

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Member puts one question and asks supplementary on a different question. Originally, he only wanted to know about the financial aspect of the Rural Co-operative Structure and whether any new scheme is going to be introduced to revitalize the co-operative movement. That is all.

**Shri Raghbir Sahai:** May I know if any active steps have been taken to popularise this movement of rural co-operative structure in the country and to impart the requisite training to official and non-official personnel to run this movement?

**Shri B. S. Murthy:** Yes, Sir.

**Shri Raghbir Sahai:** What are those steps?

**Shri B. S. Murthy:** A number of steps have been taken to revitalize the existing service co-operative societies and also to organise new ones. Also, separate training programmes have been now perfected so that officials as well as non-official can be given training in co-operation.

**Shri R. Narayanasamy:** May I know whether lessons on co-operative movement are included in the textbooks of the students of elementary and high school cadre in order to inculcate the spirit of this movement in the young minds?

**Shri B. S. Murthy:** That is also under consideration of the Ministry.

**Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri:** From the statement I find that a programme of revitalising about 52,000 village societies has been approved during the Third Plan period. May I know the financial implications of this scheme of revitalisation and whether any capital assistance will also be given to these societies because most of these societies have become moribund for want of funds as they have exhausted all their money

**Shri B. S. Murthy:** A sum of Rs. 10.99 crores has been allocated for this purpose and for new societies.

**Shri Basappa:** May I know whether any final decision has been taken regarding the size of the rural societies, as far as participation by the Government in share capital is concerned?

**Shri B. S. Murthy:** The State capital participation is available for the service co-operation societies and it is considered that about 3,000 people will form one society.

**Shri Basappa:** As there is difference between the Planning Commission and the Ministry, I want to know exactly whether the opinions of the two coincide as to the viability of a society.

**Shri B. S. Murthy:** As far as my figures are concerned, they are figures agreed to both by the Planning Commission and by the Ministry of Co-operation.

**Pandit D. N. Tiwari:** A great drawback in spreading the co-operative movement is the long delay that takes place in the registration of these societies. What steps have been taken to eliminate this delay?

**Shri B. S. Murthy:** This matter was considered at the Ministers' Conference and all the State Governments have been requested that the procedural delays should be eliminated as far as possible.

#### West Bengal-Assam Highway

\*1559. **Shri N. R. Ghosh:** Will the Minister of Transport and Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the National Highway connecting West Bengal with Assam has been breached at several places and several bridges have been washed away in the Dooars, Jalpaiguri resulting in dislocation of traffic for about six months in the year;

(b) whether it is a fact that several representations have been made for restoring the disrupted line of communication which is very vital line of communication both for West Bengal and Assam; and

(c) if so, what action has been taken on the representation and when the washed away bridges will be constructed to restore the line of communication?

**The Minister of Transport and Communications (Dr. P. Subbarayan):** (a) Yes. There are two gaps on the portion of the National Highway No. 31 lying in Dooars area of Jalpaiguri District viz. Sil Torsa and Char Torsa, as a result of bridges having been washed away by the floods of 1950 and 1954 respectively. Temporary timber bridges are being built every year at these places and when these temporary bridges get out of commission during floods, the road link is maintained through ferry service run by the Government.

(b) and (c). Yes. Representations were received from the Indian Tea Association, the Indian Tea Planters' Association and the Secretary, Jalpaiguri Congress Committee and in reply they were informed of the investigations in progress from time to time and of the action proposed to be taken. For the construction of a permanent road bridge over the river Torsa, a bridge site at a distance of about 1,200 ft. downstream of the existing railway bridge at Hashimara has now been finally selected. Detailed estimate is under preparation by the West Bengal Public Works Department. The bridge is expected to take about three years to complete after the work is sanctioned and the same is awarded to a suitable contractor. An alternative route via Matabhanga exists which is also used by road traffic.

**Shri N. R. Ghosh:** As the bridge will take about three years to complete, will the Government consider the question of decking the railway bridge mentioned in the statement, that is, the bridge over the river Torsa at Hashimara at least till the road bridge is constructed?

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** This has been under consideration for a long time as the hon. Member says. But there have been difficulties of construction

etc., because first we thought of building it by the railway bridge, then we found that the site was not suitable. Then the Chief Engineer, Bengal, suggested another site which was considered. Even that was given up. A third site has now been suggested which is under examination.

**Shri N. R. Ghosh:** That is not my question. My question is this, viz. till the bridge is built, whether the Government will think of decking the existing railway bridge at Hashimara.

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** No. That matter was also considered and we found that it would not do.

**Shri N. R. Ghosh:** Will they also think of improving the temporary wooden bridges to lengthen their life so that they do not collapse at the first impact of the rains?

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** Every year these wooden bridges are rebuilt, but when the floods occur they are again washed away.

#### Statues of Mahatma Gandhi at Railway Stations

\*1562. **Shrimati Maimoona Sultan:** Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a scheme for installing bronze statues of Mahatma Gandhi at various Railway Stations; and

(b) if so, at how many stations and where?

**The Deputy Minister of Railways (Shri Shah Nawaz Khan):** (a) Yes. There is a proposal to instal marble statue of Mahatma Gandhi at some selected railway stations.

(b) No final decision regarding the stations where the statute is to be installed has yet been taken.

**Shrimati Maimoona Sultan:** In view of the fact that the statues of national leaders that we erect should strictly conform to appearance and should be of great artistry and skill, the Government should be very careful about