

traffic. A permanent bridge at a cost of Rs. 253.20 lakhs has been sanctioned on 24.12.98. Occurrence of land slides is a natural phenomenon in hilly region. This section of the NH-21 is being maintained in traffic worthy condition within the available resources.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) No technical proposal has been received from State Government for alternative route from Swaarghat to Bilaspur.

[*English*]

Discriminatory Import Duty Structure

1042. SHRI PRITHVIRAJ D. CHAVAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the present import duty structure is highly discriminatory to the indigenous manufacturers because the countervailing duty is zero, while local equipment manufacturers have to pay 18% excise duty; and

(b) if so, the steps proposed to be taken by the Government to create a level playing field for Indian manufacturer?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) and (b) The information is being collected and reply will be placed on the table of the House.

State Funding of Elections

1043. SHRI K. YERRANNADIU:
SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY:
SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN:
SHRI PRASAD BABURAO TANPURE:
SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE:
SHRI K.P. NAIDU:
SHRI AJAY CHAKRABORTY:
SHRI K.S. RAO:

Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have decided the funding of elections on the basis of the Report of the Indrajit Gupta Committee:

(b) if so, the extent to which the funding would be allowed;

(c) whether the Government have examined the Report;

(d) if so, the salient features of the Report; and

(e) the reaction of the Government on the recommendations made by the Committee?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. M. THAMBI DURAI): (a) to (e) A Statement containing the gist of recommendations of the Committee on State Funding of Elections is attached. The recommendations of the Committee would be discussed with political parties.

Statement

Gist of Recommendations of Committee on State Funding of Elections

1. *State Funding of Elections:* The Committee has recommended, to begin with, only partial State assistance, in kind only in the form of certain facilities, to recognised political parties in a way that it provides them relief not only in carrying out their electoral activities and meeting partly the cost of essential items of electioneering campaigns of their candidates, but also helps them partially in the current administration of their day to day functioning during non-election period. Gradually, more and more of their expenses' burden can be progressively shifted to the State so that ultimately all their legitimate expenses become a charge on the State. In this respect, the Committee has recommended creation of a separate Election Fund to which the Central Government may contribute at the rate of Rs. 10/- per elector *i.e.* about Rs. 600 crores annually. The State Governments also, all taken together, may contribute proportionately Rs. 600 crores annually to the Fund.

In its report, the Committee has also specified the nature of facilities to be provided to the recognised political parties and their candidates at State cost. These include:—

(i) *For Recognised Political Parties:*

(i) Suitable rent-free accommodation for its headquarter.