

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 13th March, 1924.

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber at Eleven of the Clock,
Mr. President in the Chair.

MEMBER SWORN:

Professor Laurence Frederic Rushbrook-Williams, C.B.E., M.L.A.
(Director of Public Information).

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

RAILWAY CONNECTION BETWEEN GAYA AND SHERGHATI.

754. ***Rai Hari Prasad Lal:** (a) With reference to the reply given to my unstarred Question No. 121, dated the 18th February, 1924, will the Government be pleased to state the nature of the information available to the Government on the subject?

(b) Will it be pleased to lay a copy of the information referred to in answer-121 (b) unstarred on the table?

RAILWAY CONNECTION BETWEEN GAYA AND SHERGHATI.

755. ***Rai Hari Prasad Lal:** (a) With reference to the answer given to my unstarred Question No. 121, dated the 18th February, 1924, will the Government be pleased to state the sources of their information on which the answer is based?

(b) If so, will the Government be pleased to state when the information on which the answer is based was collected?

The Honourable Sir Charles Innes: I propose to answer these two questions together. The reply was based on traffic reports and estimates prepared by the Railway authorities in 1913. It is impossible to reproduce the information in a form suitable for placing on the table, but the Honourable Member can see the documents, if he so desires, in my office.

RAILWAY CONNECTION BETWEEN GAYA AND SHERGHATI.

756. ***Rai Hari Prasad Lal:** (a) With reference to my unstarred Question No. 121, dated the 18th February, 1924, will the Government be pleased to state if the

- (1) Gaya District Board,
- (2) Sherghati Union Committee,
- (3) Gaya Municipality,
- (4) Imamganj (Gaya) Union Committee,

(d) Is it not a fact that the disturbed conditions on the Bannu border during the last few years had frequently interfered with the smooth working of this branch line and that the public could not freely avail themselves of the use of the same with the consequent decrease in its earnings?

(e) Have the Railway Board received any representation on the subject from the Bannu Citizens' Association and will the Government be pleased to see the advisability of relieving the Bannu and the other public of these extraordinary charges over a railway, which cannot be expected to be maintained entirely at their expense?

The Honourable Sir Charles Innes: (a) Yes.

(b) The increase was unavoidable as the line was being worked at a heavy loss.

(c) The Kalabagh-Bannu branch is classed as a commercial line and Government expect it to be self-supporting.

(d) During the years 1919—22 the line was used almost entirely for military traffic, but that did not decrease its earnings as charges were levied on all traffic.

(e) The Railway Board have received representations from the Bannu Citizens' Association. No reduction in rates and fares is feasible at present but the effect of the enhancements will be carefully watched and every effort is being made by the railway administration to enforce economy in working.

Nawab Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qaiyum: Are there any other lines on which the same rates have been brought into force, in that neighbourhood?

The Honourable Sir Charles Innes: I must ask for notice of that question, I am afraid.

PROTECTION OF DERA ISMAIL KHAN FROM THE EROSION OF THE INDUS.

761. ***Nawab Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qaiyum:** Will the Government be pleased to state what progress, if any, has been made with the embankment project for the protection of Dera Ismail Khan (N. W. F.) from the erosion of the Indus?

The Honourable Mr. A. C. Chatterjee: The earth work of the bund has been completed in 58 chains out of a total ultimate length of 120 chains, and in 12 chains the stone apron and slope have been finished.

IDENTITY OF THE TWO JUDGES WHO EXAMINED THE CASES OF STATE PRISONERS IN BENGAL.

762. ***Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh:** (a) With reference to my starred Question No. 404 of the 19th February 1924, regarding the arrests in Bengal under Regulation III of 1818, will the Government be pleased to state if they have inquired from the Bengal Government whether the latter have any objection to divulge the names of the two Sessions Judges, before whom papers in connection with the State prisoners were placed? And if so, will the Government be pleased to give the names of the two Judges?

(b) If the answer to the above be in the negative, will the Government kindly state the nationality of the Judges; and also if they are members of the Indian Civil Service?

(c) In view of the fact that the Judges were merely Sessions Judges, will the Government be pleased to state if they are prepared to place the papers relating to the State prisoners before two Judges of the High Court for consideration? And if so, when is it likely to be done?

The Honourable Sir Malcolm Hailey: (a) and (b). Government are not prepared to give further details regarding the identity of the Judges.

(c) No. On the occasion of the opening of the Central Legislature His Excellency the Viceroy said that he would himself scrutinise the cases of these prisoners and the report of the two Judges thereon. This is being done.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh: May I take it, Sir, that the information now wanted has never been imparted to the public?

The Honourable Sir Malcolm Hailey: The Honourable Member may take it that we have given to the public all the information which we considered it advisable to give.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh: I should like to know what is the significance of His Excellency the Viceroy's statement in this House on the 31st January last, when His Excellency said, "after the arrests in Bengal were made, as you are aware, all the documents and evidence relating to each individual have been placed before two Judges". What is the significance of the words, "as you are all aware"?

The Honourable Sir Malcolm Hailey: The significance of those words was limited to the fact that, as many people were aware, the papers had been placed before two Judges.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh: Will Government kindly refer to the announcement which has been made by Government on the subject from which the public could draw this conclusion?

The Honourable Sir Malcolm Hailey: My impression is that the fact was referred to in the Bengal newspapers. That is the probable reason why His Excellency used the words, "as you are aware".

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh: There has been no announcement by the Government on the subject then,—may I take it?

The Honourable Sir Malcolm Hailey: I believe that there was an official announcement in the Bengal Council in the course of the debate.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh: Will the Honourable Member kindly give a reference to that?

The Honourable Sir Malcolm Hailey: I will look it up;—I have spoken to the best of my recollection.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh: I should like to have it placed on the table.

Mr. Chaman Lal: When will Government make known the results of the decision arrived at by His Excellency?

The Honourable Sir Malcolm Hailey: I am afraid I can give no information as to that, Sir.

Mr. Chaman Lal: Is it a fact, Sir, that another gentleman in Bengal has been arrested?

The Honourable Sir Malcolm Hailey: I believe that one additional arrest has been made.