

श्री बलवन्त सिंह रामूवालिया : एक लाख रुपए में 30 करोड़ रुपए का ऑब्लीगेशन। मंत्री जी कुछ तो कह दें ...**(व्यवधान)**... आप कह दो कि हम नहीं रखते ...**(व्यवधान)**...

श्री शरद यादव : सभापति महोदय, इस सम्बन्ध में मेरी कोई बहुत जानकारी नहीं है जो माननीय सदस्य दे रहे हैं, बोल रहे हैं। मुझे अभी मंत्रालय के अधिकारियों ने बताया और अभी मेरे पास जो सूचना है कि एन.ओ.सी. हमने दिया ही नहीं है। ...**(व्यवधान)**... मेरे विभाग से जो एन.ओ.सी. मिलता है वह अभी तक दिया नहीं है।

श्री दीपांकर मुखर्जी : प्रिलिमिनरी इंक्वायरी करा दीजिए। वह कराकर आप हाऊस में आइएगा। ...**(व्यवधान)**

*122. /7%e questioner (Shri CM. Ibrahim) was absent. For answer, vide page 19 infra.]

*123. [The questioner (Shri Nana Deshmukh) was absent. For answer, vide page 20 infra.]

*124. [The questioner (Prof. Ram Gopal Yadav and Shri Rama Shanker Kaushik) were absent. For answer, vide page 22 infra.]

*125. [The questioner (Shri A. Vijaya Raghavan) was absent. For answer, vide page 23 infra.]

High Level Committee for implementation of Ichampalli and Polavaram Projects

*126. SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have constituted a High-Level Committee for early clearance and implementation of Ichampalli and Polavaram Projects for utilisation of Godavari Waters;

(b) if so, the composition of the Committee; and

(c) by when the Committee would submit its report?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI ARJUN SETHI): (a) to (c) A High Level Committee has been constituted on the 6th July, 2000 under the Chairmanship of Member, Water Planning & Projects (WP&P), Central Water Commission (CWC) with representatives from Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Orissa as Member, Chief Engineer (Project Appraisal), CWC as Member, Chief Engineer (Irrigation Management) CWC, as Member Secretary and representatives from the Central Electricity Authority,

[28 November, 2000]

RAJYA SABHA

Central Ground Water Board, National Water Development Agency, Ministry of Environment and Forests as invitee Members to resolve the inter-State issues involved in Ichampalli and Polavaram Projects. The Committee is likely to submit its report by January, 2001.

SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO: Sir, the Ichampalli and Polavaram projects have been pending for the last 22 years. What concrete steps have been taken by the Government to ensure their implementation? Despite the neighbouring States accepting the Bachawat Committee recommendations, I would like to know why the Central Water Commission had reduced the height of these two projects, from 112.70 metres to 95 metres in the case of Ichampalli project; and from 45.72 metres to 38.10 metres in the case of Polavaram project, as against the recommendations of the Bachawat Committee. As the height proposed by the Central Water Commission would not help in supplying water to the agricultural land in Telangana, will the Government reconsider increasing the height of the projects, as recommended by the Bachawat Committee?

SHRI ARJUN SETHI: Mr. Chairman, Sir, these two projects are inter-State projects. The States of Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh now Chhattisgarh and Orissa are involved in the Polavaram project; and the States of Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh and the erstwhile State of Madhya Pradesh are involved in the Ichampalli project. These are inter-State projects and, therefore, all the parties have to agree for the implementation of these two projects. If these States are agreeable and have a consensus on the issues involved, the Centre can do something. The Centre cannot, on its own, impose something on these States. At the request of the hon. Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, a committee has been constituted. As I have already answered in the main reply, a committee has been constituted and the first meeting has already taken place. As I have stated in the main reply, the committee is likely to submit its report on the implementation of these projects, by January, 2001.

SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO: Sir, the Ichampalli and Polavaram projects were planned to benefit 1.576 and 7.19 lakh acres of land, besides 975 and 720 MW of power generation in Andhra Pradesh where most of the beneficiaries are STs and OBCs. In the above circumstances, I would like to request the Government to take up these projects as national projects.

SHRI ARJUN SETHI: Sir. I agree with the hon. Member that the execution of these projects, no doubt, would solve many problems and help irrigate many acres of land. Unless these States agree and come to some consensus on the issues which are involved, the Centre cannot help them. As I stated

earlier, I cannot assure the hon. Member that the Centre, on its own, can implement these projects. The Centre cannot say anything on these inter-State problems. These issues have to be resolved by the States themselves. The Centre cannot interfere and cannot direct the States to implement these projects at the earliest.

SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Sir, so far as the settlement of inter-State disputes is concerned, the role of the Central Government needs to be redefined. A number of inter-State projects are pending. I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to one project. The Koyna Dam is on the verge of a break down. It can break down any time. A breach has developed there. Water is leaking. The officials of the Karnataka Government were not allowed to inspect the dam. Once it is destroyed the lower riparian villages of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh and the villages and towns that are located on the banks of this river would be susceptible in terms of terrible damage to human lives and property. So far as clearance of these projects is concerned, what is the power of the Central Government? When such a calamity occurs, what role does the Central Government play? The role of the Central Government has to be redefined. I would request the hon. Minister to explain what steps the Government is taking in this regard.

SHRI ARJUN SETHI: I fully agree with the contention expressed by the hon. Member. As per the Constitution, the Centre cannot impose anything on the States. Primarily, it is the responsibility of the State Government. Irrigation is the responsibility of the State Government. Unless they themselves resolve the differences, the Centre cannot interfere. If any project comes to the Central Government or to the Ministry of Water Resources, we examine that project and give advice on technical matters. So far as clearance of the project is concerned, if they are not agreeable, if the two State Governments are not agreeable and are not able to resolve the differences, the Central Government cannot impose anything on them. So far as the seriousness of the issue and immediate solution to the problem is concerned, I fully agree with the hon. Member. So far as my present status is concerned, I have nothing to say. We cannot interfere.

SHRI S.B. CHAVAN: Sir, A Committee has already been constituted to look into the matter of Ichampalli and Polavaram. I would like to understand first as to what are the terms of reference under which this Committee is going to function. What are the issues which have been entrusted to it? If I remember correctly, the Bachawat Commission which was constituted earlier had also suggested that there was plenty of water available which could be diverted to

[28 November, 2000]

RAJYA SABHA

the water-deficit States. I would like to know whether this suggestion would also be included in the terms of reference.

SHRI ARJUN SETHI: Sir, as regards the supplementary, pertaining to the Bachawat Committee's recommendations, I would like to say that the Godavari Water Dispute Tribunal was constituted on 10.4.1969, under the Chairmanship of Justice R.S. Bachawat. The Tribunal gave its Report on 7th July, 1980. Sir, if the House desires, then I can read out the recommendations of this Committee...

MR. CHAIRMAN: It must be a long one. You can lay it on the Table.

SHRI ARJUN SETHI: Yes, Sir. I will lay it on the Table of the House.

SHRI S.B. CHAVAN: All other recommendations need not be mentioned. But, on the question of diversion, there is plenty of water in the Godavari basin, and this can be diverted for being used in the States where there is shortage of water. I would like to know whether there is any recommendation of this nature. That is the only point on which I would like a clarification.

SHRI ARJUN SETHI: Sir, as the hon. Member has stated, there is a need for transferring water from surplus area to deficit area. I entirely agree with his contention. But the States, as it is, don't agree with each other and they don't try to resolve the differences on different issues, such as rehabilitation, resettlement and environmental aspects of the projects are concerned, the States do not resolve the differences amongst themselves. This is the reason why the projects are being delayed and why they are not being implemented at an early date, in spite of its importance for the development of the concerned States... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: What is the role of the Central Government? You allow the disputes to continue.

SHRI ARJUN SETHI: Sir, I entirely share the concern expressed by the Member. So long as irrigation is in the State list, the Central Government can only advise the States, hold discussions and persuade the States to agree on certain issues. But nothing more can be done, as long as irrigation is in the State List.

DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA: Why don't you convene the Inter-State Council, which is the constitutional body for resolving the disputes pertaining to States.

SHRI S.B. CHAVAN: You have not replied to my supplementary.

SHRI ARJUN SETHI: Sir, as the hon. Member, Shri Ramachandraiah,

mentioned, we had discussions with the State Government, and the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh has also written to the Prime Minister, Vajpayeeji, on this issue. As per his suggestion, we constituted a Committee, under the chairmanship of one of the members of the CWC. The Committee met once and it has also appointed a task force. And they are to report to the Committee, by January, 2001, after having discussions with these States, the dissenting States. So, unless this report is given to the main Committee, nothing can be done at this juncture. But I would assure the hon. Member that at the Ministry level, whatever is possible on our part, we will, certainly, do our best to resolve the differences and get to implement this project, as far as possible.

डा. अलादी पी. राजकुमार : सर, यह प्रश्न मैंने सन् 1994 में इसी सदन में उठाया था जब श्री पी.वी.नरसिंह राव जी प्रधान मंत्री थे। तब मैंने उन्हें इसी हाउस में कहा था कि आप आन्ध्रा प्रदेश से पहले प्रधान मंत्री बनकर आए हैं, पोलवरम प्रोजेक्ट को नेशनल प्रोजेक्ट बनाना चाहिए, इसका नाम आपके नाम पर रखा जाएगा। इसके लिए स्वर्गीय एन.टी. रामाराव जी ने भी कहा था sir that it would be named after Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao and that it should be taken as a national project. Even our present Chief Minister, Shri Chandrababu Naidu, has written umpteen letters to the Union Minister of Water Resources. But nothing has been done so far. And now the hon. Minister is giving a wrong reply. If a dispute arises... (*Interruptions*)... Let me tell. Why do you worry? तीनों बहनों के बीच में अगर झगड़ा हुआ तो कौन लेगा? घर के बड़े आदमी को, परिवार के बड़े आदमी को सॉर्ट आउट करना चाहिए। अभी तीनों स्टेट्स उड़ीसा, मध्य प्रदेश और आंध्र प्रदेश में डिस्प्यूट है, ऐसा जा रहा है कभी आपने इन तीनों स्टेट्स के चीफ मिनिस्टर्स को बुला कर पूछा कि उनकी क्या प्रॉब्लम्स हैं? इनको सॉर्ट आउट करने के लिए सेंट्रल गवर्नमेंट को आगे आना चाहिए, इस बारे में आपने कभी सोचा? तो मंत्री महोदय एक मीटिंग कंडक्ट करके कि whatever problems are there, kindly sort them out and see that the project is given clearance as early as possible, because this area is mostly inhabited by STs and OBCs. If you clear this project early, then they would be benefited. Please see to it that this project is given clearance as early as possible. If you wish, we will name it after Vajpayeeji so that his name will be remembered in Andhra Pradesh for ever.

SHRI ARJUN SETHI: Sir, I entirely agree with the concern expressed by the hon. Member. As I have stated in my main reply, as per the request of the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, and also in view of the demand made by different

[28 November, 2000]

RAJYA SABHA

sections inside and outside Parliament, a high-level Committee has been constituted. I have already referred to it in my main reply. This Committee has met once. It has also appointed a Task Force to report to it the differences which are there between these States. The Task Force is to report to the Committee. The Committee is likely to meet in January, 2001. I agree with the concern expressed by the hon. Member. I would certainly see to it that whatever best can be done is done, to implement this project at an early date.

DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Sir, I want to know from the hon. Minister whether he would convene a meeting of the Chief Ministers of these three States.

SHRI ARJUN SETHI: Yes, I agree with him.

SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Sir, I want to know from the hon. Minister the terms of reference of the Committee which they have appointed. The Government of India is totally in the dark, and it is not making any effort to solve these problems.

SHRI ARJUN SETHI: Sir, as was stated by the hon. Member, the Bachawat Committee was appointed, and when this Committee had given its report, then also, for an out-of-court settlement ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Sir, the Bachawat Committee had submitted its Report some time in the year 1977, and its Award has expired on 31 st March, 2000. The Award of the Committee has already expired.

SHRI SANGH PRIYA GAUTAM: The Committee had been constituted on the advice of the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. I think, whatever was suggested by him, must be there in the terms of reference of the Committee.

SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Sir, the Bachawat Committee was constituted in 1975. It submitted its Report in 1977, and the Award has expired on 31 st May, 2000. The Minister is referring to the report of the Committee which has already expired.

श्री अधिक शिरोडकर : सर, बचावत कमेटी अब बची नहीं है।

SHRI ARJUN SETHI: Sir, as far as the Bachawat Committee is concerned, I agree with the hon. Member that it was appointed long back. In between also, another two agreements were signed between these States. So far as the Ichampalli Project is concerned, the concerned States, namely, Maharashtra, erstwhile Madhya

Pradesh and Andhra, had signed an agreement in the year 1978. They also signed another agreement in the year 1980. In spite of those agreements, there are areas on difference which could not be settled. As a result, the Task Force has been constituted, is studying their areas of difference. So far as the report of the Task Force is concerned, it would be submitted to the high-level Committee by January, 2001 /So, my Ministry is taking all possible steps to resolve the differences which are there between these states. As all the hon. Members know, we, being the Ministry at the Centre, have to function as per the Constitution. If we don't function as per the Constitution, it could be challenged in the court of law. So, I assure the hon. Members that my Ministry would do its best to resolve the differences so that the project is implemented at an early date.

SHRI FALI S. NARIMAN: Sir, I only wish to draw the attention of hon. Minister to a wider question which he raised, namely, the irrigation is a State-subject and not a Central-subject. It is absolutely right. But, Sir, many decades ago. Parliament had passed the River Boards Act. There is also the Inter-State Water Disputes Act, which has proved to be a needless source of remuneration to lawyers and work for judges. It has not yielded much result. The River Boards Act has not been implemented by the Centre, with the result that in case of an Inter-State river project, there is always scope for a River Board to be constituted; after which, the Centre assumes control and, therefore, a much more meaningful role to play than merely as a mediator between State Chief Ministers.

I would request the hon. Minister to kindly look into this. For forty years, we have not had a River Board established, and instead States have only been quarrelling with States under the Inter-State Water Disputes Act. This is a question which requires the earnest consideration of the hon. Minister.

SHRI ARJUN SETHI: Sir, so far as the River Boards Act of 1956 is concerned, it is also advisory in nature. However, we are trying to amend these Acts and to provide more teeth so that whatever difficulties are there, they can be dealt with in the Inter-State River Water Disputes Amendment Bill, which will be very soon coming before Parliament for consideration.

DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: With due respect to the hon. Minister, I would like to say that he is contradicting his own answer. In the initial stages he said that the Ichampalli and Polavaram projects is a subject between the concerned States, they have to sit and resolve the problem. But, again, he say that he is calling all the three Chief Ministers. I think, there is no seriousness in replying

[28 November, 2000]

RAJYA SABHA

the Ichampalli and Polavaram projects is a long pending problem. It is a question of irrigation of 1.65 lakh hectares, but it is remaining unutilised. I feel, the Minister has to take a serious note of this. I think, the Minister is contradicting his own answer. I want a serious reply from him.

SHRI ARJUN SETHI: Sir, I am not contradicting my answer at all. I have stated earlier that the Central Government is very serious in resolving the differences. As far as the suggestions made by the hon. Member as to why not we convene a meeting of the different States to resolve the issue, I have answered in the affirmative. I too am interested in calling a meeting of the Chief Ministers concerned so that something can emerge there. So far as the other question, which the hon. Member has raised is concerned, I have answered it in the course of my reply. Sir, there is no contradiction in my reply.

DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: I thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Government of India for constituting a high-level committee, on the suggestion of our hon. Chief Minister. In his reply to part (c) of the main question, he has said, "The committee is likely to submit its report by January, 2001." I want to know from the hon. Minister whether he has fixed a definite time-frame for the submission of that report.

SHRI ARJUN SETHI: Sir, I have indicated it as January, 2001.

डा. वाई. लक्ष्मी प्रसाद : आपने कहा "likely."

SHRI ARJUN SETHI: No doubt the word "likely" is used. I assure you that the second meeting of the committee would be held in the month of January, 2001.

DR. Y. RADHAKRISHNA MURTY: Sir, I have been reading about that project since my childhood. I thank the Minister for giving the history involved of the project till now. The specific question is, constitution of a committee, which we are resorting to, is not an answer to the problems as we know from the Bachawat Committee. We know about the dispute over Almatti and all that which this House has witnessed in the wake of it. But the specific question is, as my friend Dr. Alladi Rajkumar has pointed out, will the Centre take the initiative to call a meeting of the concerned State Chief Ministers. Minister of Irrigation, and experts, with the Centre acting as a mediator. Otherwise, I must tell you that the Committee's reports are not going to solve this problem. Therefore, I request you—I am not putting a question—to take the initiative, call a meeting of the Chief Ministers, the Ministers of Irrigation and experts of the concerned States and try to find a solution to this as early as possible.

SHRI ARJUN SETHI: Sir, as far as officials meeting isconcerned.it is held now and then. But, as far as the meeting of the concerned Chief Ministers is concerned, certainly, I will take the initiative and try to convene a meeting as soon as possible.

Volatility in Stock Market

* 127. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether keeping in view the volatility in stock market, the Chairman of SEBI (Stock and Exchange Board of India) has suggested that small investors should stay away from stock markets and instead concentrate on long term investment elsewhere; and

(b) whether this will not have adverse effect on stock market?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): (a) and (b) The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has intimated that the Chairman, SEBI, in some meetings, has mentioned, *inter alia*, that Indian stock markets like stock markets in other countries have been volatile in recent times. Therefore, it is in the interest of investors, particularly small investors, that they should examine the fundamentals of stocks before making investments since equity investments can be risky. Investors who do not wish to take risks of this nature could choose less risky alternatives such as long-term investments in Bank deposits, etc. This is part of SEBI's efforts to promote investor awareness and should not have any adverse effect on our stock markets.

DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Sir, actually, I am putting this question in view of the statement made by the Chairman of the SEBI that small investors are being given unattractive returns. I would like to know what steps the Government is taking to attract small investors to the stock market and end the present volatility.

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: Sir, the Government does not take steps directly to attract small investors to the stock market. Different kinds of stocks are available in the stock market. The functioning of the stock markets is in the public domain. We have the market regulator in SEBI which regulates the stock markets throughout the country. It is entirely optional on the part of investors to invest in the stock market, to invest in a particular stock. As far as the security of the investment is concerned, it is the responsibility of the SEBI. which is the market regulator, and, generally, of the Government. And. over a period