

(b) Does not arise.

**SHRI C. K. CHANDRAPPAN :** The answer is quite characteristic of the Railway Minister. But I would like to know whether this official 'No' will be changed to 'Yes' if a proposal is made to this effect by the Kerala Government,

**SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA :** This time I am very serious in saying 'No', because there is an alternative route, as the hon. Member knows, *via* Quilon. Therefore, this will be a superfluous connection and the Railway Ministry is not in favour of this double line within a distance of a few miles.

**SHRI C. K. CHANDRAPPAN :** On this question the Railway Minister is very determined to say often that in Kerala any line will be parallel or superficial. This is not a fact.

**MR. SPEAKER :** You should say that parallels do not meet.

**SHRI C. K. CHANDRAPPAN :** The fact is that Kerala is such a narrow land strip that there everything will be bound to be parallel. Nobody can help that, not even the Railway Minister. But since it is a densely populated area and the demand is so genuine and long-standing, will the Railway Minister be kind enough to consider it favourably if a proposal is made ?

**SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA :** The views of the State Government are almost conclusive in the matter of building over and under-bridges but not in the matter of building new railways. For that purpose the Plan provision must be there and the money must be made available. There are so many difficulties. We have not neglected Kerala. In fact, I have announced in my Budget speech that the metre gauge from Cochin to Trivandrum will be made broad gauge. Therefore, it is not that we are neglecting Kerala...*(Interruption)*. But it may not be possible to do all things desirable at once because of financial difficulties.

**SHRI N. SREEKANTAN NAIR :** In view of the fact that Kerala has only three route miles per lac of population whereas the all India average is more than 9.5, will the Government consider giving an equi-

table treatment to Kerala by constructing new lines to make it at least come very near the all-India average ?

**SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA :** I do not know whether it is possible to work out railway lines on the basis of population figures but I agree to the proposition that every State in India must be treated more or less equitably when new lines are constructed.

**SHRI VAYALAR RAVI :** May I know from the Minister whether any survey has been made in connection with Kayamkulam and Cochin *via* Allepy ?

**SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA :** A Traffic survey is being made and the line will cost about Rs. 10 crores. The distance is about 115 kms.

**SHRI M. KALYANASUNDARAM :** May I know from the Minister whether any traffic survey was conducted with regard to the line referred to in his answers ?

**SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA :** No separate traffic survey is necessary. As the hon. Member knows there is already connection between these two stations. It will not be possible to construct another parallel line.

#### Rural Electrification in West Bengal

\*1542. **SHRI SAMAR GUHA :** Will the Minister of IRRIGATION AND POWER be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any scheme to undertake large-scale projects for rural electrification of West Bengal in areas where underground water can be utilised for irrigation purposes with the help of power-pumps ; and

(b) if so, the nature of the Scheme ?

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF IRRIGATION AND POWER (SHRI B. N. KUREEL) :** (a) and (b). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

#### Statement

The emphasis on Rural Electrification Schemes continues to be on the energisation

of pumpsets for increasing agricultural production in the country. In West Bengal, the progress of both village electrification and energisation of pumpsets has been poor. Special efforts are being made to accelerate rural electrification programmes. The Rural Electrification Corporation which has been set up in the Central Sector for providing additional funds for implementation of rural electrification schemes with a bias towards energisation of pumpsets has so far sanctioned eight rural electrification schemes in West Bengal at an estimated cost of Rs. 581.71 lakhs for electrification of 1688 villages and energisation of 9047 pumpsets. More schemes are being prepared by the West Bengal Electricity Board for financing by the Rural Electrification Corporation. The State Electricity Board are proposing to implement schemes which will result in energisation of 35,000 pumpsets during the Fourth Five Year Plan period as compared to 1,199 pumpsets energised at the beginning of Fourth Plan.

**SHRI SAMAR GUHA :** Sir, it is admitted by the Irrigation and Power Minister that West Bengal is one of the States which has the least facility of rural electrification. Previously, it was the inability of the State Government to avail of the facilities sanctioned but now, as the State of West Bengal is governed from the Centre, would the Minister take an initiative to see that the rural electrification in West Bengal becomes at par with the other advanced States in this matter ?

**THE MINISTER OF IRRIGATION AND POWER (DR. K. L. RAO) :** It is true that in West Bengal rural electrification is very poor. Recently I had a discussion with the Chief Engineer there who promised to step up the tempo. The Rural Electrification Corporation has sanctioned eight schemes and we are prepared to sanction many more because Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal are given preference in regard to rural electrification.

**SHRI SAMAR GUHA :** May I know whether it is a fact that during the previous President's rule in West Bengal a scheme called Midnapore second phase scheme was approved by the Government which comprised the sub-division of Contai. If so, may I know whether that scheme has been finalised and the work started ?

**DR. K. L. RAO :** I would not be able to say whether any particular scheme has been received. A number of schemes have been received from various States and even schemes from West Bengal are pending with the Rural Electrification Corporation. I hope this is one of them. If so, it will be processed.

**SHRI DINFISH JOARDER :** May I know whether there is any immediate proposal or scheme for improvement in the rural electrification in North Bengal particularly in the district of Malda ?

**DR. K. L. RAO :** As I have submitted already we are giving preference to whole of Bengal. In North Bengal there is further difficulty because there is no adequate electricity. We have got to put some lines from Purnea and we are trying to start power generation for North Bengal. Unless we improve power generation, it will not be possible to push on electrification rapidly as we would like to.

**SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY :** In view of the hon. Ministers' statement that certain schemes are still pending or awaiting consideration, may I know from him the details of these seven schemes and whether West Bengal Government has sent some schemes for North Bengal also ?

**DR. K. L. RAO :** I will not be able to say about schemes which have not been sanctioned. I know about schemes which have been sanctioned, that is, Sunderbans, 24-Praganas, Haldia and so on. North Bengal project is not there. It may be one of the schemes under consideration. I will not be able to say about that.

**SHRI KARTIK ORAON :** I would like to know from the Government the rate of rural electrification in various States, whether it is uniform, and, if not, what steps are being taken to bring about uniformity of development of rural electrification all over the country.

**MR. SPEAKER :** You have not seen the Question. It is only about West Bengal. I am sorry that is not relevant.