

(b) whether it is a fact that during rains vehicular traffic remains suspended for more than six months at this point, because even boats cannot take the vehicles across; and

(c) if so, the reasons for not taking steps to restore the bridge and the communications?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur): (a) The bridges across the Sil Torsa and Char Torsa were washed away in 1952 and 1954 respectively.

(b) If the flood in the Torsa river is not too high but the water is deep enough for a ferry to ply, communication is maintained during the monsoons by ferries at this site; otherwise an alternative route *via* Matabhanga is used by road traffic. This alternative route makes use of the Railway bridge over the Torsa, which has been decked for road traffic.

(c) The question of constructing permanent bridges over Sil Torsa and Char Torsa rivers is under consideration.

Shri Barman: Is it not a fact that the alternative route which the hon. Minister has just now mentioned, that is, *via* Matabhanga is only a kutchra road and has as yet not been metalled? May I know whether the construction of this bridge over the Torsa has been entrusted to any expert body like the River Research Institute at Poona or any other research station so that the engineers may find out how this bridge could be constructed, which we could not do so so long?

Shri Raj Bahadur: It is true that the arrangement *via* Matabhanga railway bridge is only a make-shift arrangement. That is why we propose to have a pucca bridge there. The hon. Member is very well aware that the changing course of the river has defied so far the engineering experts. A site was selected as far back at 1951; designs were completed by about 1953; just when the designs were sanc-

tioned, a big flood came and the entire site which was selected was found to be absolutely unsuitable for the construction of the bridge. Ever since then, the engineers are again trying to fix up a site, and there is close collaboration in this matter between the experts available in the Central Water and Power Commission and the State Governments.

Shri S. C. Samanta: May I know whether there is any difference of opinion amongst the expert engineers, as a result of which this work is not being taken up soon?

Shri Raj Bahadur: There may be difference of opinion, because it is a difficult engineering problem. But I cannot say that the work is being delayed only on account of that.

Shri Barman: May I know why this task was not entrusted to the River Research Institute so that they could find out a solution? That is my definite question.

Shri Raj Bahadur: We shall bear that in mind. I think they are also in consultation with each other.

Road and Inland Water Transport Committee

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*338 { **Shri Subodh Hansda:**
Shri S. C. Samanta:

Will the Minister of **Transport and Communications** be pleased to state:

(a) whether the recommendations made by the Road and Inland Water Transport Advisory Committee have been implemented by Government; and

(b) if not, the reasons therefor?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur): (a) and (b). The recommendations made by the Road and Inland Water Transport Advisory Committee mostly concern State Governments and the question of their implementation has been taken up with them. Some of the recommendations with which the Cen-

tral Government are concerned have been implemented and steps are already being taken to implement the remaining recommendations.

Shri Subodh Hansda: May I know the important recommendations that concern the Central Government?

Shri Raj Bahadur: I shall lay it on the Table, because it will be a long statement. But if so desired....

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The statement would be laid on the Table of the House.

Shri Assar: Has the committee recommended the linking up of all the rivers from north to south in the country by canals so as to increase waterways, and if so, what is the reaction of Government thereto?

Shri Raj Bahadur: Such recommendations have been received from time to time, but I do not know whether this particular committee has made such a recommendation; I do not think it has. I think, in the present circumstances, particularly in view of financial difficulties, we shall not be able to link up the northern rivers with the southern rivers.

Shri S. C. Samanta: May I know whether these recommendations were scrutinised by the Central Government, and special references were made to the State Governments?

Shri Raj Bahadur: Yes, that is a fact.

Shri Subodh Hansda: The hon. Minister has stated that some of the recommendations concern the State Governments. May I know whether Government have any information as to whether the States have implemented all the recommendations?

Shri Raj Bahadur: The implementation of the recommendations has, of course, been recommended to the State Governments, and we are trying to follow up these recommendations with them.

Shri Ramanathan Chettiar: Is it a fact that one of the recommendations of this Committee is that the Buckingham Canal should not be improved and only a test should be conducted?

Shri Raj Bahadur: I think the hon. Member is confusing this Committee which is the Road and Inland Water Transport Advisory Committee with the Inland Water Transport Committee.

Replacement of Dakota Aircrafts of Indian Airlines Corporation

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*339. { **Shri Ajit Singh Sarhadi:**
Shrimati Ila Palchoudhuri:
Shri Narayanankutty Menon:
Shri Punnoose:
Shri Sarju Pandey:
Shri Raghunath Singh:
Dr. Ram Subhag Singh:
Shri A. K. Gopalan:
Shri Tangamani:
Shri Dinesh Singh:

Will the Minister of Transport and Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a proposal to replace the Dakota aircrafts of the Indian Airlines Corporation;

(b) if so, the details of the aircrafts proposed to be purchased this year;

(c) whether there would be global tenders for this purpose;

(d) whether any negotiations have been conducted with Lockheed Corporation of U.S.A.; and

(e) if so, the result thereof?

The Deputy Minister of Civil Aviation (Shri Mohiuddin): (a) and (b). No decision has yet been taken regarding the type of aircraft to replace the Indian Airlines Corporation's Dakotas. The Indian Airlines Corporation have, to meet their interim requirements, submitted a proposal for the purchase of five Fokker Friendship aircraft during the Second Plan period. This proposal is under consideration.