

Mr. Speaker: He says it is purely on merit. So far as the scholarship is concerned, there is no question of reservation.

KANDALA PORT

***1363. Shri Boovaraghasamy:** Will the Minister of Transport be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are giving advance payment to the contractors for the construction of Kandala Port; and

(b) if so, how much and on what conditions?

The Deputy Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Alagesan): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Advance totalling Rs. 78,14,500 on the conditions prescribed in the contract plus special advances up to a ceiling of Rs. 11 lakhs for the procurement of steel recoverable through 15% deductions from the monthly "on account" bills.

Shri Boovaraghasamy: May I know if there is any clause in the original agreement to make advance payment to the contractor?

Shri Alagesan: When I answered the previous question it was dealt with adequately.

Mr. Speaker: That is what he said in the previous question.

Shri Boovaraghasamy: May I know whether Government made any effort to get a suitable contractor when they found that the original contractor was not financially fit?

Shri Alagesan: I had dealt with this also previously. There was a firm of contractors, and the partners of that firm did not get on well. So, one of the partners was allowed to drop out, and another German firm was taken in. The main point is that this work requires a good deal of experience. The Indian contractors, who were available did not have experience of this

kind of work, and so we had to choose a firm in which there were two German partners.

Mr. Speaker: Next question.

Shri P. C. Bose: May I know whether any advance is paid.....

Mr. Speaker: This has been answered in *extenso* already.

SCARCITY OF CEMENT AND TIN IN TRIPURA

***1365. Shri Dasaratha Deb:** Will the Minister of Transport be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that construction works have been stopped in Tripura State due to non-availability of cement and tin; and

(b) the steps Government propose to take in the matter?

The Deputy Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Alagesan): (a) not so far as road works are concerned.

(b) Does not arise.

Shri Dasaratha Deb: May I know whether Government have ascertained the exact requirements of tin and cement in Tripura, and whether the required quantity is being supplied to them?

Shri Alagesan: The concerned Ministry may be doing it. As far as we are concerned, there is not much of a difficulty for these articles. Also, we do not need them much.

Some Hon. Members: We could not hear the answer.

Mr. Speaker: So far as the first part of the question is concerned, the concerned Ministry must be asked. Regarding roads, they have not felt any difficulty so far as cement or any other material is concerned.

ASSAM-BENGAL RAIL LINK

***1366. Shri Amjad Ali:** Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) how much money has been spent in the protective work on the Assam-Bengal Railway link last year;