

**MINUTES OF PARLIAMENTARY
COMMITTEES**

**COMMITTEE ON PRIVATE MEMBERS'
BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS**

Sardar Hukam Singh (Bhatinda): I beg to lay on the Table the Minutes of the sittings (Fifty-sixth to Sixty-fifth) of the Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions held during the Tenth Session.

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

Shri Dasappa (Bangalore): I beg to lay on the Table a copy each of the following Minutes of the sittings of the Estimates Committee:—

- (i) Minutes relating to the Seventy-seventh and Seventy-ninth Reports on the Ministry of Commerce and Industry—Small scale industries.
- (ii) Minutes relating to the Eighty-sixth Report on the Ministry of Commerce and Industry—the State Trading Corporation of India Ltd.
- (iii) Minutes relating to the Eighty-fourth, Eighty-eighth and Ninetieth Reports on the Ministry of Labour and Employment.

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

**NINETY-SECOND AND NINETY-FIFTH
REPORTS**

Shri Dasappa (Bangalore): I beg to present the following Reports of the Estimates Committee:—

- (i) Ninety-second Report on the Growth of Civil Non-Plan Expenditure.
- (ii) Ninety-fifth Report on the Ministry of Finance—the Rehabilitation Finance Administration (Reports and Accounts).

12.18 hrs.

**CALLING ATTENTION TO A
MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC
IMPORTANCE**

**REPORTED DANGER TO WATER TRANSPORT
ON RIVER BRAHMAPUTRA**

Shri P. C. Borooah (Sibsagar): Under Rule 197, I beg to call the attention of the Minister of Transport and Communications to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon:—

"The reported danger facing inland water transport on the river Brahmaputra".

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur): As the statement I propose to make is a long one, I shall read out a summary and then place the statement on the Table of the House.

Till 1950 river Brahmaputra was navigable between Dhubri and Dibrugarh (460 Miles). The earthquake, however, disturbed the river bed levels and shoals have formed at various places. The stretch between Dibrugarh and Desangmukh (46 miles) became unnavigable by deep draughted vessels owing to the heaving up of the river bed.

During the dry season extensive conservancy measures are carried out at Noonkhowa Shoal, Kholabanda and Bangnati. The Joint Steamer Companies carry out the conservancy and they are compensated by the Government as explained in the statement.

I have recently undertaken a river trip from Dhubri to Gauhati and gained a first-hand idea about conservancy and have also discussed this matter at length with Assam Ministers.

Assam Government are contemplating necessary river training works and afforestation in the catchment.

[Shri Raj Bahadur]

area to avoid further deterioration in the navigability of the river. The Assam Government has also agreed to grow Alfa grass and Jhou Scrub at various places to stop shifting sands in the river. The Assam Government has agreed that a joint study of the problems of afforestation be made by the State Government, G.B.W.T. Board, I.W.T. Operators and the Central Forest Department.

The Ganga Brahmaputra Water Transport Board is arranging to acquire a dredger for dredging of ghat approaches and bars other than Noonkhowa Shoal. As regards Noonkhowa Shoal. Which lies partly in India and partly in Pakistan, Joint Steamer Companies are being persuaded to purchase a dredger of their own with the suitable loan assistance from the Government to keep this Shoal clear for navigation.

A tentative provision for a bigger dredger for Brahmaputra has also been proposed in the Third Five Year Plan.

There is no grave danger of the river Brahmaputra becoming unnavigable below Desangmukh. With dredging and other measures the navigability of the river will be maintained.

STATEMENT LAID ON THE TABLE

Shri Raj Bahadur: I beg to lay on the Table the detailed statement referred to above. [See Appendix IV, annexure No. 105].

Shri P. C. Borooah: May I know the extent of the river which has become unnavigable since the great earthquake of 1950?

Shri Raj Bahadur: I have indicated that. It is 46 miles.

Shri P. C. Borooah: May I know whether dredging will be taken up in between Desangmukh Ghat and Dibrugarh Ghat?

Shri Raj Bahadur: That is a matter which would depend on the availability of the dredger and also the capacity of the dredger to undertake that particular job.

Shri S. C. Samanta (Tamluk): May I know whether any model experiment is going to be undertaken at the Poona Research Institute to know the result that would accrue due to dredging operations?

Shri Raj Bahadur: After my recent trip on the river, I am convinced that there is need for some scientific studies to be made about the conditions and about the behaviour of the rivers, the shoals and bars. The Assam Government have got a River Research Station of their own. Although it has not yet started working in full swing, I believe, some studies would be taken up in this Research Station at Gauhati. Others might have to be taken up at the Poona Research Station also; but that depends upon the Government of Assam. We have discussed this matter with them and, I think, this matter is actively under consideration.

Shri P. C. Borooah: May I know whether the recommendations of the Gokhale Committee with regard to the Brahmaputra are going to be accepted in entirety by Government?

Shri Raj Bahadur: They have also made some recommendations, I think. But in the statement which I have just now laid before the House as a result of my trip and the discussions that we have had, the general conditions are pointed out.