

PURCHASE OF RAILWAY STORES

*38. SHRI C. G. K. REDDY (on behalf of SHRI P. C. BHANJ DEO) : Will the Minister for RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the total value of stores purchased for the Railways during each of the years from 1948-49 to 1951-52 ;

(b) whether as a result of the recent price recession there will be any nominal fall in the money-value of stores to be purchased during the current year 1952-53 ;

(c) the estimated amount of saving on this account ; and

(d) whether the budget provision for 1952-53 has made any allowance for the fall in prices of stores to be purchased during that year ?

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS AND TRANSPORT (SHRI LAL BAHADUR) : (a) 1948-49—Rs. 100.44 crores; 1949-50—Rs. 86.00 crores; 1950-51—Rs. 81.59 crores and for 1951-52 the estimated figure is Rs. 93.22 crores.

(b) There is not likely to be any net overall reduction.

(c) and (d). Do not arise.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY : May I know, Sir, if these stores are purchased through contractors or through the Stores Department ?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : Through the Stores Department.

SHRI B. GUPTA : Will the hon. Minister please state the value of the stores purchased from British concerns for these two years ?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : I shall require notice.

SHRI B. GUPTA : Is the hon. Minister aware that the tenders are arranged and settled beforehand among the British concerns with a view to thrusting their terms with regard to the purchasing of stores ?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : That is not our information.

PROF. G. RANGA : Is it not a fact, Sir, that these tenders are called for openly and advertised in all countries whenever foreign supplies are needed ?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : That is the usual practice.

SHORT NOTICE QUESTION

MR. CHAIRMAN : There is a Short Notice Question of Shri S. P. Ray.

FLOODS IN WEST BENGAL

I. SHRI S. P. RAY : Will the Minister for RAILWAYS AND TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that by the recent flood in the Dooars area of Jalpaiguri District (West Bengal), the Assam Link Railway and the National Highway have been cut off at several places and all transport has been dislocated ; if so, what are the extent and nature of the damage caused ;

(b) whether it is a fact that the movement of tea and essential consumer goods from the Dooars area to Calcutta has been totally stopped as a result of the flood ; if so, what steps have been taken by Government to restore the rail and road routes at the earliest possible date ; and

(c) whether Government have engaged military personnel in this restoration work to facilitate quick repair ?

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS AND TRANSPORT (SHRI LAL BAHADUR) : (a) Yes. The position in respect of the extent and nature of the damage has been changing from time to time. Stated briefly—

(1) on the Railway, twenty serious breaches of the bank and bridge approaches occurred and about fifteen culverts and bridges including one pier of a long bridge, were damaged ; and

(2) on the National Highway No. 31 thirteen breaches of bank and bridge approaches occurred and 13 culverts and bridges including two spans of one long bridge have collapsed in the section from Siliguri to Jogigopa on the Brahmaputra.

(b) Tea from all tea gardens served by stations in the Terrai area and in the Dooars area on the Mal-Chengmari and Mal-Changrabandha sections can move by the all-rail route. There is, however, at present, no outlet for produce of the tea gardens served by stations between Chengmari and Alipur Dooar. An offer has been made to the Central Tea Board that if tea is air-lifted from these areas to Bagdogra, arrangements will be made by the Railway to book the same from there. Movement of jute from North Bihar and Haldibari area has not been affected.

Necessary staff and materials have been concentrated in the areas damaged and extensive organisation for rapid repairs to the railways based on previous experience has been strained to the limit.

State Governments who look after National Highways on behalf of the Centre, have already commenced the repairs wherever water has subsided to allow the work being done. They have been informed by the Centre that they should go ahead with the work in anticipation of grant of additional funds.

(c) No.

SHRI S. P. RAY : May I know when the restoration of these lines will be made?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : Do you mean the railway lines?

SHRI S. P. RAY : Yes.

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : We have already repaired and restored some of the lines but the whole work and especially the major railway line which has been damaged will take about a month to complete.

PROF. G. RANGA : In view of the fact that this is the third time when such major damages have been caused by the floods and also in view of the fact that plans and estimates are already prepared and the engineers are expected to anticipate these things, would Government think of instituting a detailed enquiry into the manner in which this alignment has been made and find out whether they can possibly improve the alignment and also the bridges and other conveniences which they have to provide there in order to minimise future damages?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : So far as we are aware, these damages are not due to wrong alignment. There is a misapprehension that the new road that we built has been damaged or the new railway link that we built has been damaged. The fact is that the old road and the old railway lines have been damaged and the new railway link or the new road has not been damaged. Only minor damages have taken place.

SHRI GOVINDA REDDY : Has the Government estimated, Sir, the damage done to road and rail?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : No. We have no idea.

WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTION

WORK-CHARGED ESTABLISHMENT AT COCHIN

89. SHRI M. MANJURAN : Will the Minister for TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether there have been representations for changing the work-charged establishment at the port of Cochin into a permanent one ;

(b) what action Government have taken on such representations ;

(c) what additional annual expenditure will be involved in changing the work-charged into a permanent establishment ; and