

SHRI TAJAMUL HUSAIN : May I know whether the Government of Bihar have been consulted in this matter and if so, what is the opinion of the Bihar Government—whether they are in favour of the bridge at Patna or at Mokameh ?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : The Government of Bihar has already been consulted and so far as I know, they are also of the opinion that the bridge should be constructed at Mokameh Ghat.

SHRI B. RATH : Am I to understand from the previous answer that the final plan of the bridge has not yet been decided by the Cabinet?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : I have said so. I have said that the report is under the consideration of the Government.

SHRI B. RATH : May I know how the land has been acquired in spite of the fact that the site of the bridge has not yet been finalized?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : The hon. Member has not followed what I said just now. That site was decided upon some time back and actually the construction had started but there was some difficulty on account of floods. So a special Committee was appointed and that Committee has now recommended that the construction should be made at Mokameh.

PROGRESS MADE ON INDIAN SHIPPING

•14. SHRI C. G. K. REDDY : Will the Minister for TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) what progress has so far been made towards reaching the target of two million tons for Indian shipping recommended by the Reconstruction Policy Sub-Committee on shipping, presided over by Shri C. P. Ramaswami Iyer ; ml

(b) what action is being taken to reach this target as soon as possible ?

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS AND TRANSPORT (SHRI LAL BAHADUR) : (a) The owned tonnage of Indian shipping has now increased to 4.1 lakh gross registered tons as compared with only about 1.5 lakh gross registered tons early in 1947.

(b) Shipping is in the private sector and the initiative for acquisition of additional tonnage rests primarily with the Indian shipping companies. The Government of India have, however, taken active steps to assist in this process. They have set up a Shipping Corporation on a State-c/m-private ownership basis, with 74 per cent, of the capital financed by themselves, for acquiring ships and operating them in regular liner services in selected overseas routes. They have arranged for ships to be built at the Visakhapatnam Shipbuilding Yard for sale to Indian shipping companies on the basis of payment by instalments spread over a number of years. Loans are also being made available to Indian shipping companies on reasonable terms for purchase of ships from abroad. All this is being done in pursuance of a five year programme which has been evolved in consultation with the Planning Commission. It is expected that by the year 1956, when this programme has been fully implemented, an addition of about 2,00,000 gross registered tons will have been made to Indian owned tonnage.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY : Am I to understand that the target of 2 million tons has been given up by the Government ?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : The Government never decided that the target would be 2 million tons.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY : Are the Government aware that the Shipping Reconstruction Policy Committee had recommended the constitution of the Indian Shipping Board, and have they taken any action in this regard ?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : Yes. The recommendations of that Committee were before the Government but the

Government felt that it was not possible to reach that target within 5 years,

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY : I asked about the constitution of the Indian Shipping Board. I should like to know whether the Government have appointed such a Board or intend to appoint such a Board.

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : I shall require notice of that question.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY : The Committee had also recommended a certain percentage of reservation in respect of coastal, foreign and other trades. May I know from Government whether those recommendations have been implemented or are about to be implemented or are intended to be implemented ?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : Well, we are trying to implement the recommendations subject to the limitations of finance as well as our capacity for work but in so far as the coastal shipping is concerned, as I had said before, we have made considerable progress and we are covering about 93% of coastal trade through our Indian shipping.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY : May I know in so far as foreign trade is concerned, what steps were actually taken by Government in pursuance of the recommendation of this Committee ?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : In fact since the middle of 1948 the Indian shipping companies were not able to find the necessary funds required for acquiring fresh tonnage owing to the shyness of capital but we have now provided about Rs. 3 crores for giving loans to the shipping companies. They can purchase ships out of the money loaned from Government. Besides that, the Government has established one corporation viz., the Eastern Shipping Corporation. It was set up in 1950 with an authorised capital of Rs. 10 crores. Government hold about 74% shares in it and the Scindia Navigation

Company hold about 26%. We are also helping the Vizagapatam Yard

and they are making ships and the shipping companies have been allowed to purchase ships on an instalment basis. These are the steps that we are taking and we propose to take for helping the growth of the Indian shipping industry.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY : Another recommendation of that Committee was to check any monopolistic trends that the shipping industry may have, because such trends are very obvious in the shipping industry in our country. Have Government taken any steps in that regard ?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : As I have said this comes under the private sector. So we would not ordinarily prevent private companies from floating other corporations or private shipping companies. Still, as I have said Government have already established a corporation in which we have about 74 per cent, shares. It has also been the intention to set up another two corporations, and we are making rules and regulations and we see that these rules and regulations are imposed. So I think Government are watchful in this matter.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY : Am I to understand that for reasons which I am not able to understand, Government have rejected the recommendations of the Committee in respect of checking monopolistic tendencies ?

DR. A. R. MUDALIAR : Before the Minister replies to that, I would like to know whether there are any monopolistic tendencies at all in Indian shipping. I am fairly well acquainted with Indian shipping, both coastal and foreign, and I am not aware of any.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY : Let the Government go through the report of this Committee again, Sir.

(No reply.)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 15-