

**Shri Nath Pal:** In view of the fact that the Chief Mechanical Engineer of the British Transport Commission has stated that though the initial cost of manufacturing such a coach will be higher than the conventional one, the overall maintenance cost and the cost of fuel will be much smaller and in the long run it will prove more economical, is the Government planning to give any thought to the desirability of pursuing it?

**Shri Shahnawaz Khan:** We will wait till the U.K. have built a plastic coach and experimented with it; we will then consider it.

#### Deepening of Palk Straits

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\*731. { **Shri Yadav Narayan Jadhav:**  
      { **Shri Bishwanath Roy:**  
      { **Shri Subbiah Ambalam:**

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

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to deepen the Palk Straits to avoid circumnavigating Ceylon as at present;

(b) if so, what are the details of the plan; and

(c) whether they propose to include this proposal in the Third Five Year Plan?

**The Minister of Transport and Communications (Dr. P. Subbarayan):** (a) to (c). A proposal to cut a ship canal to connect the Palk Strait with the Gulf of Mannar is under examination. It is necessary to conduct hydrographic surveys and other investigations in the area to arrive at the correct cost of such a project. A provision of Rs. 16 lakhs has been included in the Third Plan for these investigations.

**Shri Yadav Narayan Jadhav:** May I know when the work is likely to be taken up?

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** The Navy has got to supply the hydrographic surveyors; I think they will be there shortly.

**Shri T. B. Vittal Rao:** The hydrographic survey has been going on

since 1956 following the report of the Ramaswamy Mudaliar Committee. May I know to what extent this survey has progressed?

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** I am sure the hon. gentleman knows that I had to get back Captain Davis again to find out how he has estimated below what was provided by the people who estimated it again. He said that he would see whether it was a coral rock or hard rock and whether the cost might go up. That investigation has got to go on.

**Shri T. B. Vittal Rao:** My question was this. The Hydrographic survey was undertaken by the Indian Navy and it was in progress. How far has it progressed? Am I to understand that the hydrographic survey was not at all undertaken?

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** It was undertaken at that time but a new survey is being made.

**Shri Tangamani:** Is it not a fact that the scheme known as the Sethusamudhram scheme was investigated by the Ramaswamy Mudaliar committee and it has also given the details about these things which will reduce the distance and avoid going round Ceylon for the coastal ships? May we know whether it has given the details of the hydrographic survey?

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** The nature of the rock has got to be found out and the estimated cost will then follow according to the finding whether it is a coral rock or hard rock.

#### Irrigation Revenues of D.V.C.

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\*732. { **Shri Ram Krishan Gupta:**  
      { **Shri Chund Lal:**

Will the Minister of Irrigation and Power be pleased to refer to the reply given to Starred Question No. 693 on the 9th March, 1961 and state the decision taken by West Bengal Government regarding payment of irrigation revenues of D.V.C.?