

LOK SABHA

Thursday, February 27, 1969/
Phalgun 8, 1890 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven
of the Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

National Highways

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- *211. SHRI R. V. NAIK :
SHRI N. K. SOMANI :
SHRI K. M. KUSHIK :
SHRI R. K. AMIN :
SHRI N. SHIVAPPA :
SHRI D. R. PARMAR :
SHRI C. C. DESAI :

Will the Minister of TRANSPORT & SHIPPING be pleased to state :

(a) the details of the Central Government's allocation to the States for the maintenance of national highways for the current fiscal year and the proposed allocation for the next fiscal year ;

(b) whether the allocation has satisfied the demands of the concerned State Governments ; and

(c) whether complaints have been received from certain State Governments in regard to the inadequate grants from the Centre as a result of which some of the national highways have not been maintained properly by the State Governments ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS, AND IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI IQBAL SINGH)

(a) A statement showing the details of the allocations to the States for the maintenance of national highways during the year 1968-69 is laid on the Table of the Sabha. [Placed in Library See No. LT-156/69]. The allocation for the year 1969-70 are under consideration.

(b) and (c). Representations had been received from certain State Governments about the inadequacy of maintenance grants during past few years including 1968-69. The question of increasing the allocations to States on this account is under active consideration.

SHRI R. V. NAIK: In connection with maintenance grants and road development outlays, the State Governments have two main reasons for dissatisfaction and complaints : first, the Central grants for the maintenance of national highways are given at the rate of Rs. 3000 to 3500 per mile which were fixed ten years ago; these rates are now inadequate for the proper maintenance of these roads which had to bear greater loads on account of increased developmental activities all-round; secondly, with regard to road development during the Fourth Five-year Plan, both the States and the Union Territories had asked for an outlay of Rs. 618.94 crores whereas the outlay recommended is only Rs. 559 crores, i.e. Rs. 60 crores less. In view of this will the Hon. Minister recommend to the Government and the Planning Commission increased amounts of grants and outlays ?

SHRI IQBAL SINGH : It is true that these allocations are based on the norms for maintenance and repair of national highways which were prevalent about 8 or 9 years ago. Last year we appointed a Committee under the chairmanship of the Director-General, Roads, and they have surveyed the whole position. On the basis of the report of the Committee, the maintenance and Repair grants are being increased, and from the new norms will be applied.

SHRI R. V. NAIK ; In the matter of construction, repair and maintenance of highways, the public Works Departments of the States have become notorious centres of corruption, bribery, favouritism, delay, inefficiency, waste and sometimes even misdirection of funds. Will the Hon. Minister take steps to devise some machinery to check these evils ?

SHRI IQBAL SINGH : The State Governments are doing the work for us. Estimates are submitted by them and after proper scrutiny grants are sanctioned by the centre. About the working of the Public Works Departments of the States, I think it is better that the questions are asked of the State Governments.

SHRI N. K. SOMANI : May I draw the attention of the Hon. Minister to the 42nd Report of the Public Accounts Committee, just released, where the irregularities in the matter of construction of lateral road of 1,111 miles from Amingaon in Assam to Barcilli in U. P. at a cost of Rs. 110 crores have been fully explained. It has also been pointed out that, on some superficial investigation, it was found that 69 items of equipment of road-making like aircompressors, generators, stone-crushers, etc., of a value of Rs. 19.41 lakhs have been found surplus already.

In view of this and also the other irregularities that have been pointed out, a very high-level committee had been set up in October, 1968. May I know by what time the final report of this committee would be obtained after looking into the irregularities and the over-stocking and the poor maintenance of the equipment? In the meantime, before the report is obtained, what does the Ministry propose to do to set these matters right?

SHRI IQBAL SINGH : If it is a lateral road, it does not come within the scope of this.....

SHRI N. K. SOMANI : It is a part of the national highways.

SHRI RANGA : The matter is already there before Government. The Public Accounts Committee had reported on this not once but twice.

SHRI N. K. SOMANI : Government cannot disown responsibility. A committee also had been appointed. There have been irregularities in the construction of the network of national highways. So, how can he deny it?

SHRI IQBAL SINGH : A committee had been appointed. As regards the stage at which its proceedings are and

how they have dealt with the matter, I do not know. If the Hon. Member gives new notice, I shall supply the information.

SHRI N. K. SOMANI : How can he say that he does not know? He is a Minister.

MR. SPEAKER : Because he does not know.

SHRI N. K. SOMANI : It is unfair to us, if he does not know. It is a pity that such cases of gross irregularities are not in the knowledge of the Hon. Minister.

AN HON. MEMBER : Dr. V.K.R.V. Rao, the former Minister in charge of Transport is here. Let him answer it.

SHRI N. K. SOMANI : Before the high-level committee submits its report, what does the Ministry propose to do in the meantime? Lakhs of rupees worth of equipment is lying outside and they are not going to be used. What does the the Ministry propose to do in the meantime?

SHRI IQBAL SINGH : A committee has been appointed and the committee will submit its report and then we can take further measures.

SHRI R. K. AMIN : I hope the Hon. Minister is aware of the fact that according to the targets laid down in the Nagpur Plan, it was only the Gujarat State where the targets had fallen by about 42 per cent. Even today when the other States have achieved more than what was laid down in the Nagpur Plan, it is only Gujarat State which has not achieved the targets. In view of the deficiency of roads and transport in Gujrat, the State has demanded a national coastal highway which is very important for the economic development of the entire region. Is the Hon. Minister aware of the fact that one-third of the vehicles lie in the Gujrat State? In view of this, may I know whether Government would consider the question of granting a national coastal highways to the Gujarat State at an early date?

SHRI IQBAL SINGH : Inclusion of further roads among national highways can be done only under the National

Highways Act—an Act of Parliament. About 15000 miles of road have now been declared as national highway, and we should maintain them and improve them and have a good standard in regard to them. We are trying for inclusion of further road among national highways, and that will be considered when the further allocation is made after the Fourth Plan is approved.

SHRI D. R. Parmar : In view of the heavy traffic and also increased traffic on National Highways No. 8 from Ahmedabad city, may I know whether a suggestion had been made to have a diversion of that road outside Ahmedabad city, and if so, when that work will be taken on hand ? May I also know whether the work cannot be taken on hand due to want of funds ?

SHRI IQBAL SINGH : Regarding the Ahmedabad bypass I have no information at present. Regarding the maintenance aspect, we have classified the roads according to the traffic etc. Where there is more traffic, there will be more maintenance grants so that the roads may be maintained according to some standard.

SHRI D. R. PARMAR : The Gujarat Government had already recommended for the diversion of the highway in view of heavy rush of traffic on it from Ahmedabad city.

SHRI C. K. BHATTACHARYYA : May I draw the attention of the Hon. Minister the fact that one of the national highways in West Bengal, and in particular, national highway No. 34, is in a very bad state of repair, particularly in the part between Raiganj and Dalkola so that they are impassable for cars and further there are still shaky wooden bridges on the road on account of which trucks with full load are not allowed to ply on them ?

MR. SPEAKER ; I do not think that the Hon. Minister can answer separately for every road; or every bit of national highway.

SHRI C. K. BHATTACHARYYA : Kindly bear with me for a minute. Let me complete my question. I want to

know whether there is any proposal to put such national highways in proper repair and convert the shaky wooden bridges on the national highway into steel and concrete bridges ? It is not a proper thing that on national highways there should be wooden bridges in between on account of which trucks can not be allowed to pass on them.

SHRI IQBAL SINGH : The Hon. Member has asked about the roads in certain areas. I cannot reply to it offhand because it is a matter of detail.

Regarding repair of roads, we do give the first priority ; If a national highway is in bad shape, we do give it priority and shall see to it that it is in good shape, and for that purpose, we shall give maintenance and repair grants on a priority basis for such roads.

SHRI BAL RAJ MADHOK : At the moment there are more than 30 national highways and we find boards 'National Highway No. 1', 'National Highway No. 2' and so on. When we go on those highways, barring a few passages where we have good roads, we find that in most places the roads are dilapidated and it is a shame to call them national highways. May I know whether any special attention is being paid by the Central Government to bring all the national highways to a minimum standard of width and to have other maintenance regarding bridges etc., or whether simply putting up a board 'National Highway' is enough ?

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE : Otherwise, call it Congress highway.

SHRI IQBAL SINGH : Regarding national highways, I do admit that during the last few years in view of the economy, the funds for roads have been cut down and so we could not maintain them according to the standard which we should have. But in the Fourth Plan, we are trying to have increased allocation so that the national highways could be maintained in a proper way and could be developed also. A national highway requires a lot of financial resources. Regarding the bridges we are taking them up one by one. But there are too many bridges which require funds- I cannot

say that even in the Fourth Plan we could build all the bridges.

SHRI BAL RAJ MADOK : I am concerned with width of the road only. There are national highways where at some places the width is 50 feet or 30 feet, but at many places the width is only 15 feet. May I know whether some minimum width will be fixed for a national highway all through ?

SHRI IQBAL SINGH : We want to have two-lane national highways, and its width may be 23 feet. But there are about 10,000 miles of roads where we have only single-lane roads; if we could make them two-lane roads, then more traffic can move on them. But that is a long drawn-out plan; we cannot say that we could do it in a small time or even in five years. About 10,000 miles of road would require more than about Rs. 300 crores.

SHRI MANUBHAI PATEL : May I know whether there is any uniform policy in putting up the boards on national highways ? I was passing through the Punjab on a national highway but I could not read what was written because it had been written only in Punjabi and not in English or Hindi. May I know whether the Central Government would draw the attention of the concerned States to put the names either in English or Hindi and the regional language ? May I also know whether Government would ask the concerned States to maintain the roads properly ? For instance, National Highway No. 8 from Wapi to Bombay is not at all maintained properly.

SHRI IQBAL SINGH : As regards the putting up of the names on the national highway signboards, we have been asking the States Governments to give the names in the national language, the regional language and English.

श्री एस. एम. जोशी : मैं मंत्री महोदय से यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि जब रुपयों को बंटन होता है स्टेट्स को तब वह पैसा नेशनल हाईवेज की मरम्मत के लिए खर्च किया जाता है, इसको देखने के लिये क्या सरकार ने कोई प्रबन्ध किया है ?

SHRI IQBAL SINGH : The accounts are audited as they spend the money. We give the States grant first and then they spend the money.

श्री एस. एम. जोशी : मेरे सवाल का जवाब नहीं आया। वह तो कहेंगे ही कि हमने पैसा खर्च किया। लेकिन जब रुपया खर्च हुआ है तब रास्ता ठीक हुआ है या नहीं, इसको देखने के लिये क्या प्रबन्ध है ?

SHRI IQBAL SINGH : All the accounts are audited by the Auditor General.

श्री मधु लिमये : यह सवाल नहीं था। सवाल यह था कि जो अनुदान दिया जाता है वह ठीक तरह खर्च किया जाता है या नहीं। मैं तीन सड़कों के बारे में जानना चाहता हूँ कि ग्रैंड ट्रंक रोड बम्बई-बंगलौर रोड और बम्बई दिल्ली रोड, की हालत क्या है, इसको देखने के लिए आप के पास कोई मशीनरी है या नहीं ? अगर मंत्री महोदय यह बात नहीं जानते हैं तो किस लिये मिनिस्टर बने हुए हैं ?

MR. SPEAKER : The question is what is the control to see whether the amount has been properly spent or not.

श्री इकबाल सिंह : जहाँ तक इस बात का ताल्लुक है रुपया ठीक खर्च किया जाता है या नहीं यह होता है कि पहले वह रुपया खर्च करने का अनुमान करते हैं उसके बाद सेंट्रल गवर्नमेंट से कहते हैं और हम उनको रुपया देते हैं। उस के बाद आकाउंटेंट जनरल उकाउंट्स को चेक करता है।

श्री मधु लिमये : आउंट्स नहीं, फिजिकल वेरिफिकेशन ?

श्री इकबाल सिंह : इसके अलावा कितने मील सड़क उनके पास है इसके मुताबिक पहले हम उनको 3000 रुपया फी लेन के हिसाब से देते थे, अब उसको हमने साढ़े 4 हजार रुपया कर दिया है। जब कोई खास सड़क होती है तब पहले एस्टिमेंट सम्मिट होते हैं, उसके बाद डाइरेक्टर जन-

रल, रोड्स उसको स्कुटिनाइज करते हैं, उसके बाद फैसला होता है कि कितना रुपया दिया जाये। अगर इसके अलावा कुछ और होना चाहिये तब माननीय सदस्य हमको बतलाएँ, हम उस पर विचार करेगे।

SHRI SHIVAJI RAO S. DESHMUKH : The question is in three parts, (a), (b) and (c). The statement laid on the Table relates only to half the portion of (a), namely what has been the current allocation. It does not even relate to what would be the next year's allocation. It does not reveal what is the demand of the State Governments for allocation under National Highways. Lastly part (c) asks whether because of the inadequacy of grants by the Centre, the national highways are in bad shape. That portion also has not been answered either by the statement laid or in the subsequent answers given. Would you please request Government to answer these questions fully and properly as is expected of them?

Coming to my supplementary...

MR. SPEAKER : No, no. This is a good enough supplementary.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS, AND SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI RAGHU RAMAIAH) : May I draw his attention to page 2 of the answer dealing with (b) and (c)? (a) asks for details of allocations for the current year. That has been given. As for the allocations for 1969-70, they are under consideration. That is a matter for the coming budget.

श्री मधु लिमये : हम को जो स्टेटमेंट दिया गया है उसमें कुछ नहीं है। यह प्रश्न 212 के बारे में है।

MR. SPEAKER : I think we had better go to the next question. We will be losing time otherwise.

श्री मधु लिमये : आप ने क्या प्रराजकता पैदा कर दी है मंत्रिमंडल की पुनर्रचना कर।

SHRI SURENDRANATH DWIVEDY : May I suggest that the questions addressed to the Ministry of Transport and Shipping in the list today may be

transferred to some other day when the Ministers could study the papers and come ready with facts?

MR. SPEAKER : That will take away some other time of more important questions. If they want to put two or three more supplementaries, I can allow them. But they will not get better answers because the Ministers are new to the portfolio and they will have to study all the papers again.

SHRI BAL RAJ MADHOK : We have the problem of square pegs in round holds and round pegs in square holds. Is Parliament going to be treated like this?

MR. SPEAKER : Order, order. It is not proper if so many of you are standing at the same time and speak simultaneously. Mr. Krishnamoorthi.

SHRI V. KRISHNAMOORTHY : Before I put a question, I seek your advice. The Prime Minister has changed the portfolio just on the even of the Budget session. We have tabled our questions expecting a good answer. I do not think that even you are satisfied with the answers. You must pull up the Prime Minister... (*Interruptions*).

The road transport wing of the Government of India has been irresponsible throughout and I shall cite an example. The Government of India requested the Madras Government to take up the east coast road during 1956. On the advice of the Government of India, the Madras Government had taken it up for execution and it was partially executed. But then they turned down our request for financial assistance and the road is still incomplete and the expenses incurred by the Government of Madras had not been met. Funds are allocated according to the whims and fancies of the Ministers who are in power at that time. Is it proper? Will the Minister of Transport look into this and reconsider the entire issue of reallocation of funds?

SHRI RAGHU RAMAIAH : May I say that I am giving as complete an answer as is necessary for the question. The question related to the allocation for 1968-69. I have given that. Now we were asked whether any complaint

had been received or request had been received for more allocation. We have said: yes that is under consideration. Then they asked for the allocation for 1969-70. That is a matter for the budget which I cannot disclose now. It is not true that Minister allocate fund according to their whims and fancies. They have made a charge against the Ministers. I really wish that ministers were so powerful. We are working in a democratic pattern under the vigilance of this House and we cannot do things we like. There is a committee, high level committee consisting of the Director General as chairman and five State Chief Engineers and the Chief Engineer (roads wing) and it had been set up to find out suitable criteria for the maintenance and allocation of funds for the highways and we go according to policy decision. It is not a matter of whim or fancy.

SHRI CHENGALRAYA NAIDU : There are some big States with many miles of national highway; there are some States having only a few miles. The allocations made so far by the Government is not in proportion to the mileage in each State. Will the Government consider making allocations according to the mileage of national highways in each State and not according to the size of the States? The Andhra Government had already represented to the Government about the allocations of funds on the basis of mileage in each State.

SHRI RAGHU RAMAIAH : Apart from mileage, there are other considerations such as traffic, etc. They have classified national highways on the basis of certain criteria. They have divided the country into four zones on the basis of the cost of labour prevailing in that part. Various other criteria are also laid down, not merely mileage.

श्री शिवचरण लाल : मंत्री महोदय ने कहा है कि पांच प्रांतों को अनुदान देने का सवाल है। उत्तर प्रदेश का एक ऐसा भी जिला है जिसको देखने के लिये विदेशों से लोग जाते हैं। ताजमहल जो आगरा में है

उसको देखने के लिये न केवल भारतीय बल्कि विदेशी लोग भी जाते हैं। आगरा जाने वाला जो राजमार्ग है क्या सरकार उसकी तरफ भी ध्यान देगी? फिर आगरे में सड़कें बहुत गंदी और खराब हालत में हैं। एक जमाना था जब आगरा मुगलों की राजधानी थी। जो नेशनल हाईवे आगरा को जाता है, क्या सरकार उसकी मरम्मत कराने की तरफ भी ध्यान देगी? क्या उसका नव निर्माण करायेगी? इतनी गंदी सड़कों को देखकर न केवल आगरा का बल्कि भारत का मस्तक भी नीचा होता है। या तो आगरा की यात्रा को बन्द कर दिया जाय ताकि विदेशी उसको देखने के लिये ही न जायें, या फिर सड़कों की जो खराब हालत है उसको ठीक कराया जाए।

श्री इकबाल सिंह : जहां तक नेशनल हाइवे का सम्बन्ध है, यहां से जो सड़क आगरे को जाती है, वह बहुत अच्छी सड़क है। जहां तक शहर में सड़कों की हालत का सम्बन्ध है, यह या तो म्यूनिसिपल कमेटी का काम है या कारपोरेशन का काम है, कि वह उनकी मरम्मत कराये और आनरेबल मੈम्बर को उनको कहना चाहिये।

SARI SHEO NARAIN : When you were Transport Minister, Sir, you and the Prime Minister went to Faizabad. I can show you that great road-Ramjanki Road. (*Interruptions*).

शेर शाह सूरी ने पांच बरस में इस देश की सारी सड़कों को ठीक करवा दिया था। देश की उन्नति के लिए मीज आफ कम्युनिकेशज का होना बहुत जरूरी है। आपने नेशनल हाइवे बनाने के काम को बन्द कर दिया है। क्या आप यह नहीं समझते हैं कि इस काम को शुरू करके सड़कों को बनाया जाना चाहिये? कब तक आप इसको बंद रखेंगे। हमारे जिले में हाइवे को बनाने का काम पोस्टपोन आपने कर रखा है। आपका डिपार्टमेंट क्या कर रहा है, आपके इंजी-

नियर क्या कर रहे हैं कम से कम आप शेर शाह सूरी ने जो किया था, वह तो करें।

श्री इकबाल सिंह : शिव नारायण जी की राय बहुत अच्छी है। सरकार जरूर इस पर गौर करेगी।

श्री सरजू पाण्डेय : स्टेटमेंट को देखने से मालूम होता है कि उत्तर प्रदेश को 65 लाख रुपया दिया गया है। मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि राज्य सरकार ने केन्द्र से कितने रुपये की मांग की थी? क्या 65 लाख रुपया उत्तर प्रदेश से बड़े प्रान्त के लिए बहुत कम नहीं है?

दूसरा मेरा सवाल यह है कि बिहार और उत्तर प्रदेश को मिलाने के लिए क्या कोई नैशनल हाइवे बनाने की योजना सरकार के विचाराधीन है या नहीं है?

श्री इकबाल सिंह : जो क्राइटीरिया है उसी के मुताबिक उत्तर प्रदेश को रुपया दिया गया है। अगर वह रुपया कम है तो और दे दिया जायगा।

जहां तक उत्तर प्रदेश और बिहार को मिलाने की बात है, माननीय सदस्य जानते हैं कि कलकत्ता से जो सड़क जाती है वह भी उत्तर प्रदेश और बिहार को मिलाती है और जो लेटल रोड है वह भी उत्तर प्रदेश और बिहार को मिलाती है।

SHRI TENNETI VISHWANATHAM: The Minister said that money is allotted according to the traffic and certain other considerations. May I know the minimum and maximum per mile for maintenance and whether maintenance includes widening of roads or there is a separate grant for that? If it is according to traffic, would they consider converting some roads in each State where the traffic is very high into National Highways?

SHRI IQBAL SINGH : Previously it used to be Rs. 3,000. We are increasing it to Rs. 5,500 Rs. 11,000 per mile for single lane and Rs. 6,500—Rs. 16,000 per mile for double lane highways. Widening of roads is separate; it is not included in this.

Flood Relief Machinery in Orissa

*212. **SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI :** Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Orissa Government have furnished the information regarding the factual position on the setting up of the machinery envisaged in the Emergency Relief Organisation Scheme and the extent to which such machinery was utilised during the recent floods and cyclones in Orissa in October and November, 1968 ;

(b) if so, the details thereof ;

(c) whether it is a fact that the steps taken to reach the distressed people were quite inadequate ; and

(d) if so, the measures contemplated to set up an adequate machinery ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI K.S. RAMASWAMY) : (a) to (d). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b). The State Government have intimated that they have not yet finalised the State plan of operation as envisaged in the Emergency Relief Organisation Scheme. However, since 1965-66, the administrative machinery has been strengthened at various levels to cope with sudden natural calamities. The Board of Revenue, Revenue Divisional Commissioners, Heads of Departments, District administration and Block administration are assigned specific roles in implementation of relief measures.

A State Relief and Civil Supplies Advisory Committee has been set up to advise the State Government on important aspects of relief operations at State level. The Committee is presided over by the Chief Minister. The Deputy Chief Minister, Revenue and other Ministers, some representatives of various political parties and senior officers are its members. Besides, Relief Committees are functioning at district level. The District Committees are headed by District Collectors. Members of Parliament and Members of Legislative Assembly and Sub-Divisional