

(Dr. K. L. Shrimali)

of Section 25 of the University Grants Commission Act, 1956, a copy of the University Grants Commission (Disqualification, Retirement and Conditions of Service of Members) Rules, 1956, published in the Notification No. S.R.O. 2607, dated the 10th November, 1956. [Placed in Library. See No. S-540/56].

AMENDMENTS TO PUBLIC DEBT (COMPENSATION BONDS) RULES

The Minister of Revenue and Civil Expenditure (Shri M. C. Shah): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table, under sub-section (3) of Section 28 of the Public Debt Act, 1944, a copy of the Notification No. S.R.O. 1196, dated the 26th May, 1956, making certain amendments to the Public Debt (Compensation Bonds) Rules 1954. [Placed in Library. See No. S-541/56].

REPORT OF REHABILITATION FINANCE ADMINISTRATION

The Minister of Revenue and Defence Expenditure (Shri A. C. Guha): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table, under sub-section (2) of Section 18 of the Rehabilitation Finance Administration Act, 1948, a copy of the Report of the Rehabilitation Finance Administration for the half year ended the 30th June, 1956. [See Appendix IV, annexure No. 56].

FLOOD SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY

The Minister of Planning and Irrigation and Power (Shri Nanda): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table of the House a statement [Placed in the Library. See No. S-558/56.] reviewing the flood situation in the country subsequent to my earlier statement on the 27th July. With your permission, I would like to add a few words on the overall position of the programme as implemented and the directions in which we propose to take further action.

As the House is already aware, the question of an integrated national flood

control programme was taken up in September 1954. As indicated in the comprehensive statement which I laid on the Table of the House on 3rd September 1954, the programme was divided into three phases, immediate, short-term and long-term. Special organisations were set up at the Centre and in the States affected by floods for formulating schemes and implementing them quickly. The 'immediate phase' extending over a period of two years was to be devoted to intensive investigation and collection of technical data, preparation of designs and estimates for short-term measures and execution of emergent measures like revetments, spurs and some embankments. During this period, investigations have been carried out over extensive areas and valuable data have been collected. Aerial photography has been completed over 43,000 sq. miles; photomosaics have been taken for about 35,000 sq. miles; secondary and tertiary levelling has been done in an area totalling 19,000 square miles. A number of discharge observation, gauge and silt observation sites, and rain-gauge and river-gauge stations have also been set up.

As a result of the execution of emergent schemes during this period, appreciable benefits have already accrued to the regions in which those schemes were undertaken. An area of over 26 lakh acres has been saved from inundation, besides a number of towns in Assam, U.P., Bihar and West Bengal.

The 'immediate phase' is over and the stage has now been reached when we should take stock of the position. We have had very heavy floods successively in 1954, 1955 and 1956. These floods, each of which had its own special features, presented problems, a satisfactory solution which is essential for the formulation of an integrated programme. In 1954, major rivers like the Brahmaputra, the Kosi and Burhi Gandak, were mainly responsible for the havoc caused. The 1955 floods, however, showed that even

small streams like the Tons, the Gomti and the Sai could be as devastating as the larger rivers and that a serious situation could be created by heavy local precipitation where drainage was not adequate. The experience of the 1956 floods was that heavy and continuous rainfall could cause great damage even in areas like Rajasthan, south-eastern districts of the Punjab, etc. normally considered to be immune from floods. The four River Commissions, which have been constituted for the Ganga, the Brahmaputra, the North-western rivers and the Central India rivers are seized of the position and they are helping the States in the formulation of appropriate proposals. Nevertheless, the flood problem is so varied and intricate in nature that it is desirable to secure authoritative advice in regard to the works to be undertaken hereafter. Opinion is sharply divided on the suitability of certain measures of flood protection, in particular, of embankments. It is important that all such questions should be settled beyond doubt. The Government, therefore, propose to set up a high level committee, which may include foreign experts, to go into the entire question on the basis of available data and make their recommendations. When the methods to be adopted are finally settled, we can, with confidence, go ahead with the implementation of our long range programme.

Shri Kamath (Hoshangabad): On a point of information, may I ask whether, in view of the recurring floods for the last so many years and the damage they have caused to food crops and also to human lives in the shape of train disasters, Government propose to tackle the problem of flood control with a new sense of urgency, greater than what is visible or what is shown in the second Five Year Plan, and if I may be permitted to use a hackneyed phrase, hackneyed by Government use, will they put it on a "war footing"?

Shri Nanda: I do not accept the suggestion or the hint that there has

not been a sense of urgency about the execution of the programme; so far in the course of the last two years the pace of work that had been accomplished has been more than anything done during the last 20 or 30 or 40 years and the proposal that has been put forward here or rather the decision of the Government to set up a high level Committee of this kind is itself a certain evidence of the sense of urgency about this matter so far as the Government is concerned.

Shri Kamath: How many Committees have set so far?

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty (Basirhat): The hon. Minister stated that foreign experts will be brought in to find out the ways and means to tackle these floods. I would like to know whether separate experts will be allocated to various rivers or whether there will be one commission or expert committee which will be going round the country and may I know when they will start the work?

Shri Nanda: This Committee is not intended to tackle individual schemes in different areas. It is really an overall assessment of the work that has been done, the method that has been adopted, the approach to the whole solution of the problem of floods. On the basis of the experience in other countries and the examination of the experience here we have to see whether we need to modify our methods or approach in this matter. Naturally the Committee in order to have an overall view of the situation must visit all the areas and places which are affected by the floods.

COMMITTEE ON PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

SIXTY-SIXTH REPORT

Sardar Hukam Singh (Kapurthala—Bhatinda): I beg to present the Sixty-sixth Report of the Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions.
