitan railway transport systems for the four cities in the country is Rs. 50 crores and we can easily complete this project within the money that is allotted to us.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: May I work in Calcutta actually begun, what was the projected date of its completion and what are the reasons for the delay?

SHRI ROHANLAL CHATURVEDI: As I said in my reply to the main

question, this work of the final location survey was begun in October, 1969 and it will be completed by April, 1971.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. C. D. Pande, last question.

SHRI C. D. PANDE: I have been in Parliament for the last nineteen years and the question 'was always raised in both Houses about the underground railway in Calcutta. Really the traffic problem cannot be met without underground railways. Now, that question has been shelved. The real problem is how to tackle the congestion there. May I know whether the Government will assure this House that they will be able to solve the problem without an underground railway system? The survey is for a circular railway. In Delhi it is a total failure and it will be so in Calcutta as well.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: When the people and the Government are going underground, how can the railways go underground?

MR. CHAIRMAN: You need not answer that.

SHRI ROHANLAL CHATURVEDI: The final location survey and the techno-economic feasibility surveys are going on. It may be that from the feasibility survey for the two corridors that I mentioned just now, an underground railway may have to be suggested, particularly for the section between Howrah and Sealdah, a distance of five to six kilometres, but at present I am not in a position to say unless the feasibility report is received.

श्री नेकीराम : थोड़ा मैं सुझाव देना चाहता हूँ रेलवे मिनिस्ट्री को ।

श्री सभापति : यह सुझाव का वक्त नहीं है, क्वेश्चन का वक्त है ।