

SHRI P. K. KUMARAN: May I know how long it will take for the Government to introduce the scheme? It has been before you for the last one year.

SHRI JAGANATH RAO: Because of the Supreme Court's ruling which excluded the production bonus from basic wage, the Employees' Provident Fund Act has to be amended. Steps are being taken to introduce an amending Bill.

SHRI A. D. MANI: Is it proposed to include in the definition of 'incentive bonus' the compulsory minimum bonus which the Bonus Commission has recommended, irrespective of the fact whether a concern runs into a profit or loss?

SHRI JAGANATH RAO: The entire matter is under discussion. As I said, a decision will be made and an amending Bill will be introduced.

*276. [The questioner (Shri G. K. Kapoor) was absent. For answer, vide cols. 1680-81 infra.]

PUBLICATION OF THE ANNUAL LIST OF LIGHT-HOUSES AND LIGHT-VESSELS

*277. SHRI M. RUTHNASWAMY: Will the Minister of TRANSPORT be pleased to state whether an annual list of light-houses, light-vessels and their position with sailing direction for Indian country vessels is published and made known to shipowners, captains and pilots of coastal units?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI N. KANUNGO): Information in this behalf is available in the Admiralty List of Lights (Volume F) as well as the Sailing Directions. These are priced publications available in India. The Naval Hydrographic Office, Dehradun, have also published in 1961 and 'Indian List of Lights and Fog Signals-Aden to Singapore' which is also a priced publication.

SHRI M. RUTHNASWAMY: Is it an annual publication?

SHRI N. KANUNGO: No, it is not an annual publication. It is published as and when there are changes.

*278. [The questioners (Sarvashri Niren Ghosh and M. Basavapunnaiiah) were absent. For answer, vide cols. 1682-83 infra.]

*279. [The questioner (Shri P. Abraham) was absent. For answer, vide col. 1683 infra.]

*280. [The questioner (Thakur Bhanu Pratap Singh) was absent. For answer, vide cols. 1683-84 infra.]

*281. [For answer, vide cols. 1677-78 infra.]

EARLY COMPLETION OF SETHUSAMUDRAM PROJECT

*282. { SHRI SANKAR PRATAP
SINGH DEV;
SHRI RAM SINGH;†

Will the Minister of TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister recently said in Madras that he was very keen about an early completion of Sethusamudram Project connecting Palk straights with the Gulf of Mannar;

(b) if so, whether this project has been included in the Fourth Five Year Plan; and

(c) what are the details of financial implications?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI N. KANUNGO): (a) In his speech on the occasion of the opening ceremony of the Jawahar Dock at Madras on the 6th November, the Prime Minister said that he was keen on work on the Sethusamudram

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Ram Singh.

Project being started early in the Fourth Five Year Plan.

(b) The proposal is at present being considered for inclusion in the Fourth Five Year Plan.

(c) The cost of a canal which can take ships of 30 ft. draft is estimated at about Rs. 22 crores.

SHRI RAM SINGH: May I know if the project has been delayed by five years and, if so, how much loss has been incurred?

SHRI N. KANUNGO: It was not delayed at all. It has not started.

PROF. M. B. LAL: Delay in starting.

SHRI N. KANUNGO: It has not started. It is being studied.

SHRI GOPIKRISHNA VIJAIVAR-GIYA: May I know what kind of scheme is thought of and is it some cutting of the rocks, through which ships can pass easily and avoid circuiting via Ceylon?

SHRI N. KANUNGO: That is the idea, passage through Adam's Bridge, so that ships can come directly from the West Coast to East Coast and vice versa.

SHRI M. RUTHNASWAMY: In view of the fact that the prosperity of the projected Tuticorin harbour will depend on the completion of the Sethusamudram project, will the Government consider the advisability of pursuing the Sethusamudram project *pari passu* with the building of the new Tuticorin harbour?

SHRI N. KANUNGO: That is being done. At present there is a technical committee which is going into it.

SHRI B. K. P. SINHA: May I know by what length this scheme will shorten the nautical miles that a ship has to cover in their journey? What length will be reduced?

SHRI N. KANUNGO: The saving in time will be about 15 hours and, of course, it will be a straight-cut to the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea, without going round Ceylon.

SHRI N. SRI RAMA REDDY: What are the main advantages? Are there any defence advantages to be derived by the Sethusamudram project? Why was the Prime Minister insisting on the completion of this?

SHRI N. KANUNGO: Because it will be of great help to the coastal shipping of India.

FOOD SHORTAGE

*283. SHRI RAM SINGH: Will the Minister of FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether serious shortage of food supply has been reported from various parts of the country; if so, what steps have been taken or are proposed to be taken by the Government of India to overcome this shortage;

(b) whether it is a fact that several people have died as a result of shortage of supply of foodgrains; and

(c) if so, the details of the casualties?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (SHRI D. R. CHAVAN): (a) Some shortage of foodgrains is being experienced in certain States. To overcome this shortage programme of import of foodgrains has been stepped up and large quantities are being supplied to deficit States from Central stocks.

(b) No, Madam.

(c) Does not arise.

SHRI RAM SINGH: Is it a fact that in certain parts of the country because of shortage some people have been eating grass instead of wheat?