

Shri A. K. Gopalan : May I know when the other incomplete portion will be completed? In how many months will it be done?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh : The scheme is proceeding and as the work is done, whatever we have promised to give will be given.

Shri Achuthan : May I know whether the works are spread throughout the districts? If so, what are the major works in each district and what is the present strength of the labour force employed?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh : I have no exact information about the persons employed. But, so far, altogether 58,640 people were employed. For the year 1956-57, 2,069 people were employed. So far as the work being spread to each district is concerned, it is the concern of the State Government.

Shri L. N. Mishra : May I know whether the Government of Australia have made some special offer for soil conservation, erosion and flood control measures and, if so, the nature of such offer.

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh : There's no such offer, to my knowledge. There are certain discussions going on about better use of water resources. But even there no final decision has yet been arrived at.

Shri Kasliwal : What are the measures taken by Government to prevent soil erosion? May I also know whether about the establishment of the soil conservation boards in various States, Government have received any complaint from any State that there is considerable lack of activity by the soil conservation board?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh : The activity and earnestness of each board certainly differ from board to board. There has been no complaint of the nature my friend has suggested. We have, however, found that some boards are active and others are yet to be fully activated.

Pandit D. N. Tiwary : In view of the fact that soil erosion has become an all India question and there is soil erosion in every State for instance, by Ganges in Bihar—what steps have the Government taken to co-ordinate the plans for all the States so that soil erosion may be arrested?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh : I cannot say what co-ordinated plans we have undertaken in replies to a question. But we have certainly taken an all India view of all those places where soil erosion takes place. We have set up

certain research centres and certain other experimental demonstration centres all over India and we are trying to prevent every type of soil erosion, including river erosion.

Pandit D. N. Tiwary : How many centres are there in Bihar?

Mr. Speaker : We have enlarged this question. This relates only to Travancore Cochin. Mr. Gopalan, may put his question.

Shri A. K. Gopalan : May I know whether any steps have been taken on the Malabar side and, if so, whether there have been any reports about them?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh : I cannot specifically refer to what exactly is being done. But we are taking care of every kind of soil erosion.

Banihal Tunnel

*957. **Shri Krishnacharya Joshi :** Will the Minister of Transport be pleased to state:

(a) the progress of work on the Banihal Tunnel Project during 1956 so far; and

(b) the amount spent so far on its construction?

The Deputy Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Alagesan) : (a) A statement is laid on the Table of the Lok Sabha. [See Appendix VI, annexure No. 2].

(b) Rs. 53.59 lakhs upto June, 1956.

Shri Krishnacharya Joshi : May I know when these tunnels will be completed.

Shri Alagesan : It was programmed to complete the first tube by November 1956 and the entire work by April 1958. Now, on account of certain special difficulties encountered, these dates may have to be put off.

Shri Krishnacharya Joshi : May I know what is the estimated cost of construction of this tunnel?

Shri Alagesan : About three crores of rupees.

Pandit Fotedar : May I know whether the Government have any assessment of the probable date when the tunnel will be thrown open to traffic?

Shri Alagesan : As per present position, it is expected that the first tube will be available for traffic by about the end of December. But I am not very sure about it.

Pandit Fotedar : Is it a fact that the previous assessment of the Government was that the tunnel would be thrown open to the traffic in the month of November 1956?

Shri Alagesan: I said so.

Shri S. V. Ramaswamy: What are the special difficulties which they could not anticipate when the scheme was launched upon?

Shri Alagesan: They came to light later on as they went on driving the pilot tube. The rock was found to be softer than what was assumed. It was originally assessed that it would be enough if we lined the tunnel for about half the length with cement. Now it looks as if the whole tunnel has to be lined. And the old tunnel which was functioning gave way and the contractor's staff and officers had to be diverted to set right the old tunnel. That also put off the progress of the work of the new tunnel.

श्रेष्ठ प्रबल सिंह : सरकार इस टनल पर इतना खर्चा कर रही है, लेकिन क्या उस को इस टनल से कुछ इनकम भी होगी या नहीं ?

रेलवे तथा परिवहन मंत्री (श्री लाल बहादुर शास्त्री) : अभी तो खर्च ही हो रहा है। आमदनी का सवाल बाद में आयागा।

Shri Kamath : Has the Minister's attention been drawn to certain reports that the serious damage which occurred to parts of the tunnel, resulting in the virtual collapse of certain parts, might have been the work of certain saboteurs and anti-Indian elements operating in the State of Jammu and Kashmir?

Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri: I do not know whether the hon. Member is referring to the old tunnel.

Shri Kamath : Old tunnel.

Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri : There is no basis for making that type of assumption.

Shri Kamath : Was there any damage to the new tunnel?

Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri: No. Not yet.

Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad : Would the difficulties, apart from taking the original schedule of time to further ahead, in any way contribute or lead to increase in the original estimate also?

Shri Alagesan: I am not able to say. It may not lead to any increase.

Bengal Provincial Railway Company

*999. **Shri Tushar Chatterjee:** Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether any representation has been received by Government from the public of Dasghara to the effect that as a result of abolition of Bengal Provincial Railway Company of West Bengal, public of that area are in great distress and that Government should intervene to continue running of the Railway in that area till some alternative transport arrangement is made; and

(b) if so, the steps Government have taken or propose to take in the matter?

The Deputy Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Alagesan): (a) No representation has been received from the public of Dasghara. A representation was, however, received in March last from the public of Magraganj but it was considered that road services could adequately meet the needs of transport in that area.

(b) Does not arise in view of the answer to (a) above.

Shri Tushar Chatterjee : Has the Government made any enquiry into the question that there is no road from Dasghara to Magraganj? That was the only link connecting them.

Shri Alagesan: This is a matter in which we have been in close consultation with the State Government. The State Government also extended some financial assistance for the activities of this Company. Now the Company has gone into voluntary liquidation. There is a road available and buses are plying on the road. That is our information.

Shri Tushar Chatterjee: In view of the fact that in connection with this Railway, the Railway Minister promised several times in this House that the railways would not be closed without any alternative transport and in view of the fact that there is no transport now, how is it that Government has not intervened in the matter?

The Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri): I have never said like that—that these railways will never be closed, No. 1, it is a private company. I cannot compel them to function all the time. If they cannot work the railways, well, they have to close it down. No. (2), there is already a road and (3) some subsidiary roads are being built by the West Bengal Government and the Centre is giving them adequate financial assistance.

Shri Tushar Chatterjee: There is some misrepresentation. I say that the Railway Minister promised that this railway would not be closed without making any