

**ESTIMATES COMMITTEE
(1971-72)**

(FIFTH LOK SABHA)

SIXTH REPORT

MINISTRY OF IRRIGATION AND POWER

[Action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the Hundred and Twenty-Fourth Report of the Estimates Committee (Fourth Lok Sabha) on the Ministry of Irrigation & Power—Farakka Barrage Project.]



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

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Corrigenda to Sixth Report of
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INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman of the Estimates Committee, having been authorised by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present this Sixth Report on action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the 124th Report of the Estimates Committee (Fourth Lok Sabha) on the Ministry of Irrigation and Power—Farakka Barrage Project.

2. The 124th Report of the Estimates Committee (Fourth Lok Sabha) was presented to the Lok Sabha on the 30th April, 1970. Replies indicating action taken on the various recommendations contained in the Report were furnished by Government on the 22nd October, 1970. The Study Group 'F' of the Estimates Committee (1970-71) considered the replies received from the Ministry on the 18th December, 1970 and approved the draft Report on the same day. The Report was subsequently adopted by the Committee (1971-72) on the 9th July, 1971.

3. The Report has been divided into the following Chapters:—

- I. Report;
- II. Recommendations that have been accepted by Government;
- III. Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's reply; and
- IV. Recommendations in respect of which reply of Government has not been accepted by the Committee;

4. An analysis of the action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the 124th Report of the Estimates Committee (Fourth Lok Sabha) is given in Appendix to this Report. It would be observed therefrom that out of 33 recommendations made in the said Report, 20 recommendations i.e., 60.6 per cent have been accepted by Government. The Committee do not desire to pursue 3 recommendations, i.e., 9.1 per cent. The replies of Government to 10 recommendations i.e., 30.3 per cent have not been accepted by the Committee.

KAMAL NATH TEWARI,
Chairman,
Estimates Committee.

NEW DELHI;
July 12, 1971.

Asadha 21, 1893 (Saka).

CHAPTER I

REPORT

The Estimates Committee in para 3.12 of their Hundred and Twenty-Fourth Report (Fourth Lok Sabha) felt that the inordinate delay in completion of the work by M/s. National Projects Construction Corporation had contributed to increase in the cost of Farakka Barrage. In view of the poor performance of M/s. National Projects Construction Corporation on the right bank of the Farakka Barrage, the Committee urged the Government to go into the matter of allotment of work on the 1-12 days of the Farakka Barrage to M/s. National Projects Construction Corporation on the cost plus basis. The Ministry of Irrigation and Power in their reply have stated that the work on the Farakka Barrage had to be started in 1963-64 from important national considerations but the detailed specifications and schedule were not then ready, necessary details required to be provided in the tender to enable bidding were not available; there was also uncertainty of transport and other arrangements. The Ministry have added that they also did not have experience in the method of construction and the type of equipment required for this complex barrage construction. The Ministry, therefore, considered expedient to entrust construction work on the right bank up to the divide wall (which formed one unit) to M/s. National Projects Construction Corporation by negotiation on cost plus basis.

2. The Committee are not convinced with the reply of the Government. Since the project was to be completed at an early date the Government should have taken all care to see that the specifications, knowhow, transport etc. should have been arranged at an early date. The National Projects Construction Corporation having taken over the responsibility of constructing the project within the target date, the Committee are of the view that there was no justification for extension of target date from June, 1965 to June, 1969. They feel that the delay for completion of this project has resulted in tremendous losses to the national exchequer.

3. In para 3.24 of the Report the Committee noted with concern that the work on the Feeder Canal could not be completed *inter alia* due to the failure of the contractor. The Committee urged that the Government should take appropriate action against the

contractor for failure to complete his contract so that the Government was not put to any loss. The Ministry in their reply have stated that the contract has since been terminated. There were indications that if the contract was terminated with the imposition of penalty, it would lead to litigation which would have further impeded the progress of work. The Farakka Barrage Control Board, taking into account the tight schedule of the project and the fact that delays in completion of the work would put off the benefits accruing from the project, apart from the financial loss due to blocked up capital, decided to terminate the contract without imposing any penalty. The Ministry have informed that this decision of the Control Board was implemented in consultation with the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Law.

4. The reply of the Government that the termination of the contract without any penalty on the ground that it would rather create further delay is not convincing. The Committee consider that if the contractors in the public works were to be let off on the ground that it is likely to lead to litigation, this would set an extremely bad example. The Committee note with regret that this action of not imposing any penalty has found concurrence with the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Law. The Committee would like to know why any action was not taken against the contractor after the contract was terminated and whether any action could even now be taken against the contractor for non-fulfilment of his responsibility departmentally or otherwise. ..

5. In para 3.25 of the Report the Committee noted that the targets fixed for excavation of the Feeder Canal could not be achieved except during the years 1963-64 and 1966-67. The Committee felt that unless the work on the Feeder Canal was completed before the Farakka Barrage was completed, the objective of the whole project would remain unfulfilled. The Committee, therefore, stressed that every effort should be made by the Government to synchronise the completion of the Feeder Canal with the commissioning of the Farakka Barrage by June, 1971. The Ministry, while noting the Committee's recommendation, have stated that best efforts are being made to complete the Feeder Canal as early as possible. However, due to the prevailing conditions at the project the completion of the Feeder Canal which was scheduled for completion in June, 1970, would take about 2 years more.

6. Originally the Feeder Canal was to be completed by 1968 but subsequently the Government revised the programme and fixed June, 1971 as the target for its completion. The Committee consider it most regrettable that the target date for completion of the Feeder Canal has again been postponed by 2 more years beyond the revised programme fixed for June, 1971 and would like the Government to furnish details of the manner and progress of completion of the Feeder Canal as per the revised target.

CHAPTER II

RECOMMENDATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY GOVERNMENT

Recommendation (Serial No. 1) Para No. 1.19

The Committee note that the investigations about the details of the Project, which were started by the West Bengal Government in 1948, were later on taken over by the Central Water and Power Commission, the administrative sanction to the Project was given in 1962 and the work was started only by 1963. They further note that even after that for two or three years the work on the Project was not started in right earnest. Although the importance of the Project was realised long ago it was delayed for a long time.

The Committee are constrained to observe that this delay, apart from resulting in loss of hundreds of crores and increase in cost, has deprived the country from the anticipated benefits of the Project. The Committee have been informed that the Farakka Barrage Project will enable the diversion of 40,000 cusecs of water from the Ganga into Bhagirathi which will set right the hydraulic balance of the tidal bores in the Hooghly, check the threat posed to the Calcutta Port and restore normal navigation in river Hooghly. The Committee understand that with the reduction in frequency of tides, salinity in the water will be reduced which in turn will solve the problem of water supply to the city of Calcutta and Calcutta Metropolitan District. The Committee note that Farakka Barrage will also bring about the improvement in the communication system and remove the drainage congestion.

Reply of Government

Noted. The reasons for the delay in taking up the work have already been explained.

[Ministry of Irrigation and Power O.M. No. 6/19/70-FBP, dated the 22nd October, 1970].

Recommendation (Serial No. 2) Para No. 2.8

The Committee feel that there is some force in the argument that the decision making authority should be based at site to take

on the spot decisions. They are of the view that it would be useful if sufficient powers are delegated to the highest officer on the spot so that it may be possible for him to take quick decisions as and when unforeseen situations arise. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the entire position may be reviewed in consultation with the Ministry of Finance at an early date.

Reply of Government

The overall responsibility for the expeditious, economical and efficient execution of the Project vests in the Farakka Barrage Control Board. The meetings of the Board are generally held at the site of work to take on-the-spot decisions, as and when necessary. The General Manager, whose Headquarters are at the project, has been delegated suitable powers in respect of sanction of estimates, award of works to tenderers, accepting tenders for supply of material, etc., so that no delay is caused in the execution of works for want of decisions. However, as desired by the Estimates Committee, the powers which have been delegated to the General Manager of the Farakka Barrage Project have been reviewed in consultation with the Ministry of Finance, and the powers at present vested in the General Manager have been considered adequate for the execution of the works of the Project efficiently and in time. It may be stated that with the near completion of the main barrage, the most difficult work on the Project has already been completed and it is most unlikely that the completion of the remaining works of the Project will be handicapped for want of powers to be exercised by the General Manager.

[Ministry of Irrigation and Power O.M. No. 6/19/70-FBP, dated the 22nd October, 1970].

Recommendation (Serial No. 4) Para No. 2.15

The Committee note the measures being taken by the Government for absorption of the personnel who may be rendered surplus after the completion of the Farakka Barrage Project. The Committee would, however, suggest that the Government should prepare an integrated programme to provide alternative employment to the Project personnel who will be rendered surplus on completion of the Project, thereby saving them from undue hardship and sufferings.

Reply of Government

Efforts continue to be made to explore possible avenues of employment for the Departmental employees who will be rendered sur-

plus on the completion of the Project. An Officer on Special Duty has been appointed with headquarters at Calcutta. He is in-charge of the Special Cell under the Directorate General of Employment and Training to deal with the absorption of staff which will be rendered surplus.

[Ministry of I&P O.M. No. 6/19/70-FBP, dated the 22nd October, 1970].

Recommendation (Serial No. 6) Para No. 2.27

The Committee are unhappy to note that the cost of the project which was originally estimated at Rs. 56.40 crores in April, 1960 has now been estimated at Rs. 156.293 crores i.e. an increase of about 180 per cent. The Committee are constrained to observe that by the time the original estimate of the Project in 1960 was prepared, the Government had an experience of at least fifteen years of preparing designs and estimates of river valley projects. It is, therefore, strange that within a short period of six years, the estimate should have increased enormously. The Committee are of the opinion that sharp increase in the Project estimate vitiates the economics of the Project and also disrupts the allocation of precious resources of the country for different projects.

Reply of Government

Noted. It has already been explained that the original Project estimate had to be revised due to increase in the rate structure, increase in the scope of work and insufficient provision for certain items in the original estimate.

[Ministry of I&P O.M. No. 6/19/70-FBP, dated the 22nd October, 1970].

Recommendation (Serial No. 7) Para No. 2.28

The Committee have been informed that increase in rate, increase in scope of the work, inadequate provision for the works were largely responsible for enormous increase in the estimates. The Committee feel that had the Project estimate been initially prepared after full investigations instead of being prepared on limited data and preliminary designs, as has been done in the present case, this enormous increase in the revised estimate of the Project could have been obviated.

Reply of Government

Noted. It has already been explained that with the know-how available at the time of preparation of the original estimate that was the best that could have been done.

[Ministry of I&P O.M. No. 6/19/70-FBP, dated the 22nd October, 1970].

Recommendation (Serial No. 8) Para No. 2.29

The Committee would like to draw the attention to the recommendations made in their Report on the Gandak Project and to stress again that the reasons for the enormous increases in the estimates of most of the river projects in the country should be examined fully by the Government and steps taken to avoid increases of such dimensions in future.

Reply of Government

Noted.

[Ministry of I&P O.M. No. 6/19/70-FBP, dated the 22nd October, 1970].

Recommendation (Serial No. 9) Para No. 3.11

The Committee are unhappy to note that while the work on the right bank of the Farakka Barrage was allotted to M/s. National Projects Construction Corporation in October, 1963, the first pier on it could only be raised after four years i.e., in the working season of 1967-68.

Reply of Government

There was some unavoidable delay in the completion of the work on 1-12 bays allotted to the National Projects Construction Corporation due to slushy nature of the soil, power breakdowns, labour troubles, unsatisfactory performance of Batching and Crushing plants and shortage of wellpoint equipment and pile driving hammers, although this delay did not affect the overall construction of the barrage.

It may, however, be added that the raising of piers in a barrage construction is comparatively much easier and involves much less volume of work than the preceding works involved in the foundation for which huge excavation is needed, a very large tonnage of sheet piles are to be driven and a huge quantity of reinforced cement concrete in the barrage raft is to be laid.

[Ministry of I&P O.M. No. 6/19/70-FBP, dated the 22nd October, 1970].

Recommendation (Serial No. 12) Para No. 3.25

The Committee are unhappy to note that the target fixed for excavation of the Feeder Canal could not be achieved except during the years 1963-64 and 1966-67. Unless the work on the Feeder Canal is completed before the Farakka Barrage is completed, the

objective of the whole project will remain unfulfilled. The Committee, therefore, stress that every effort should be made by the Government to synchronise the completion of the Feeder Canal with the commissioning of the Farakka Barrage by June, 1971.

Reply of Government

Noted. Best efforts are being made to complete the Feeder Canal as early as possible. However, due to the prevailing conditions at the Project, the completion of the Feeder Canal, which was scheduled for completion in June, 1971, will take about 2 years more.

[Ministry of I&P O.M. No. 6|19|70-FBP, dated the 22nd October, 1970]

Comments of the Committee

Originally the Feeder Canal was to be completed by 1968 but subsequently the Government revised the programme and fixed June, 1971 as the target for its completion. The Committee consider it most regrettable that the target date has again been postponed by two more years and would like the Government to furnish details of the manner and progress of completion of the Feeder Canal as per the revised target.

Recommendation (Serial No. 17) Para No. 3.36

The Committee would also urge that the action regarding fresh allotment of work on this portion of the Feeder Canal will be taken by the Government without any further delay and that the work will now be allotted after carefully assessing the capacity of the contractor to complete the work within the time. The Committee hope that a strict watch will be kept on the progress of the work so that the commissioning of the Feeder Canal is done as per programme.

Reply of Government

Noted.

Tenders for this reach have been received and are under consideration.

[Min. of I. & P. O.M. No. 6|19|70-FBP, dated the 22nd October, 1970]

Recommendation (Serial No. 18) Para No. 3.43.

The Committee are surprised to note that although there was no plan of starting work on the Jangipur barrage, the materials for construction were collected on the site earlier and thereby a

large sum of money was blocked which could otherwise have been utilised on other works of the project. The Committee feel that with proper planning this could have been avoided.

Reply of the Government

Noted. However, the phasing of construction of various components of the project had to be reviewed and revised and necessary according to availability of funds.

[Min. of I. & P. O.M. No. 6|19|70-FBP, dated the 22nd October, 1970]

Comments of the Committee

The Committee were informed earlier that the revised date for completion of Jangipur Barrage had been fixed as June, 1970. The Committee would like to be apprised of the progress of work on the Jangipur Barrage in due course.

The Committee were also informed that priority to this work was given in accordance with the funds available and that some steel materials and stones were collected at the site according to the earlier programme.

The Committee are of the opinion that it was the paucity of funds that should have made planning and control of the whole project more effective. In this connection the Committee would like to be informed when was the work on the Jangipur Barrage commenced and when was the material purchased?

Recommendation (Serial No. 23) Para No. 4.25

The Committee note that the Government have not been able to dispose of imported sheet piles which were rendered surplus. The Committee would urge the Government to take necessary steps for their disposal at an early date, and in the meantime to take adequate steps to ensure that the sheet piles are protected against loss, theft, pilferage or damage due to inclemencies of weather.

Reply of Government

The observations of the Estimates Committee have been noted. The Director General, Naval Project and the Government of West Bengal have agreed to take 2500 M/T of sheet piles. Efforts are being made for the disposal of the remaining sheet piles. Various projects/Departments have been requested to intimate their requirements for the sheet piles.

[Min. of I&P O.M. No. 6|19|70-FBP, dated the 22nd October, 1970]

Recommendation (Serial No. 24) Para No. 4.39

The Committee note that the Report of the Construction Plant and Machinery Committee provides for the maintenance of spares at a minimum level of 15 per cent of the cost of capital equipment and that the value of spares kept in stock was in conformity with the capital cost of the equipment. The Committee, however, note that the actual utilisation of spares in stock was only 8.8 per cent in 1965, 14.2 per cent in 1966; 12.1 per cent in 1967 and 13.9 per cent in 1968. The Committee are constrained to observe that the procurement of spares was made in excess of the requirements which led to over capitalisation of the Project and blocking up of much needed public funds. The Committee would urge that there is a need for realistic provisioning of machinery and spares keeping in view the experience gained in the Project and other similar projects. The Government should take positive measures to streamline the procedure of provisioning by examining it in all its aspects including the feasibility of reducing the percentage of spares to be kept in stock. The Committee need hardly stress that in the context of the present difficulty in resources position, the Government should keep uppermost the need for effecting economy in such projects.

Reply of Government

The various project and State authorities in the Irrigation and Power sector have been advised to organise inventory control cells so that a meticulous check can be exercised in ordering the minimum possible quantities and items of spare parts from time to time. This matter has also received further attention of the Committee of Ministers recently constituted by the Government to recommend measures for eliminating delays in procurement of equipment and spare parts required for Irrigation and Power Projects.

[Min. of I&P O.M. No. 6-19-70-FBP, dated the 22nd October, 1970]

Recommendation (Serial No. 25) Para No. 4.40.

From the information furnished by the Ministry regarding utilisation of construction equipment the Committee are surprised to note that out of 80 "Jyoti" horizontal split casing 6" x 5" Electrical driven pumps purchased at the cost of Rs. 6,72,320 only 18 pumps were put into use. Similarly out of 50 "Jyoti" vertical split casing 6" x 5" Electrical driven pumps purchased at the cost of Rs. 3,81,550 only 6 pumps were put into use. The other significant items of construction equipment not effectively utilised at the

Project are C-268 Type Pile Driving Units, Electrical Vibrosinkers, BSP 2 type Diesel Hammers, C-231 Pneumatic hammers, Kirloskar Broomade air compressors, "Sigma" Electrical pumps, concrete mixtures etc. The Committee note with concern that the said construction equipment which have not been utilised in the project is worth more than Rs. 30 lakhs. The Committee would like the Government to examine how far the non-utilisation was due to over estimation of the requirements by the Project authorities and how far it was due to defects in the equipment supplied. Keeping in view the future requirements, the Committee would urge the Government to consider how far the equipment and machinery not utilised could be gainfully used elsewhere in the Project or other Projects.

Reply of Government

The observations made by the Estimates Committee are noted. The matter is being examined by the Central Water and Power Commission.

As regards the disposal of surplus equipment, a Committee has been constituted to review the lists of equipment, stock material, etc., available with the Farakka Project, with a view to deciding the items which should be declared surplus to the requirements of the Project. A drill has been drawn up for disposal of surplus materials by transfer to Central Departments, other projects in the Irrigation and Power Sector in different States, other State Government Departments/Public Sector Undertakings, etc.

[Min. of I&P O.M. No. 6/19/70-FBP, dated the 22nd October, 1970]

Recommendation (Serial No. 26) Para No. 4.41.

The Committee would further like the Government to take adequate steps to ensure that the surplus spares and machinery like Pile Driving Units, Vibrosinkers, hammers, air compressors, Electrical pumps, concrete mixtures etc., which have neither been used so far nor are likely to be used in execution of the project should be adequately protected against loss, theft, pilferage or damage due to inclemencies of weather so that the precious resources of the country are fully utilised.

Reply of Government

The recommendations of the Estimates Committee have been noted. Efforts are being made to dispose of the surplus equipment.

[Min. of I&P O.M. No. 6/19/70-FBP, dated the 22nd October, 1970]

Recommendation (Serial No. 27) Para No. 4.42

The Government should also profit by their experience and evolve realistic criteria for the purchase of machinery and equipment in future so that the precious resources of the country are fully utilised.

Reply of Government

Noted. The matter is under the consideration of Central Water and Power Commission.

[Ministry of I&P O.M. No. 6/19/70-FBP, dated the 22nd October, 1970].

Recommendation (Serial No. 28) Para No. 4.56

The Committee note with concern that the Project authorities have not been able to get possession of one tenth of the land provided in the project estimate. The Committee are distressed to learn that due to non-availability of land, the progress of various works of the Project is hampered. Evidently the scheduled targets for the completion of the various works of the Project would not be achieved in the absence of the availability of land for the works. Unless the commissioning of the essential components of the project is synchronised with the scheduled targets, the benefits of the project will not be derived in time. The Committee would, therefore, strongly urge the Government to take up the matter at a higher level with the Government of West Bengal and make all out efforts to remove the bottlenecks regarding the acquisition of land early.

Reply of Government

The recommendations of the Estimates Committee have been noted. The matter has been taken up with the Government of West Bengal.

[Ministry of I&P O.M. No. 6/19/70-FBP, dated the 22nd October, 1970].

Comments of the Committee

The Committee would like to be apprised of the results achieved regarding acquisition of land in due course.

Recommendation (Serial No. 29) Para No. 4.62

The Committee regret to note that the progress of the corrective works in the Bhagirathi river have not advanced sufficiently to synchronise with the completion of the Farakka Barrage Project. In order to obtain optimum benefit from the Farakka Barrage, the Committee would urge the Government to expedite the completion of the essential portions of the scheme that are necessary before the commissioning of the Farakka Barrage Project.

Reply of Government

The Ministry of Shipping and Transport have intimated that the progress of the corrective works in the Bhagirathi River during the season 1969-70 has been satisfactory. The works for the coming years have been phased by the Calcutta Port Commissioners to synchronise with the Farakka Barage Project.

[Ministry of I&P O.M. No. 6/19/70-FBP, dated the 22nd October, 1970].

Recommendation (Serial No. 30) Para No. 4.67

The Committee regret to note that earlier the work on the Project suffered greatly due to frequent power failures. The Committee are constrained to observe that remedial measures by the Government for improvement in the power supply should have been taken urgently and in a concerted manner.

Reply of Government

Noted.

[Ministry of I&P O.M. No. 6/19/70-FBP, dated the 22nd October, 1970].

Recommendation (Serial No. 31) Para No. 4.70

As the Farakka Barrage is expected to be completed by the next year, the Committee would like the Government to finalise the scheme for setting up of the maintenance organisation at an early date. The Committee also hope that while manning the maintenance organisation for the Project, due consideration will be given to the absorption of the staff which is likely to be rendered surplus on completion of the various works of the Project.

Reply of Government

The maintenance organisation for the Project has been finalised. While manning the maintenance organisation, due consideration will be given to the absorption of the staff likely to be rendered surplus on the completion of the Project.

[Ministry of I&P O.M. No. 6/19/70-FBP, dated the 22nd October, 1970].

Recommendation (Serial No. 32) Para No. 4.72

The Committee hope that the scrutiny of the survey maps will be completed at an early date and that suitable measures required for

the protection of the affected areas would be taken by the Government well in time before the completion of the Project. The Committee would like to be apprised of the measures taken in the matter in due course.

Reply of Government

The survey maps have been received. Suitable measures will be taken, in consultation with the Technical Advisory Committee, for the protection of the affected areas well in time.

[Ministry of I&P O.M. No. 6/19/70-FBP, dated the 22nd October, 1970].

Recommendation (Serial No. 33) Para No. 4.75

The Committee note that the Government would not agree for any project which might affect the Farakka Barrage Project. The Committee recommend that all possible precautionary measures should be taken well in time to avoid any possibility of damage to the Farakka Barrage Project.

Reply of Government

Noted.

[Min. of I&P O.M. No. 6/19/70-FBP, dated the 22nd October, 1970].

CHAPTER III

RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT'S REPLY

Recommendation (Serial No. 3) Para No. 2.12.

The Committee fail to understand why the liaison work in Delhi could not be done by the office of the Farakka Barrage Control Board earlier also as is being done now. They cannot help drawing the inference that there was no justification for setting up Liaison Office at Delhi.

Reply of Government

Most of the equipment and spares costing about Rs. 12.30 crores had to be procured during the initial stages of construction, and therefore a separate liaison officer was essential to speed up the process of procurement. By 1968 the bulk of the equipment had already been procured, and for the remaining work a separate Liaison Officer was not considered necessary and accordingly the post was abolished and the work is now being looked after by the office of the Farakka Barrage Control Board.

[Min. of I&P O.M. No. 6/19/70-FBP, dated the 22nd October, 1970]

Recommendation (Serial No. 13) Para No. 3.30

The Committee are unhappy to note that almost a year was taken by the authorities to finalise the contract of the Feeder Canal in the reach between R.D. 10-68. The Committee note that though the offer of the lowest tenderer was not accepted on the ground that the lowest tenderer was not considered capable of doing the job and the contract was given to the other contractor whose tender was more than one crore higher than the lowest tender, the work on this reach could not be completed in time and a extension of time for two years had to be given to the contractor.

Reply of Government

The tenders for the allotment of this work were called in January, 1964. This was for dry earthwork only with option to quote for underwater work if so desired. These were opened in May, 1964.

In August, 1964, when it was considered advantageous to get the full section work done, the tenderers were asked to requote for composite work also. These were received in September, 1964 and the tenders were finalised in December, 1964.

The stipulated date of completion in the contract of the accepted tenderer for the reach R.D. 10 to 68 was originally June, 1968. Keeping in view the difficulties faced by the contractor in regard to the imported Russian machinery in giving rated output, and as the work could not be completed due to non-availability of power at the initial stage, non-availability of land in time, difficulties in foreign exchange and equipment etc., the scheduled date of completion had to be extended upto June, 1969. Subsequently, when it was found that unexpected rains had further slowed down the work, the target date of completion for the balance work in this reach together with the additional work allotted in the reach R.D. 97 to 103 was fixed as June, 1970. It was not possible to adhere to this target date due to labour trouble. The target date has, therefore, been further extended upto June, 1971. The progress achieved by the contractor on this stretch upto the end of August, 1970 was 93 per cent.

[Min. of I&P O.M. No. 6|19|70-FBP, dated the 22nd October, 1970]

.. Recommendation (Serial No. 19)
Para No. 4.18

The Committee have noted the contents of the letters dated 24th February, 1964 and 10th March, 1964 from the Chief Engineer, Farakka Barrage Project addressed to the Iron and Steel Controller, Calcutta. The first letter dated 24th February, 1964 makes an enquiry about the availability of straight-web sheet piles from any steel plant in India and if that was not possible then whether it could be arranged from any of the East European countries. The second letter dated 10th March, 1964 states that the Iron and Steel Controller had already been requested to find out and let the Ministry know if sheet piles suitable for the Cellular Cofferdam would be available from any country. Without awaiting the reply to the first letter the Chief Engineer, Farakka Barrage Project stated in the second letter that the sheet piles of the required specifications manufactured by Yawata Iron and Steel Company, Tokyo, Japan would be suitable for their purpose and requested the Iron and Steel Controller to take immediate steps for procuring the sheet piles (about 20—25 thousand metric tonnes) before September, 1964 and to ascertain the total quantity of sheet piles that could be supplied by the firm with in 1964.

Reply of Government

It was only when it was known that the particular type of sheet piles required were not available in India that action was taken to import them. This is also apparent from the fact that in the letter dated the 24th February, 1964 it was stated that "In case, it is not possible to manufacture this in India, I would request you to kindly let me know if this can be arranged from any of the East European countries" and in the further letter dated the 10th March, 1964 it has been mentioned, "You have already been requested to find out and let us know if sheet piles suitable for the cellular coffer dam would be available from any country."

[Min. of I&P O.M. No. 6|19|70-FBP, dated the 22nd October, 1970]

Para No. 4.19.

The note circulated by the Ministry of Irrigation and Power for the meeting proposed to be held on 11th March, 1964 stated that the British Sheet Piling Company of U.K. had made a firm offer to supply sheet piles of the required specifications at the rate of 1,000 tons per month during the period April-September, 1964 provided the order was placed by the end of that month. The British Firm quoted the cost of 5000 tons of sheet piles at Rs. 27.4 lakhs f.o.b. U.K. Port. The Committee are constrained to observe that the said note does not mention about the availability of the sheet piles from Yawata Iron and Steel Co. Tokyo, Japan, which was stated to be suitable for the purpose by the Chief Engineer, Farakka Barrage Project in his letter dated 10th March, 1964 addressed to the Iron and Steel Controller, Calcutta.

Reply of Government

As the information regarding the Japanese Yawata sheet piles was received in the Ministry of Irrigation and Power from the Chief Engineer, Farakka Barrage Project after 11th March, 1964, it could not be incorporated in the note which was prepared by the Ministry for the meeting to be held on 11th March, 1964.

[Min. of I&P O.M. No. 6|19|70-FBP, dated the 22nd October, 1970]

Para No. 4.20

The Committee further note that the Ministry of Irrigation and Power in their note furnished to the Minister of Irrigation and Waterways, West Bengal regarding purchase of sheet piles stated

that the sheet piles of required type were not manufactured in India by any indigenous manufacturer. That it was decided in a meeting held in the Ministry of Irrigation and Power on 16th March, 1964 that limited tenders should be invited from the Indian Agents of the firms in U.S.S.R., Luxemburg, Japan, Sweden, U.K., France, Hungary etc. for procurement of 8,000 tonnes of sheet piles on deferred payment basis. That tenders from M/s. Mitsubishi Kaisa of Japan, representative of M/s. Krupps, Germany and M/s. Golumeta, Luxemburg were received in response to the tender enquiry. The Committee are constrained to observe that in this note, there is no mention about the offer made by the British Sheet Piling Company of U.K.

Reply of the Government

As no offer from the British Sheet Piling Company of U.K. was received against the tender enquiry, the question of mentioning the same in the note did not arise.

[Ministry of I&P O.M. No. 6/19/70-FBP, dated the 22nd October, 1970].

Para No. 4.21

Whereas the Committee have been informed that open tenders were invited but there was no offer from indigenous sources, the Ministry informed the West Bengal Minister that limited tenders were invited.

Reply of Government

As explained at the time of factual verification, only limited tenders were invited.

[Ministry of I&P O.M. No. 6/19/70-FBP, dated the 22nd October, 1970].

CHAPTER IV

RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLY OF GOVERNMENT HAS NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE

Recommendation (Serial No. 5) Para No. 2.16

The Committee hope that the possibilities of development of inland water transport in the Farakka Complex (referred to in para 2.14) have by now been investigated by the Ministry of Transport and the Chairman, Inland Water Transport Committee. The Committee also suggest that in view of the importance of absorption of the surplus staff after the completion of the Farakka Barrage Project, the feasibility of developing a base workshop for inland water transport in Farakka Complex may be examined by Government.

Reply of Government

The Ministry of Shipping and Transport have informed that the possibilities of developing an inland port at Farakka can be considered after the results of the post Farakka Traffic studies, which are underway in that Ministry, are known and also after knowing the traffic that would be generated/terminated at Farakka on completion of the Project. It would also depend upon the possibilities of running commercially viable services.

Regarding the workshop at Farakka, the Union Ministry of Industrial Development and Internal Trade had got an inspection carried out by a team from the D.G.T.D. who recommended that the workshop should better be taken over by the Government. The Ministry of Industrial Development and Internal Trade as also the Ministry of Irrigation and Power accordingly approached the State Government requesting them to take over the workshop in a phased manner. The West Bengal Government have replied that they are unable to formulate any composite scheme for the utilisation of the workshop. They have, however, expressed the view that the workshop can be profitably utilised as a part of any integrated Harbour Project.

[Ministry of I&P O.M. No. 6/19/70-FBP, dated the 22nd October, 1970].

Comments of the Committee

The reply of the Government indicates that the possibilities of developing an inland port at Farakka can only be considered after the results of the Farakka Traffic Studies and would also depend upon the possibilities of running commercially viable services.

From the reply of the Government it is not clear as to what problems exist now that would not allow the Government to complete the studies at this stage. The Committee feel that the traffic studies should be completed as early as possible.

The Committee would also urge that the question of handling over the workshop either to the West Bengal Government or any other Ministry of the Union Government should be settled at an early date.

Recommendation (Serial No. 9) Para No. 3.12.

The Committee feel that the inordinate delay in completion of the work by M/s. National Projects Construction Corporation has contributed to increase in the cost of the Farakka Barrage. In view of the poor performance of M/s. National Projects Construction Corporation on the right bank of the Farakka Barrage, the Committee urge the Government to go into the matter of allotment of work on 1—12 bays of the Farakka Barrage to M/s. National Projects Construction Corporation on the cost plus basis.

Reply of Government

The work on the Farakka Barrage had to be started in 1963-64 from important national considerations. But the detailed specifications and schedule were not yet ready, necessary details required to be provided in the tender to enable bidding were not available; there was also uncertainty of transport and other arrangements. We also did not have experience in the method of construction and the type of equipment required for this complex barrage construction. It was, therefore, considered expedient to entrust construction work on the right bank upto the divide wall (which formed one unit) to M/s. N.P.C.C. by negotiation on cost plus basis.

[Min. of I&P O.M. No. 6|19|70-FBP, dated the 22nd October, 1970]

Comments of the Committee

The reply of the Government that they did not have experience in the method of construction and the type of equipment required

for this complex construction is not convincing. The explanation for extension of target date from June, 1965 to June, 1969 is not satisfactory.

The Committee feel that the delay in the completion of this project has resulted in tremendous losses to the national exchequer.

Recommendation (Serial No. 10) Para Nos. 3.18 and 3.19

The Committee are surprised to note that after incurring an expenditure of Rs. 0.88 crores on the construction of upstream navigation lock, taken up in November, 1963 on a priority basis, the work on it was suspended in April, 1966 only three months before target date of completion in June, 1966, due to paucity of funds.

The Committee further note that the estimate of the Navigation lock has increased from 0.87 crores to Rs. 2.83 crores. The Committee are of the view that the estimate had not been properly worked out. Had it been properly prepared, the work on the Navigation lock would have been completed or substantially completed within the original estimate. The Committee are constrained to observe that the Project authorities had not carefully examined the necessity of the navigation lock and assessed the immediate requirement *vis-a-vis* available resources before taking up its construction. They feel that with proper planning this could have been avoided.

Reply of Government

Though the target date of completion of the Navigation lock was June, 1966, it would not have been possible to complete it by that date; it would have taken at least one more working season. Due to limitation of resources, some rescheduling of the works of the Project had to be done and the available funds diverted to works of a higher priority. If the construction of these other works had been deferred instead of the navigation lock, the cost of such deferred work would also have increased due to the increase in the cost of labour and material in the intervening period. Therefore, by not postponing the construction of the lock, an increase in the total cost could not have been avoided.

[Min. of I&P O.M. No. 6|19|70-FBP, dated the 22nd October, 1970]

Comments of the Committee

The Committee regret that the reply of the Government to various queries raised in paras 3.18 and 3.19 is not satisfactory. The enquiry whether the estimate has been properly worked out has not been answered properly.

The Committee would like the Government to clarify as to the basis of diversification of funds to some other works on the so-called higher priorities. The Committee feel that the work's estimate exhibits complete lack of financial management procedures and needs to be further investigated.

Recommendation (Serial No. 11) Para No. 3.24.

The Committee note with concerned that the work on the Feeder Canal could not be completed *inter alia* due to the failure of the contractor. The Committee hope that the Government would take appropriate action against the contractor for his failure to complete his contract so that the Government is not put to any loss.

Reply of Government

The contract has since been terminated. There were indications that if the contract was terminated with the impositions of penalty, it would lead to litigation which would have further impeded the progress of work. The Farakka Barrage Control Board, taking into account the tight schedule of the Project and the fact that delays in completion of the work would put off the benefits accruing from the Project, apart from the financial loss due to blocked up capital, decided to terminate the contract without imposing any penalty. This decision of the Control Board has been implemented in consultation with the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Law.

[Ministry of I&P O.M. No. 6|19|70-FBP, dated the 22nd October, 1970].

Comments of the Committee

The reply of the Government is extremely unsatisfactory since it seems that the termination of the contract without imposing any penalty on the ground that it would rather create further delay is not acceptable. The Committee consider that if the contractors in the public works were to be let off on the ground that it is likely to lead to litigation, this would set an extremely bad example.

The Committee note with regret that this action of not imposing any penalty on the contractor has found concurrence with the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Law. The Committee would like to know whether any action can even now be taken against the contractor for non-fulfilment of his responsibility.

Recommendation (Serial No. 14) Para No. 3.32.

The Committee are unhappy to observe that while the work on the Feeder Canal was started in 1963-64, the tenders for this portion of work on the canal were called in August, 1966 and that it took more than a year to finalise the contract. The Committee hope that the matter regarding delay in calling and finalisation of tenders will be looked into and responsibility fixed. The Committee regret to note that only 17.8 per cent of the work has completed. The Committee hope that the remaining 82.2 per cent of the work will be completed by June, 1971, the target date fixed for it.

Reply of Government

The work on the first half of the canal i.e., R.D. 10 to 68 was tendered and allotted on 15th January, 1965. It was considered advisable that before inviting tenders for taking up the work in the remaining lower reach, we should get detailed data about the reach and also know, by the performance in the first reach, the difficulties that may be experienced in the excavation of the canal. Tenders were accordingly invited in August, 1966 for the reach 68-126, opened in October, 1966 and the work was allotted in November, 1967. The contractors had stipulated certain special terms and conditions which had financial implications, such as sanction of heavy advances, release of foreign exchange, escalation clauses, etc., and negotiations had to be carried out with a view to persuading them to reduce their rates and also to delete their special terms and conditions. It was in these avoidable circumstances that the tenders could not be finalised before November, 1967. The progress achieved by the contractor in the reach 68-97 upto the end of August, 1970 was 36 per cent. Due to the prevailing labour situation, the target date of completion of this reach had to be extended upto January, 1972.

[Ministry of I&P O.M. No. 6/19/70-FBP, dated the 22nd October, 1970].

Comments of the Committee

In their earlier report, the Committee had brought to the Government's attention the extremely poor progress in the matter of Feeder Canal. The Committee regret to note that the Government have failed to locate responsibility in spite of the clear direction by the Committee. The Committee would also like a definite time bound programme showing the completion of the work as per the revised schedule of January, 1972 including penalties leviable for default.

The Committee would like to reiterate their earlier recommendation that the whole matter of delay in calling tenders and finalisation of the work on the Feeder Canal and slow progress of work on the various portions of the Canal should be looked into and responsibility fixed for any lapse on this account. . .

Recommendation (Serial No. 15) Para No. 3.34

The Committee are unhappy to note that although the tenders for this portion of the canal were also called in August, 1966, it took more than one year to finalise the contract. The Committee regret to note that only 5.7 per cent of work has been completed. The Committee hope that the remaining 94.3 per cent of the work will be completed by June, 1971, the target date fixed for it.

Reply of Government

The position of finalisation of tenders for the reach 103-126 has been explained in reply to para 3.32.

Due to unsatisfactory performance of the contractor in this reach, his contract has been terminated. Steps are being taken on urgent basis to start this work in the working season 1971.

[Ministry of I&P O.M. No. 6/19/70-FBP, dated the 22nd October, 1970].

Comments of the Committee

Please see comments of the Committee in respect of Recommendation (Serial No. 14) Para No. 3.32.

Recommendation (Serial No. 16) Para No. 3.35.

The Committee are constrained to observe that after watching the work of the contractor for two years, the Farakka Barrage Control Board had decided to terminate the contract on account of poor performance of the contractor and that the completion of this portion of the canal is likely to be delayed beyond June, 1971, which is the scheduled date for the commissioning of the Farakka Barrage. The Committee would, therefore, urge that whole matter of delay in calling and finalisation of contracts for work on the Feeder Canal and subsequent delay in completion of the work on various portions of the Feeder Canal should be looked into and responsibility should be fixed for lapse on this account.

Reply of Government

Work on the various portions of the Feeder Canal could not be completed as per schedule due to a number of factors, such as, the failure of one of the contractors who had been allotted the work on

the reach 193-126; delay in procurement of equipment by the contractors; unsatisfactory performance of some of the imported equipment; unusually early rains; and above all, labour unrest at the project site. These factors were beyond the control of the Department.

[Ministry of I&P O.M. No. 6/19/70-FBP, dated the 22nd October, 1970].

Comments of the Committee

Please see comments of the Committee in respect of Recommendation (Serial No. 14) Para No. 3.32.

Recommendation (Serial No. 20) Para No. 4.22

The Committee note that while the Sheet Piles were imported in 1964, on urgent basis to enable the construction of the Coffor Dam in river bed in November, 1964, the experimental cells for the purpose were only sunk after two years in 1966-67 working season.

Reply of Government

River handling was a major problem in the Project. The type of coffer dams to be adopted for isolating the work area in any working season was dependent upon the river conditions, bed contours, etc. Originally, it had been anticipated that most of the work from the 1964-65 season onwards will have to be done after constructing cellular coffer dams. But, the river conditions proved favourable and the work during working seasons 1965-66, 1966-67 and 1967-68 could be executed after constructing earthen coffer dam enclosures only. However, the Technical Advisory Committee felt that for the construction work to be executed during 1968-69 and onwards, when work will have to be done in the centre of the river, cellular coffer dams would be required. They, therefore, recommended that experimental cells should be sunk during the 1966-67 working season to gain experience.

Fortunately, the river conditions proved favourable in the working seasons 1968-69 also and all underwater work could be executed by making earthen coffer dam enclosures as in the previous seasons.

[Min. of I&P O.M. No. 6/19/70-FBP, dated the 22nd October, 1970]

Comments of the Committee

The Committee are not convinced with the arguments advanced by the Ministry. They fail to understand why sheet piles were imported in 1964 on an urgent basis involving a foreign exchange of Rs. 93 lakhs when they were sunk on experimental basis only after two years in 1966-67 working season.

Recommendation (Serial No. 21) Para No. 4.23.

The Committee are unhappy to note that out of 7500 tonnes of sheet piles involving foreign exchange of Rs. 93 lakhs, more than 6000 tonnes of sheet piles worth about Rs. 80 lakhs could not be utilised and have been rendered surplus. The Committee are not convinced with the Government's explanation that the Cellular Cofferdam was found ultimately not necessary due to favourable river conditions in one year which nullified the calculations based on the technical data of the previous many years. The Committee cannot help observing that the idea of cellular coffer dam was conceived without thorough investigation. They feel that with better planning the necessity of importing sheet piles could have been avoided. The Committee consider it regrettable that after the sheet piles had been ordered, the actual site had been investigated and it was decided to have a different type of coffer dam. In view of this revealing statement, the Committee feel that the investigations should have preceded the ordering of the sheet piles.

Reply of Government

Because of the magnitude of the Project, various types of cofferdams were envisaged for different working seasons. While an earthen coffer dam was feasible at the initial stages of work when construction was close to the bank, as the work advanced to the river, a Sheet Piles backed coffer dam was considered necessary. In the central portion of the river, even this arrangement was thought to be inadequate. For this portion, it was considered that it would be necessary to resort to cellular type of coffer dam. This was also confirmed by model tests and river surveys carried out after each flood season. Thus the idea of constructing the cellular coffer dam could not be ruled out till the last year of foundation construction i.e., 1968-69. We had, therefore, to keep in stock requirements of sheet piles for a minimum of one season. If we were not fully prepared for this eventuality and if the single wall coffer dam had failed, then the work would have received a grievous set back.

The total quantity of sheet piles required for putting up Cellular coffer dams for enclosing working areas in different years of construction was estimated at 30,000 tons. Against this, a quantity of 7,500 tons, which was approximately the requirement for one season only, was procured from Japan on deferred payment basis. Thus, the quantity actually procured was just the minimum required to be kept in readiness, in case the river conditions could not be controlled without the use of cellular sheet piles coffer dams. However, due to

favourable river conditions, it became possible to execute the work with earthen bunds with sheet piles protection.

[Ministry of I&P O.M. No. 6|19|70-FBP, dated the 22nd October, 1970].

Comments of the Committee

The Committee are not at all satisfied with the reasoning given by the Ministry. They would, therefore, reiterate their earlier recommendation.

Recommendation (Serial No. 22) Para No. 4.24.

The Committee note that there was a loss of Rs. 10.36 lakhs on account of experimental cellular coffer dam cells being washed away during the floods of 1967. The Committee also note that the advice of the Russian expert was sought on the design of the experimental cellular coffer dam cells. The Committee fail to understand why in the absence of Indian technical know-how the guidance of the Russian experts was not sought regarding the driving of the experimental cells in the river bed. They feel that with better planning this loss could have been avoided.

Reply of Government

The experimental cells were constructed before the actual prototype construction, to avoid the risk of being put to greater loss on account of not having enough experience. The driving of the experimental cells did not require any foreign technical expertise.

[Min. of I&P O.M. No. 6|19|70-FBP, dated the 22nd October, 1970].

Comments of the Committee

The Committee feel that if the driving of the experimental cells did not require any foreign technical experts and adequate technical knowhow was available in the country, then the responsibility for these cells being washed away during 1967 floods will have to be located and action taken against persons responsible for this.

KAMAL NATH TEWARI,

Chairman,

Estimates Committee.

NEW DELHI;

July 12, 1971

Asadha 21, 1893 (Saka)

APPENDIX

(Vide Introduction to Report)

Analysis of the action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the 124th Report of the Estimates Committee (Fourth Lok Sabha)

1. Total No. of recommendations	33
2. Recommendations which have been accepted by Government (<i>Vide</i> recommendations Nos. 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 12, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, & 33 included in Chapter II)	
Number	20
Percentage to total	60.6%
3. Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's reply (<i>Vide</i> recommendations Nos. 3, 13 & 19 included in Chapter III)	
Number	3
Percentage to total	9.1%
4. Recommendations in respect of which replies of Government have not been accepted by the Committee (<i>Vide</i> recommendations Nos. 5, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 20, 21, & 22 included in Chapter IV)	
Number	10
Percentage to total	30.3%
