

SHRI S.M. GURADDI : May I know whether you go to any assistance from the World Bank to complete this project and whether it is a fact that the World Bank has insisted on rehabilitation of those families which have lost their land? Have they suggested it or not?

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND : Leave alone the World Bank, the Speaker, the Members of Parliament, the Government, they are insisting that the land should be given to the farmers. The World Bank assistance is there, its component is there. It is a multi-purpose project and it is for irrigation. The Prime Minister last year visited this area and has said that all efforts should be made to see that the project is completed within time.

MR. SPEAKER : I know.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND : So, a special assistance of Rs. 10 crores has been granted and we have already written to the State Government to give Rs. 5 crores as their share.

MR. Speaker : Shri Nityananda Mishra.
(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER : I have already told him. How many times do you want me to say the same thing over again?

SHRI ANANTA PRASAD SETHI : The policy is very good, but the implementation is very poor. That is the trouble.

MR. SPEAKER : Will you take your seat?

SHRI ANANTA PRASAD SETHI : Will you kindly go there, Sir?

MR. SPEAKER : Have you not heard me?

(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER : It is all right.

Shri Nityananda Mishra. Absent.

Shri Ramashray Prasad Singh.

**Railway Finance Corporation for
Railways Development Programmes**

*145. **SHRI RAMASHRAY PRASAD SINGH :** Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal to float a Railway Finance Corporation for financing the Railways development programmes;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether this arrangement will result in increase in passenger fares and freight rates?

**THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI
MADHAVRAO SCINDIA) :** (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) & (c) It is proposed that the Indian Railway Finance Corporation may have an authorised capital of Rs. 200 crores and a paid-up capital of Rs. 50 crores. The Corporation would undertake public borrowings. From the funds so raised they will procure Rolling Stock and other equipment and lease them to the Railways. It is proposed to raise Rs. 250 crores in the current year. The details in regard to the rate of interest etc. have not yet been decided.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAMASHRAY PRASAD SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, in response to hon. Minister's reply, I would like to know the amount of loan received by the Corporation from the public and what is the rate of interest thereon?

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : What does the hon. Member want to know?

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Ramashray Prasadji, you put your question again please.

SHRI RAMASHRAY PRASAD SINGH : The hon. Minister has told that the proposed Corporation would borrow money from the public. I would like to know how much money the Corporation has so far borrowed from the public and what is the rate of interest thereon ?

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : It has been decided in principle that a corporation named 'Indian Railway Finance Corporation' will be registered. The rate of interest on its borrowings and other provisions are still under consideration. Since no bonds have yet been floated, there is no question of borrowings.

SHRI RAMASHRAY PRASAD SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, we want to know whether during the formulation of the proposal, it was also considered that with the setting up of the proposed Corporation for the development of Railways and after railway equipments are purchased with the borrowings from the Corporation, the railway fares would also go up or not?

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : The rate of interest on the proposed borrowings of Rs. 250 crores will be, perhaps, $10\frac{1}{2}$ or 11 per cent. This is a proposal and the decision thereon is yet to be taken. That means, it will be higher by 4 per cent as compared to the rate of interest that we pay to the Government and will result in an additional burden of Rs. 10 crores on the Railways in a full year. The Railways are spending Rs. 4640 crores yearly and keeping that figure in view, these 10 crores rupees are not much. This may also not necessitate any increase in the rail fare or freight.

[English]

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE : I could not fully understand the rate of interest question. It is said in the main reply that Rs. 250 crores will be raised in the current year itself. And now you say that the details of the interest have not yet been worked out. Naturally I take it that it is within this financial year that you want to raise Rs. 250 crores through public borrowing and, therefore, you will promise some

rate of interest to the public as we are seeing many public undertakings raising loans from the public at 15 per cent or 16 per cent rate of interest. I would like to know from the hon. Minister, since only a few months are left for the current year to be over, whether the economics of getting public borrowing at such a high rate of interest and the implications of it to the railways when that money will be leased out to the railways, have been worked out so that additional burden through this high rate of interest does not come on the consumers.

MR. SPEAKER : He has already replied to that question that the additional burden on the railways will be Rs. 10 crores only.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : $10\frac{1}{2}$ per cent has not yet been decided. In principle it has been accepted that the Indian Railway Finance Corporation be set up. The formalities themselves would be taking approximately a month or two. While those formalities, the registration, etc. and the setting up of the body would take place, in the intervening period, we will make up our mind as to what the rate of interest should be and what are the special incentives, if any, that should accompany the rate of interest. But we are saying that if the rate of interest is $10\frac{1}{2}$ per cent or 11 per cent, then the difference comes to 4 per cent only. But as yet the rate of interest has not yet been decided.

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : Geetaji, do you also intend to deposit some money.

[English]

SHRI K.S. RAO : It is good that the hon. Minister has come with the proposition of starting a Railway Finance Corporation and borrowing funds from the public with a view to give some more facilities to the people. In Andhra Pradesh a lot of cement industries have come up near Jaggaiahpat in Krishna District which

are losing crores of rupees because of short of railway line between Naligudi and Guntur. They are prepared to deposit a certain amount with the railways. I wish to know from the hon. Minister whether he will undertake construction of this railway line which will be useful for reduction of the cost of cement and for that they are prepared to give the deposit to the railways.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : It does not pertain to the question of Indian Railway Finance Corporation.

**Blind Population and Aid to blinds
for Treatment**

***146. SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMA-
CHANDRAN :** Will the Minister of
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be
pleased to state :

(a) the estimated number of blind persons in the country as per the latest census;

(b) whether the number of blinds in the country has been decreasing or increasing during the last three years, year-wise;

(c) whether Government have any estimate as to what percentage of the blinds is curable;

(d) what help is being extended by Government to enable the curable blind to regain sight; and

(e) whether Government have any specific proposal/programme for extending financial aid to those who are blind and cannot afford treatment.

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN THE
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY
WELFARE (KUMARI SAROJ KHA-
PARDE) :** (a) According to I.C.M.R.
Survey (1971-73), 9 million persons were
estimated to have vision less than 6/60
i.e. they could not count fingers from a
distance of 20 ft.

According to National Sample Survey (1981), using criteria of counting fingers from 3 metres (10 ft.), 3.47 million persons were found to be blind,

(b) A country-wide sample survey for blindness is in progress at present and the decrease or increase in the number of blind will be known after its findings become available.

(c) Yes, Sir. About 80%.

(d) Free medical treatment is provided at all Government hospitals and in the eye camps.

(e) No, Sir.

**SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMA
CHANDRAN :** Sir, I understand that in order to tackle the problem of blindness, the Government of India had introduced a massive programme in the year 1976-77, and one of the salient features of this programme is conducting eye camps throughout the country. In view of the irreparable damage that these camps have posed in recent months in certain parts of the country by rendering hundreds of persons totally blind, may I know from the hon. Minister whether this eye camp approach has been entirely withdrawn or the voluntary organisations are being forbidden from conducting these sort of eye camps in future?

**THE MINISTER OF HUMAN
RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND
MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY
WELFARE (SHRI P.V. NARASIMHA
RAO) :** Sir, there are two sides to this. The eye camps in many instances have done a very good service, in some instances they have also unfortunately added to the blinds. So, it is a question of how efficiently an eye camp is run. During the recent meeting of the Central Council of Health, a decision was taken that eye camps run indifferently or with inadequate preparation or with inadequate after operation care, should be clearly banned. We should have some criteria which should be rigorously followed. We are setting up a committee to go into all the aspects of eye camps. It