

Shri Thirumala Rao: May I know what is the total deficit of rice claimed by the Kerala Government for the Year 1958-59, what is the proportion of it that has to be got from the southern zone by the Kerala Government, and what is the proportion that the Central Government has agreed to supply?

Shri A. P. Jain: More or less, I have answered all those questions. They estimate their deficit to be between 6 lakh tons and 7 lakh tons. We think that it is an exaggeration. Now, if there is any unforeseen difficulty the Central Government will go to their assistance, otherwise both the Kerala Government and the Kerala Merchants will buy in the southern market.

Shri Punnoose: Is it not a fact that Kerala is the most deficit State in the southern zone? When the Centre purchases 4 lakh tons from Andhra, is it not proper that Kerala is given priority in the matter of supply of rice?

Mr. Speaker: He has answered that I put it straight instead of allowing any kind of doubt regarding this matter, whether the purchase of rice by the Centre would affect adversely the purchase by Kerala.

Shri Punnoose: That is not my point. The Centre is purchasing 4 lakh tons from Andhra. Kerala is the most deficit State in the southern zone. I am only asking whether the request of Kerala Government that they may be supplied rice from these 4 lakh tons is not proper.

Mr. Speaker: He says that besides these 4 lakh tons there is enough of rice which can be purchased by Kerala Government.

Shri Yajnik: Is it a fact that Kerala Government is paying a bigger price for the quantity of rice bought from Andhra State than the price fixed by the Government of India and the price at which the Government of India is

buying rice from the Andhra State? The question of price is most important. You can buy anything anywhere but then you buy dearer if you are not properly authorised and you are not properly given convenience to do so.

Shri A. P. Jain: At one time the allegation was that the Kerala Government had paid a higher price than what the Central Government was paying. This hon. House is aware that a judge of the High Court was appointed to investigate as to what were the reasons for doing that. My present information is that the Kerala Government is buying within the controlled rates.

Road Bridge on Rupnarain River

53 { Shri S. C. Samanta.
Shri Subodh Hansda

Will the Minister of Transport and Communications be pleased to refer to the reply given to Starred Question No 584 on the 4th December, 1958 and state

(a) whether tenders for the construction of a Road Bridge on the Rupnarain River (Highway No 6) have been called, examined and final contract given,

(b) whether any interim arrangement for crossing the river has been made, and

(c) how long model experiments were done in the Central Water and Power Research Station, Poona, for selecting the site of the Bridge?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur). (a) Fresh tenders were called and have been recently received by Public Works Department, Bengal for an alternative R C C design which will not involve Foreign Exchange. Final contract will be given after the tenders have been examined.

(b) Yes. A passenger ferry service operates at the crossing and an estimate for converting it into a power ferry service for carrying loaded vehicles besides passengers has been sanctioned. The power ferry ghat is under construction.

(c) No model experiments were carried out in the Central Water and Power Research Station, Poona as the same were not considered necessary. However, the opinion of the Director, Central Water and Power Research Station, Poona regarding the selection of the site was sought and he agreed with the proposal.

Shri S. C. Samanta: Before Government took the decision to construct this bridge may I know whether Government thought of the rail-cum-road bridge and, if so, whether the Railway was consulted in the matter?

Shri Raj Bahadur: The Railway Ministry has usually been consulted. The present site which has been approved now is half a mile upstream of the existing railway bridge.

Shri S. C. Samanta: This bridge is being constructed to have a link from Calcutta to Bombay by the National Highway. May I know when this decision was taken and why so much delay is taking place?

Shri Raj Bahadur: The decision was taken in 1956. To begin with tenders were invited on the basis and design of construction using pre-stressed concrete which involved expenditure of foreign exchange to the tune of Rs 6 lakhs. So, they were asked, in order to economise on the expenditure of foreign exchange, to alter the design which was done and hence some time was taken.

Shri Subodh Hansda: The hon. Minister has just now stated that the power ferry is under construction. May I know when this will be introduced?

Shri Raj Bahadur: As soon as the jetties are ready and the State Government have acquired the necessary equipment, the power ferry should be in operation.

Shri Subodh Hansda: May I know whether the approach roads to the bridge have been constructed?

Shri Raj Bahadur: I cannot exactly say whether the approach roads have been built or not.

Shri S. C. Samanta: The railway bridge that is nearby was under danger so to say, some twenty-two years back and the Poona Research Station carried research on it. May I know whether the result of that research has been taken into consideration?

Shri Raj Bahadur: As I have just now indicated in reply to the main question, the Chairman of the Water Research Station, Poona, has been consulted in regard to the present site. It is only after that consultation that the present site has been approved.

Shri B. K. Galkwad: What is the estimated cost of the road bridge on Rupmat river?

Shri Raj Bahadur: Rs 1,12,21,500

Surface Drainage

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*54. { **Shri R. C. Majhi.**
Shri Subodh Hansda

Will the Minister of Irrigation and Power be pleased to state

(a) whether there is a proposal to finance surface drainage improvement works out of the funds available for flood control, and

(b) if so, whether the Central Flood Control Board has approved it?

The Deputy Minister of Irrigation and Power (Shri Hathi): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.