

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: May I take it that one of the guidelines in the constitution of this board is that all areas where tobacco is cultivated will be represented on the board and if so, would he explain why in spite of the fact that there is tobacco cultivation in Kerala, Kerala is not represented on the board?

SHRI A. C. GEORGE: The answer I have given about Gujarat will have to be extended to Kerala also. We are setting up this board for flue cured virginia, which is an important export item. I do concede there is some tobacco cultivation in Kerala and the suggestion of the hon. member will be taken into consideration.

Railway Lines serving Rajasthan

*385. **DR. H. P. SHARMA:** Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state the average area and population catered by 100-kilometers of Railway lines in Rajasthan and how these figures compare with the all India figures?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI T. A. PAI): 5327 Sq. Kms. of area and a population of 912 thousands are catered for by 100 kilometres of railway lines on an average for all Indian Railways.

The information about route kilometres of railway lines is not compiled State-wise but only Railway Zone-wise. Hence such figures for Rajasthan or any other State are not available.

DR. H. P. SHARMA: It is a well-accepted statement of fact that without the provision of infra-structure the backward regions cannot hope to catch up with the rest of the country. In view of this, will the government come out with a time-bound programme so that the backward regions can hope to catch up with the rest of the country?

SHRI T. A. PAI: The role of the railways in building up the infra-structure is granted. Therefore, even in Rajasthan a new metre-gauge rail link project has been taken up from Dabla to Singhana 33 kms. estimated to cost Rs. 2.79 crores) mainly falling in Rajasthan. About ten per cent progress was achieved by July 1972. The target date for completion of this line is December 1973. Another is the conversion of the 1066 km. Delhi-Ahmedabad link into broad-gauge, including certain branch

lines. A major portion of this conversion, namely, 778 km. falls in Rajasthan. The survey is expected to be completed by December 1972. Further consideration to this conversion scheme will be given after the survey report is received and examined from all angles. So, schemes for every backward area will be taken into consideration.

DR. H. P. SHARMA: I want the Minister to cut out the pleasant generalities which the government generally give in reply to such question. I asked a specific question about a time-bound programme and yet the Minister in his reply went into the same generalities. Before I ask my question, I would like to give one instance. There is a line from Churu to Sikar, a distance of 60 miles, for which both the freight and passenger fare is one and a half times the all India rates. These rates were fixed at the time of the British Government. The present government is still continuing the same anomalies for the last 25 years, the anomalies which were handed over by the British Government.

MR. SPEAKER: This has nothing to do with the original question.

DR. H. P. SHARMA: Will the government remove these anomalies and will they come out with a time-bound programme?

SHRI T. A. PAI: I think the question is about the removal of anomalies in freights and fares in certain sections of railways in Rajasthan. I am afraid, I do not have the information. Anyway, the main question related to the removal of backwardness by development of the railways through a time-bound programme. This backwardness is not a static concept; it is a dynamic concept and I do not think the railways alone can tackle this. It is difficult to answer this question.

SHRI N. K. P. SALVE: This question is of quite some importance to those of us who come from backward States. When the Railway Minister must be having with him the average area of every State, the total population of every State and the total kilometres of railway lines in every State, what is preventing him from arriving at this figure? In that case, we will know the imbalances so far as railways are concerned.

SHRI T. A. PAI: My predecessors have rightly taken the decision that comparison between State and State should not be made by getting this information. I think the backwardness or forwardness of a particular State cannot be decided only in terms of railway mileage. Of course, the addition in railway mileage will have to be considered wherever necessary.

SHRI N. K. P. SALVE: Then the answer should have been that the information cannot be divulged in the public interest, not that it is not available.

Number of villages without Electricity

*386. **SHRI RANABAHADUR SINGH:** Will the Minister of IRRIGATION AND POWER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of villages in the country which have a population of over 2,000 and are still without electricity; and

(b) the State-wise break-up of the total number ?

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

Out of 30,762 villages with a population of over 2,000 in the country, 20,596 villages were electrified as on 31-3-71. The break-up of un-electrified villages State-wise is given below :

Andhra Pradesh	1,312
Assam	279
Bihar	2,424
Gujarat	301
Haryana	62
Himachal Pradesh	158
Jammu & Kashmir	88
Kerala	335
Madhya Pradesh	153
Maharashtra	560
Manipur	5
Mysore	482
Nagaland	4
Orissa	241
Punjab	190
Rajasthan	632
Tamil Nadu	477
Tripura	21
Uttar Pradesh	771
West Bengal	1,636
Union Territories	35

Total: 10,166

SHRI RANABAHADUR SINGH: In view of the statement that has been provided to us, may I know the main factors that are responsible for this wide variation in the number of villages in different States which remain electrified, looking to the policy of the government to electrify every village with a population of 2,500 in the Fourth Plan ?

SHRI B. N. KUREEL: Since electrification is done by the States, those States which have spent more money, are advanced in the matter of electrification while others are lagging behind. Those States which are below the average are Assam, Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Manipur, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tripura, UP and West Bengal. The average for the whole country is 21.7 whereas these States have a lower figure.

SHRI RANABAHADUR SINGH: It is common knowledge that most of the State Electricity Boards are suffering from want of funds. May I know what the government propose to do to save these Electricity Boards from shortage of funds?

SHRI B. N. KUREEL: Keeping this difficulty in view, the Rural Electrification corporation has been constituted at the Centre. It has already sanctioned schemes costing about Rs. 159 crores for rural schemes, including the backward regions.

SHRI NAWAL KISHORE SINHA: We are given to understand that the target of the Fifth Plan for electrification of villages is 1,31,000 and they propose to add 42 million kw of Electricity during the same period. Has the work started on all those power projects which will produce additional energy for the Fifth Plan period ?

SHRI B. N. KUREEL: During the Fifth Plan 1,31,315 villages will be electrified and 25 lakhs pumpsets installed. By this time 1,23,389 villages out of 5,66,878 have been electrified. The percentage is 21.7.

SHRI NAWAL KISHORE SINHA: May I know whether the work has started on those power projects which will produce additional 42 million kw during the Fifth Plan ?

SHRI B. N. KUREEL: Some of the schemes are continuing schemes. Some new schemes will also be taken up.