

MASTER PLAN FOR INLAND NAVIGATION

*39. SHRI BABUBHAI M. CHINAI: Will the Minister of TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state the progress which has so far been made in regard to the preparation of the Master Plan to connect the various rivers in India with a view to facilitating inland navigation?

THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI S. K. PATIL) : A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

STATEMENT

A master plan to connect the various rivers in India with a view to facilitate inland navigation in India was prepared by the Central Water and Power Commission. The Inland Water Transport Committee set up under the Chairmanship of Shri B. K. Gokhale, I.C.S. (Retd.) to examine the problems of inland water transport in the country from all its aspects are considering the matter and their final report is awaited. In their interim recommendation, the Committee has made the following recommendations:

"The Members of the Inland Water Transport Committee considered the material placed before them and felt that the so called Master Plan was at present beyond the range of practical politics. Conditions had radically altered since the time when Sir Arthur Cotton envisaged these ideas in 1874 A.D. Withdrawals of water for irrigation have considerably affected the navigability of the main rivers during the last century. Steamers which could go up to Agra in the old days now find it difficult even to go as far as Allahabad. The demand for increased food production will inevitably further affect navigation-But, even otherwise, it would be impossible to find adequate water on the Central India Plateau to fill up any canals whether from east to west or north to south at least (during six months every year. More-

over the country had now been covered by a network of railways and roads and it was improbable that any considerably long distance traffic would be available by the slower navigation route when railways and road transport are available to cope more expeditiously with such traffic."

The matter will be considered further on receipt of the final report of the Committee.

SHRI BABUBHAI M. CHINAI: In view of the fact that the interim report has more or less suggested that the scheme of the Master Plan for inland navigation should be put in cold storage, has Government accepted this interim report?

SHRI S. K. PATIL: It is not said in the same words that the scheme should be put in cold storage, but it is not a scheme that can immediately be taken in hand, because just now we are busy with these other schemes as the food situation is so acute in the country.

SHRI BABUBHAI M. CHINAI: In view of the fractional expenditure on inland water transport so far during the Second Plan, may I know what steps are being taken to accelerate the matter during the rest of the Plan and the Third Plan?

SHRI S. K. PATIL: The Third Plan is of course yet to be made. But it is not merely insignificant expenditure because even without doing much, as it is, the present position is that we have somewhere about 5,760 miles of inland water transport. Of course to that it could be added, surely that could be done, but the question of priority comes in.

SHRI B. K. P. SINHA: May I know whether the interim report merely recommended the postponement of the scheme or they have pointed out some inherent difficulties in the implementation of the scheme?

SHRI S. K. PATIL: The whole scheme was prepared by the C.W.P.C

It rests on the supposition that the rivers or part of the rivers are navigable. But, as I said, it depends upon the projects that we are making, and in some of the rivers at any rate there is water everywhere except in the river basin.

CRASH OF A DAKOTA NEAR HAILAKANDI

"MOULANA M. FARUQI: t

J SHRIMATI SAVITRY DEVI

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SHRI S. C. DEB:

Will the Minister of TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether an Indian Airlines Dakota crashed near Hailakandi, 25 miles from Silchar, on the 29th March, 1959;

(b) if so, what is the total loss of life and property involved in the accident; and

(c) whether an investigation has since been made into the cause of the accident; if so, what are the reasons for the crash?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI AHMED MOHTUDDIN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Twenty-four persons including four crew and twenty passengers were killed and the aircraft was completely destroyed.

(c) The accident is under investigation by a Court of Enquiry.

مولانا ایم - فاروقی : بی بی کے سلسلہ میں میں یہ پوچھنا چاہتا ہوں کہ کیا ان کے وارنٹوں کو کوئی تاوان دیا جائے گا -

‡[مولانا ایم۔ فاروقی: 'بی' کے سلسلے میں میں یہ پوچھنا چاہتا ہوں کہ کیا ان کے وارنٹوں کو کوئی تاوان دیا جائے گا ?]

fThe question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Moulana M. Faruqi.

f[] Hindi transliteration.

SHRI AHMED MOHIUDDIN: Yes, Sir. The crew were insured, and the dependants will be paid the insurance amount. The I.A.C. have also announced *ex-gratia* payment or compensation for the dependants of the dead.

مولانا ایم - فاروقی : یہ جو انکوائری ہو رہی ہے کب تک اس کا فیصلہ ہو جانے کی امید ہے -

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SHRI AHMED MOHIUDDIN: I cannot lay down any date, but still it is expected that it will be over very soon.

SHRI S. C. DEB: May I know whether it is a fact that this accident was of an uncommon nature because there was no survivor, that no one could be identified, and that every limb of every occupant was torn apart? If so, what was the reason for it?

SHRI AHMED MOHIUDDIN: Yes, Sir, it is unfortunately true that there was no survivor and that the parts of the plane were found at considerable distances from each other. Those are the points that will be the subject of enquiry in Court.

SHRI AMOLAKH CHAND: May I know at what stage the enquiry is now?

SHRI AHMED MOHIUDDIN: The enquiry started only about a week ago.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: May I know if the Government is aware that a demand has been made that at least some of the Dakotas should be put out of commission and that among those people who made the demand is the previous Mayor of Calcutta who also happens to be a member of the Congress Party?

SHRI AHMED MOHIUDDIN: I have not seen any demand that the

t[] Hindi transliteration.