

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : The new Minister is absolutely oblivious of the fact that complaints were made about the fate of very valuable books,—four hundred volumes—

MR. SPEAKER : Come out with a very brief, concise question; no introduction.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : May I know whether it is a fact that the police verification showed that 400 volumes of very valuable books from the reading room collection were stolen during the period from June, 1963 to June 1964, and whether it is a fact that since 1948 many other valuable books and documents have been stolen and whether it is a fact that the Jha Committee said that in the case of the theft of one book, an immediate enquiry should be instituted and whether the police and audit were kept completely dark about these thefts?

SHRI D. P. YADAVA : The Jha Committee was set up in which Prof. Hiren Mukerjee was also a member. This committee went into these details and submitted a report, in which they have said that they learn from evidence that many of the books are missing from the library. They could not ascertain how many books were missing. About those 400 volumes, at present, I am not in a position to answer. I required notice.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : Were the police and audit kept in the dark about the thefts?

SHRI D. P. YADAVA : Firstly, we must have an authentic report of the number of books stolen. For that, as recommended by the Jha Committee, extra staff numbering about 22 have been already sanctioned.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : May I know whether it is a fact that the Deputy Librarian, Mr. Chittaranjan Banerjee, who has been described by eminent scholars as a living bibliography and a man of great erudition, brought this fact before the reviewing committee and because of that, he was penalised and he has been demoted? Is it a fact that on 1st July 1970, a memorandum signed by 22 eminent scholars, Vice-Chancellors and National Professors was addressed to Dr. V.K.R.V.RAO, demanding that the injustice done to the Deputy Librarian should be removed? If so, what steps have Government taken about it?

SHRI D. P. YADAVA : The Deputy Librarian, Mr. Banerjee, has not been demoted. He has been placed in charge of the Central Reference Library, which is definitely a good post.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : What about the memorandum?

MR. SPEAKER : That is a separate question. You should give separate notice of it.

SHRI D. P. YADAVA : So far as erudition and scholarship of Mr. Banerjee is concerned, very soon we are going to have the post of Director of the National Library advertised. Should he compete, he will come in.

Construction of a Bridge over River Beas

*732. **SHRI PRABHODH CHANDRA :** Will the Minister of SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether there was a proposal to construct a bridge over river Beas at Sri Hargobindpur some years back and necessary estimates were prepared; and

(b) whether this proposal has since been dropped or Government intend going ahead with the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS, AND SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJ BAHADUR): (a) and (b). The Punjab Government are primarily concerned with the proposed bridge as it would fall on a State road. In 1970, they asked for Central loan assistance for this and some other road and bridge schemes in the State. No detailed estimate was however received from the State Government. It has not been possible to provide any loan for the bridge in question.

SHRI PRABODH CHANDRA : Is it a fact or not that the Defence Ministry also wanted to build a bridge on Beas?

SHRI RAJ BAHADUR : It is not a fact. On the other hand, he will appreciate that sometimes absence of a bridge also is a part of the defence mechanism.