

that is so, if legally our stand is correct, what is the difficulty in the way of enforcing it?

Shri Hathi: We have read the proceedings and the discussions that took place at the conference referred to by the hon. Member. Here is a question of the World Bank using its good offices in arriving at an immediate settlement.

Some Hon. Members rose—

Mr. Speaker: I have allowed a number of questions. Negotiations are going on.

Shri Raghunath Singh: I want to put one very important question. Considering the fact that the new Pakistan Government have refused to accept the 1948 agreement, what is the proposal now?

Shri Hathi: But still they are a party to the negotiations and they are taking part in the discussions.

Shri Raghunath Singh: Are they going to accept the award? Has there been any understanding to that effect?

Shri Hathi: There is some misunderstanding. There is no question of arbitration and any award being given. The World Bank is only using its good offices.

Some Hon. Members rose—

Mr. Speaker: I do not want to shut out any supplementary question. We are all anxious to hear about it, but the hon. Deputy Minister has just said that negotiations are going on. I have heard all the questions and we are not advancing this cause to any extent. As soon as the negotiations are concluded, I will give an opportunity.

Shri Hem Barua: One important question.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members might have a half-an-hour discussion. Let us see. Next question.

Alternate Assam Rail Link

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•728. { **Shri Barman:**
Shri Subodh Hansda:
Shri S. C. Samanta:

Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to refer to the reply given to Starred Question No. 679 on the 28th August, 1958 and state:

(a) the progress of survey of the alternate Assam Rail Link;

(b) estimates of costs for the completion of the project; and

(c) the names of places where stations are proposed to be located?

The Deputy Minister of Railways (Shri S. V. Ramaswamy): (a) Survey has been completed and the report is being finalised by the Railway Administration.

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

Shri Barman: In connection with the survey of the alternate link some Members of West Bengal and Assam suggested another line and the hon. Minister of Railways agreed that both the routes will be surveyed. Do I understand that the route suggested by the Members of Assam and West Bengal will not be surveyed?

Shri S. V. Ramaswamy: All suggestions have been considered. There are three alternate proposals of which one has been preferred. We have referred it to the State Governments for the location of the stations. We are awaiting the reply of the State Government. Then we will take further action.

Shri Shree Narayan Das: May I know the mileage that will be covered by the alternate route?

Shri S. V. Ramaswamy: I am sorry I do not have the mileage.

Shri Subodh Hansda: May I know the number of bridges that are proposed to be constructed on this line?

Shri S. V. Ramaswamy: I do not have the details of that either.

Shri S. C. Samanta: Is it not a fact that the proposal of the Members from West Bengal and Assam to the Railway Board about the alternate route, if it is implemented, the line will pass through Cooch-Bihar, a former native State?

Shri S. V. Ramaswamy: It comes very near to Cooch-Bihar

Shri P. C. Borooah: May I know when the work is likely to be completed?

Shri S. V. Ramaswamy: The preliminary survey is just completed. We have referred the matter to the State Governments. The moment the State Government replies we have to start work. It will take some time.

Shri Hem Barua: May I know whether the proposed alternate line is over and above the stabilisation scheme undertaken for the existing link and, if so, to what extent is it likely to affect the load capacity of the lines?

Shri S. V. Ramaswamy: The line which is proposed to be laid is between Domohani and Alpur Dowal. That line avoids the mountainous regions along which the present line is laid. That is in addition to the stabilisation scheme.

Shri Hem Barua: What is the load capacity?

Shri S. V. Ramaswamy: I do not have the figure.

Shri Halder: May I know whether the Assam Railway will be connected with Tripura State, which is not connected with Railways now?

Shri S. V. Ramaswamy: That is a different question altogether.

Shri S. C. Samanta: Is it not a fact that the river Teesta is subject to occasional heavy floods and so breaches take place? If so, why did Government not consider the alternate proposal so that the bridges on Teesta can be avoided, if constructed?

Shri S. V. Ramaswamy: The river Teesta is not the only river. There are umpteen rivers there—Dhans, Teesta, Toras and many others. We are trying to avoid the sub-mountainous regions and bringing it further south so that these bridges may not be exposed to heavy flood water. The whole thing has been gone into by experts, who have studied it, and then they have made the proposal.

Rabi Crop Prospects

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729. { **Shri Harish Chandra Mathur:**
Shri Supakar:

Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state

(a) what are the prospects of the Rabi Crop in the country; and

(b) to what extent this will affect our import of foodgrains?

The Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri A. M. Thomas): (a) and (b) It is too early yet to make a forecast about the prospects of the next Rabi Crop and its possible effect on our programme for the import of foodgrains.

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur: May I know if the Government can give us any idea whatsoever about the prospects of rabi crops and whether the Government's proposal to store two million tons of rice is only in the thin air or it has any connection with their assessment of the rabi crops?

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri A. F. Jain): The storage of rice has no bearing on the rabi crops.

Shri Supakar: My original question related to the reports about kharif crops for the current year, and this question is about rabi crops. I just want to know if Government have received reports from the States regarding the kharif crops of this year and, if so, having regard to the good crops in most States, will there be any cut in the import of foodgrains from abroad?