

- (5) Increased cost of Nangal Power Houses and stepping up substation equipment.

Purchase of Railway Sleepers from Burma

*822. { Shri Aurobindo Ghosal:
Shri P. C. Borooah:

Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether a team of Railway officials has been sent to Burma to negotiate an agreement for the supply of sleepers for Indian Railways;

(b) if so, whether the sleepers to be purchased are of special type;

(c) whether an agreement has since been entered into; and

(d) if so, what are the main terms of the agreement?

The Deputy Minister of Railways (Shri Shah Nawaz Khan): (a) to (c). Yes, Sir.

(d) About 7.19 lakh cft. of Bridge & Crossing timber and narrow gauge sleepers are to be supplied at rates ranging from Rs. 365.00 to Rs. 540.00 per cubic ton (50 cft.) F.O.B. Burmese ports. Payments are to be made in Indian Rupees in terms of the protocol to the 1956 Trade Agreement between India & Burmese Govt. signed on 25-9-1958.

Railway Employees in Hirakud Construction Area

*824. **Shrimati Renu Chakravartty:** Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that compensatory allowance admissible to all the Central Government employees working in the Hirakud construction area has not been paid to Railway employees working in the actual project area;

(b) whether the Railway staff working between Jharsuguda to Sambalpur stations have not received this allowance while Postal, Excise and other Central Government employees in these Stations are receiving the same; and

(c) if so, the reasons for withholding the allowance from March, 1956 to September, 1959?

The Deputy Minister of Railways (Shri S. V. Ramaswamy): (a) and (b). Railway staff working in the Hirakud Project area have been paid compensatory allowance; staff working between Jharsuguda to Sambalpur stations have not been paid this allowance.

(c) These stations are not within the Hirakud Project area proper.

National Highway System

*826. **Shri M. B. Thakore:** Will the Minister of Transport and Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether the President of the Indian Roads Congress at the annual session in Bhopal on 4th January, 1961 pointed out a number of deficiencies in our National Highway system;

(b) If so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the entire length of the National Highways is 15,000 miles as compared to Railway track of 3,500 miles and there is no bridge on them on an average of 187 miles; and

(d) if so, action proposed to be taken to improve the National Highway system?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur): (a) and (b). A statement giving the required information is laid on the Table of the Sabha. [See Appendix III, annexure No. 12].

(c) The present length of the National Highways is 14,880 miles. There are 80 unbridged crossings, each costing above Rs. 5 lakhs. Work on 47 bridges is in hand.