

Madras Rangoon Steamer Service

*923. **Shri C. R. Narasimhan:** Will the Minister of Transport be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of Government has been drawn to a report in the "Mail" dated the 2nd December, 1955 that the steamer service between Madras and Rangoon has been interrupted and that representations are being made for restoration of a satisfactory service between the two places; and

(b) what consideration the matter is receiving?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Shahnawaz Khan): (a) and (b). A statement is laid on the Table of the Lok Sabha. [See Appendix V, Annexure No. 46].

Shri C. R. Narasimhan: Are the Government aware that the absence of a regular service at certain fixed intervals between Madras and Rangoon is causing great hardship and that the small boat Sonavati now plying rolls and pitches far too much for passenger comfort?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: We are fully aware of that and every endeavour is being made by the Ministry of Transport to procure a suitable ship.

Shri C. R. Narasimhan: I was asking about the necessity of fixed interval services.

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: Of course the necessity is there. We are trying to secure a suitable ship.

Shri C. R. Narasimhan: There might be a service once in a way. It is considered better by the passengers to have the dates known before hand.

Mr. Speaker: In reply to that he has said there are not sufficient number of ships.

Shri C. R. Narasimhan: Whatever they have, they can run at fixed intervals. Are arrangements being made for that?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: The ship that was plying on this route--Sonavati--has been withdrawn for carrying out certain surveys and repairs. That will be put into commission from February 1956. We hope that from that date there will be a regular service.

Shri B. S. Murthy: May I know whether the ship plying from Madras to Rangoon has been diverted to other ports in Malaya?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: No, Sir.

Telephone Exchange at Purne

* 924. **Shri P. G. Sen:** Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether the arrangement for the opening of a Telephone Exchange at Purnea has been completed; and

(b) if not, the reasons for the delay?

The Deputy Minister of Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur): (a) A Telephone Exchange at Purnea was opened on 11-8-55 and its capacity is going to be increased further.

(b) Does not arise.

Shri P. G. Sen: Is it a fact that according to the present arrangements, no call can be made before 10 A. M. on Saturdays and Sundays?

Shri Raj Bahadur: It is a regular exchange and the working hours may be fixed according to the needs. I am not quite sure about the hours during which this particular exchange functions.

Air Strips in Kangra and Kulu Valleys

*925. **Shri Hem Raj:** Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to refer to the reply given to Starred Question No. 1333 on the 22nd March 1955 and state:

(a) whether the survey for the construction of air-strips in the Kangra and Kulu Valleys has been completed; and

(b) if not, when it is likely to be completed?

The Deputy Minister of Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur): (a) On the basis of the survey so far undertaken, only the site of Bhuntar in the Kulu Valley appears suitable, and it is being made fit for a test landing by Heron aircraft. None of the sites surveyed in Kangra Valley has been found suitable. However, further search for possible sites continues.

(b) Does not arise.

Shri Hem Raj: May I know by what time the survey so far as Kangra Valley is concerned will be completed?

Shri Raj Bahadur: I have submitted that we had already made a preliminary survey and the sites that had been pointed out to us had not been found suitable for constructing an aerodrome. Whenever we get another site which may reasonably appear to be worthwhile, we shall consider that.