

Government has reconsidered their study of feasibility of this line in view of the findings of the Geological Survey of India showing big limestone deposits in this region ?

SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA : We have made a study and, unfortunately, much as we would like to concede the hon. Member's point of view, it is not remunerative nor have we got funds for this purpose.

Tista Multipurpose Barrage Project

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*797. **SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY :**
SHRI R. N. BARMAN :

Will the Minister of IRRIGATION AND POWER be pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred Question No. 3266 on 19th August, 1970 and state :

(a) whether West Bengal Government have submitted any report to the Central Water and Power Commission regarding Tista Multipurpose Barrage Project ; and

(b) if so, the action taken in this regard so far, and the time by which the project is likely to be completed ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF IRRIGATION AND POWER (SHRI B. N. KURBEL) : (a) and (b). The revised project report of the Tista Barrage Project has been received from the Government of West Bengal and is under technical scrutiny in the Central Water and Power Commission. The completion of the project will depend upon the availability of resources of the West Bengal Government for undertaking irrigation projects.

SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY : May I know from the hon. Minister the salient features of the project report submitted by the West Bengal Government, which is now under scrutiny ? May I know (a) whether this project will connect Brahmaputra with Ganga, (b) to what extent it will afford irrigation facilities and (c) to what extent it will help generation of hydro-power ? What is the estimated cost of this project ?

THE MINISTER OF IRRIGATION AND POWER (DR. K. L. RAO) : The

present estimate of this project is Rs. 44 crores. It is estimated to irrigate 9 lakhs acres in both North Bihar and North Bengal.

SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY : It was stated in reply to Unstarred Question No. 326 that the estimated cost of the project will be nearly Rs. 357 crores. May I know why the project estimate has been reduced to such an extent when it is a project of very vital importance for the development of northern regions of both Bihar and Bengal and also Orissa ?

DR. K. L. RAO : I mentioned Rs. 44 crores as the cost of the present project. Earlier, many years ago, we were thinking of connecting Brahmaputra and Ganga for navigation purposes which will cost hundreds of crores of rupees because we have to bi-pass Pakistan and go via Siliguri. It was very costly and after deep consideration by the Ministry of Transport it was decided not to take it up for the present. But the West Bengal Government was very anxious to have some irrigation project. Therefore, the present project has been conceived after consultation and discussion with the West Bengal Government.

SHRI R. N. BARMAN : May I know whether the Government propose to attach very much importance to this project and if so whether it would be taken up as a project of national importance ?

DR. K. L. RAO : We are aware of the importance of this project. But, as the hon. Members know, irrigation is a State subject and we expect that the project must be financed by the State Government. The West Bengal Government has made out a case that in view of the fact that this is a project of international importance the finance for the project must come from the Centre. That is a point which is yet to be decided.

DR. RENEN SEN : Is it not known to the Minister that there has been a demand not only from the people of North Bengal but also from the people of Bihar and adjoining States also that Tista barrage scheme is a must if any project is going to be taken up in North Bengal ? So, will the Government of India view it from the

national point of view or will it be relegated to the domain of the West Bengal Government? What is the position of the Government of India in this regard?

DR. K. L. RAO : As explained already, every irrigation project is a must for the country. But, in this particular case, as the Tista river ends up in Pakistan, we are anxious to ensure the utilisation of the water essential for our needs. That is the only aspect where it differs from other projects. The Government of India is giving due consideration to this aspect.

SHRI SUBODH HANSDA : If I have understood correctly, the Minister said that this project will cost Rs. 44 crores. May I know the share of the State in this Rs. 44 crores?

DR. K. L. RAO : Under this scheme Bihar can irrigate 1 to 2 lakh acres and Bengal 7 lakhs acres. But both the governments have written to us that the money must come from the Centre. So it is extremely difficult to say about the share of States.

SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY : Accept that proposal of the State Governments.

Rural-Electrification Scheme in Manipur

*798. SHRI N. TOMBI SINGH : Will the Minister of IRRIGATION AND POWER be pleased to state :

(a) the number of villages benefited by the rural Electrification Scheme in Manipur and the total number of K. Watts consumed under this scheme so far ;

(b) whether Government are considering further expansion of the scheme in response to heavy public demand ; and

(c) if so, when the benefit of such expansion will reach the consumer ?

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

Statement

(a) Up to 31st March, 1971, 187 villages have been electrified in the Union Territory of Manipur ; the maximum demand of power for these villages is of the order of 2600 kilowatts,

(b) and (c). The rural electrification schemes are being accelerated ; about 310 villages are expected to be electrified by the end of the Fourth Plan as compared with 119 villages electrified at the beginning of the Fourth Plan.

SHRI N. TOMBI SINGH : It has been mentioned in the statement that 187 villages have been electrified and the maximum demand of power for these villages is of the order of 2,600 kilowatts. What is the basis of calculation of the requirements of the villages so far and may I know whether the total demand has been met ?

THE MINISTER OF IRRIGATION AND POWER (DR. K. L. RAO) : Manipur is very short of power ; at the moment we have got 5 MW power. We are hoping that in the next three years by diesel sets and other ways to have additional power of 2 MW. But even this is not sufficient for rural electrification of Manipur. So, we propose to take up 310 villages in a phased way during the Fourth Plan. Unfortunately, there is no power in that area. So, unless we have transmission of power from Assam I am afraid the progress cannot be expedited.

SHRI N. TOMBI SINGH : What is the progress made in the bulk purchase of power from Assam ? May I know whether the rural electrification is connected with this bulk purchase ?

DR. K. L. RAO : It is quite true that we are trying to get power from Assam up to 15 MW. The transmission on line is under construction. We hope it will be completed in the next two years.

SHRI D. BASUMATABI : In view of the fact that the *per capita* consumption of power is the lowest in Assam, how does the hon. Minister expect Assam to share power with Manipur ? We are already sharing it with Bengal.

MR. SPEAKER : The question is about Manipur.