

As the hon. Member has said, no doubt, there is the difficulty of finances also. Bengal has got flood control funds to the extent of about Rs. 10 crores, in this plan of which Rs. 2½ crores have been allotted to North Bengal. But when the important schemes have been sanctioned, some of the important works have got to be taken up, and I think that due attention will be paid by the Government of India to the problem of implementing flood control-works.

SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY : In view of the hon. Minister's statement, pending detailed working out of the control of the North Bengal rivers, may I know what immediate steps are being taken up to control floods in North Bengal? Secondly, may I also know whether the embankment running from Mondalghat to Bibiganj will be extended from Beltallia to Jharshingeshwar because that area is very much susceptible to floods each and every year?

DR. K. L. RAO : The Mondalghat embankment was sanctioned and it was to be taken up. But the people objected to the alignment, and wanted a re-alignment of the embankment. The latest report is that the alignment has now been approved and the work is being started.

SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY : What are the other rivers which are being controlled?

DR. K. L. RAO : There are quite a large number of small schemes which have been sanctioned and they will be taken up, but the bigger schemes have got to await investigation by the commission.

SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE : When does the hon. Minister expect the board to start its comprehensive work?

DR. K. L. RAO : There are two bodies, as I have submitted already, namely the board and the commission. The board is a policy-making body of the Ministers and it has met once. The commission has not yet started, and it is got to be appointed; the chief engineer and some members have to be appointed. We have located the headquarters at Jalpaiguri. There was a lot of controversy about it, and we have finally selected Jalpaiguri. I have requested

the West Bengal Government and reminded that they should take action immediately in this respect.

श्री हुकूम चन्द कच्छबाय : पिछले वर्ष जब वहां बाढ़ आई थी तब उस बाढ़ को देखने का अवसर मुझे मिला था। प्रतिवर्ष बाढ़ आने का प्रमुख कारण यह भी है कि उस इलाके में बहुत बड़ी तादाद में जंगल साफ किये जा रहे हैं। वह पहाड़ी इलाका है जब वर्षा होती है तो पहाड़ों की मिट्टी नदी में आ कर भर जाती है। उस कारण भी पानी का फैलाव होता है। मैं जानना चाहता हूं कि जंगल जो बड़ी तादाद में कट रहे हैं उसे रोकने के लिए सरकार क्या कर रही है? साथ ही मिट्टी जो भर गई है, उसे हटाने के लिए आप कौन से प्रयत्न करने वाले हैं?

DR. K. L. RAO : It is not possible to desilt these rivers completely. The only thing possible is to prevent further siltation by soil conservation measures. But even that is very difficult in North Bengal, because the Himalayas are concerned in this; and soil conservation measures in North Bengal would, therefore, be very difficult because of the Himalayas, but still we are trying to find out the important or critical points where if action is taken it will be possible to reduce the silting, and we are at it.

Memorandum by the Eastern Railway Coal and Ash Handling Mazdoor Union

*648. **SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE :** Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether a memorandum has been submitted by the Eastern Railway Coal and Ash Handling Mazdoor Union to the Chairman, Railway Board, recently;

(b) if so, the main demands of the workers listed therein; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to meet their demands?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The main demand is that the labourers engaged by contractors for coal and ash handling on the Indian Railways should be treated as regular Railway employees.

(c) Coal and Ash handling work has been entrusted to contract labour for a long time past on the Indian Railways. Whether this work should be taken over for departmental management with regular Railway employees will depend upon the Central Government deciding whether contract labour should be prohibited for this type of work, in exercise of the powers vested in the appropriate Government under the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act of 1970. Ministry of Railways will take necessary action as soon as Government's decision is notified.

SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE: Are Government contemplating abolishing contract labour?

SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA: The Act is already there; notification has to issue.

SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE: He said the competent authority would decide? Have they decided to abolish contract labour or not?

SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA: So far as the Railway Administration is concerned, we have not decided.

SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE: How soon will the decision be taken?

SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA: It is not possible for me to state the date because acceptance of the hon. Member's proposition will result. I am told, in an additional expenditure of Rs. 5 crores. The railways are hardly in a position to meet this additional commitment at any rate during this year, considering the magnitude of our deficit.

Incidence of Ticketless Travelling

*649. **SHRI R. P. YADAV:** Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the incidence of ticketless travelling between Patna and Gaya, Thana Bihpur to Mahadevapur Ghat, Banmanki to Behariganj, Banmanki to Murliganj has increased; and

(b) if so, the remedial steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA): (a) and (b). No, Sir. However frequent and surprise checks are being made on the Railways, including sections, referred to, on a massive scale to curb the evil of ticketless travel. I may add that I have got statistics here. Recently we have taken a number of steps. Even last night we conducted surprise checks and have been able to catch a number of ticketless travellers; the money realised therefrom is considerable.

SHRI R. P. YADAV: It has been found that the checking staff do not venture to check each and every passenger out of fear as there is no security for them. Are Government taking steps to enable them to discharge their work fearlessly?

SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA: Yes. That apprehension is there, not all over the Indian railways, but in some areas, in the eastern region and the coastal area of Gujarat where smuggling is taking place. We are taking steps to see ticketless travelling is checked and protection is given to the checking staff.

SHRI R. P. YADAV: What are those steps?

SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA: There are the police and the RPF. Also the railway employees themselves co-operate with one another. These are the steps.

SHRI K. S. CHAVDA: RPF does not go with the TTEs in the running trains. What steps have been taken or are intended to be taken to protect TTEs in running trains?

SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA: I have already stated that the protection Government can possibly give is police protection, by the RPF and the regular police. If my hon. friend has got any other suggestion. I welcome it.

SHRI K. S. CHAVDA: My question has not been replied to. The RPF is not travelling with the TTEs, and they fear that they may be attacked or assaulted by ticketless travellers. So, what steps have they taken? This is my point.