

arrangements that are made. Only last week we had a conference with Pakistan and as I said we always participate in the international conferences and do more than our part in the matter.

**SHRI KANHAIYALAL D. VAIDYA:** Is it not a fact that Madhya Bharat was invaded by locusts recently? Unfortunately I do not find any mention in the statement about Madhya Bharat.

(No reply)

#### SCARCITY CONDITIONS IN RAJASTHAN

**\*387. SHRI H. C. MATHUR:** Will the Minister for FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of Government has been drawn to the serious scarcity conditions prevailing in Rajasthan;

(b) whether the Government of Rajasthan have approached the Government of India for any assistance to meet the situation; and

(c) if the answer to part (b) above be in the affirmative, what action has been taken by Government in the matter?

**THE MINISTER FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI):** (a) Yes.

(b) No.

(c) Does not arise.

**SHRI H. C. MATHUR:** May I know, Sir, if the hon. Minister is receiving regularly periodical returns from the State concerned in respect of scarcity conditions prevailing there?

**SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI:** We are aware of scarcity conditions if they exist, because we read sometimes in the papers and when hon. Members put questions we make enquiries. As I have said, in reply to part (b) of the question, the Rajas-

than Government have not asked for any help from us.

**SHRI H. C. MATHUR:** I am afraid the hon. Minister has not followed my question—whether he has any information from the States about the prevailing scarcity conditions, if any?

**SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI:** I believe the hon. Member is perfectly aware of the procedure. We receive regular reports, weather reports and crop conditions reports, and when this question was put we got a special report.

**SHRI S. MAHANTY:** Sir, on a point of order, whenever this side of the House refers to any newspaper report, it is dismissed with "wise men do not read newspapers". Now, in reply to this question, the hon. Minister is referring to newspaper reports. Sir, I want a ruling.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** It is not always wisdom to be wise.

#### TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM U. S. A. FOR DETERMINATION OF SOIL FERTILITY

**\*388. SHRI S. PANIGRAHI:** Will the Minister for FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any assistance has so far been received by India under the project for determination of soil fertility for which an agreement was entered into between the Government of India and the Government of the United States of America under the Technical Co-operation Programme; and

(b) the progress so far made in the work connected with the project?

**THE MINISTER FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI):** (a) Most of the equipment indented under the Project has been received. An American Soil Scientist is

working since September 1953 and an Indian Soil Scientist and an agronomist have already returned from U. S. A. after training. Cartographer who was deputed for training abroad is likely to return shortly.

(b) A statement is placed on the Table of the House

*Statement*

Regional centres have been opened at Sabour, Kanpur, Delhi, Nagpur, Coimbatore and Poona for soil survey and work on collection of master profiles and associated samples is in progress. Agronomic trials with fertilisers are in progress in 40 centres, of which 25 are in community project areas. Data on paddy and wheat for one year have been obtained which are being analysed and interpreted. At the Indian Agricultural Research Institute a laboratory has been set up for rapid soil testing. Samples are being collected, analysed and data correlated with crop response for use in advising farmers for fertiliser requirements of their soils. A radiotracer and cartographic laboratory and a greenhouse building are under construction for work on radiophosphorus in soil fertility problems. Most of the equipment for radiotracer work and the radioactive phosphorus have been received.

**SHRI S. PANIGRAHI:** May I know, Sir, what is the nature of the technical assistance which has been given by the United States of America?

**SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI:** The reply which I have just given gives clearly the nature of the aid that we are getting. We have got an expert; we have got some equipment.

**SHRI S. PANIGRAHI:** Does it include equipment or does it include money?

**SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI:** Equipment.

CHORD RAILWAY LINE BETWEEN SILIGURI AND ALIPURDUAR

\*389. **SHRI S. P. RAY:** Will the Minister for RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any representation from the Indian Tea Planters Association, Jalpaiguri, suggesting the construction of a chord railway line between Siliguri and Alipurduar, at a safe distance from the foot of the hills as a permanent solution of the communication troubles between those two stations during the monsoons; if so, what action has been taken thereon by Government; and

(b) whether it is a fact that the Government of Assam have also expressed their views in favour of a similar chord line to ensure suitable connection between Assam and the rest of India?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS AND TRANSPORT (**SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN**): (a) Yes, Sir. This proposal will be considered in the light of the recommendations of the Joint Committee of State authorities and the Railway on the measures necessary to avoid damages by floods.

(b) No communication from the Assam Government has been received.

**SHRI S. P. RAY:** May I know, Sir, whether it is a fact that due to innumerable breaches of small culverts between Siliguri and Hashimara, the railway line between these two stations has remained suspended for the last four months and it is likely to remain suspended for another month?

**SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN:** Yes, Sir. There have been extensive breaches