

(b) No information about the precise manner of utilization of rice received at Siliguri on trade account is available. The quantity of rice received at Siliguri on Government account was intended for distribution needs of North Bengal, Sikkim and Bhutan and also for meeting any emergent demands from any other neighbouring area.

(c) I regret that the information is not readily available and its collection will involve time and labour not commensurate with its utility.]

RAIL LINK WITH WESTERN DOON VALLEY

*341. SHRI SURJIT SINGH ATWAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to link Western Doon Valley with Dehradun city by a railway line;

(b) if so, what will be the total cost of this project; and

(c) when it is likely to be started?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SHAH NAWAZ KHAN) : (a) A proposal to connect Dakpathar with Dehra Dun or Saharanpur by rail has been received from the U.P. Government.

(b) Unless a proper survey is made, the cost cannot be worked out.

(c) Decision on construction can be taken only in the light of developments following the results of survey.

EXTENSION/RESTORATION OF RAILWAY LINE FROM SUPAUL TO RAGHOPUR

*342. SHRI N. SRI RAMA REDDY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any proposals either from the people or the Government of Bihar for the restoration or extension of railway line from Supaul to Ragho-

I pur through Bhaptiahi (Chandpipai) or any part thereof in Saharsa District of North Bihar; and

(b) if so, what are the reactions of the Government to the proposals?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI S. V. RAMASWAMY) : (a) Representations from the Convener, Bihar Congress M.Ps. State Committee for restoration and construction of railway lines in Saharsa District, including the Supaul-Bhaptiahi line, have been received. One such representation was also forwarded to this Ministry by the Chief Minister, Bihar State.

(b) The Kosi Project Authorities have stated that the river Kosi has not yet settled in its regime. In view of the uncertain behaviour of the river and possibilities of extensive flood danger, restoration or construction of Railway lines in this area has not been considered.

SIZE OF GRAM PANCHAYATS

*343. SHRI DHANANJOY MOHANTY: Will the Minister of COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CO-OPERATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to reduce the size of Gram Panchayats; and

(b) if so, what will be the maximum population covered under a panchayat under the new scheme?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CO-OPERATION (SHRI B. S. MURTHY) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

TELEGRAMS SENT BY POST

*344. SHRI P. ABRAHAM: Will the Minister of POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 23 million telegrams were disposed of by post last year in the country; and

(b) if so, why and under what rules?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE DEPARTMENT OF POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS (SHRI B. BHAGAVATI): (a) Yes.

(b) Telegrams are forwarded partially or wholly between two intermediate Telegraph Offices, by quickest available mail, when owing to prolonged interruptions in the telegraphic communications and in the absence of alternative telegraphic route, disposal of telegrams on wire are subject to serious delay, under the provisions of Rule 79 of Indian Telegraph Rules, 1951.

SECOND SHIPYARD

*345. SHRIMATI DEVAKI GOPIDAS. Will the Minister of TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) how far the scheme for the construction of the Shipyards at Cochin has progressed; and

(b) when the construction is expected to start?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING IN THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJ BAHADUR): (a) Further discussions with the Mitsubishi Group, Japan for collaboration in the project are expected to take place in April, 1964 at Tokyo. Meanwhile, the revised technical report of the Group is being examined by a committee set up for the purpose. Other aspects of the proposals made by the Group are also under examination in consultation with the Ministries, Organisations etc. concerned.

(b) The construction is expected to start after an agreement for collaboration in the project is signed.

LOAD PERMITTED ON NARMADA BRIDGE

*346. SHRI M. C. SHAH: Will the Minister of TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the gross load permitted on the Narmada bridge near Broach in Gujarat is 19,000 lbs.;

(b) whether it is a fact that the goods vehicles operating between Ahmedabad and Bombay are permitted to carry gross load of 33,000 lbs.; and

(c) if so, whether Government propose to bring in line the axle load limits on the Narmada bridge to the prevailing limits on the highway on which this bridge is situated?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING IN THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJ BAHADUR): (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

STATEMENT

(a) Yes.

(b) No. A maximum laden weight of 24,000 lbs. only has been permitted on the sections of the National Highway No. 8 adjoining the bridge.

(c) In order to avoid inconvenience to traffic resulting from the present restriction of 19,000 lbs. laden weight, the State Government are being allowed to raise the permissible laden weight limit to 24,000 lbs, subject to the following precautions being taken: —

1. A few test runs with vehicles of laden weight of 24,000 lbs. may be made before the bridge is opened to such vehicles;
2. the present speed limit of 5 miles per hour should continue;
3. not more than one vehicle should be permitted on one span at a time; and
4. the deck should be kept under very careful observation for checking up whether it shows any Signs of distress under heavier loads.