

Deputy Gustavo Tarre Briceno, currently on a visit to our country as our honoured guests.

On behalf of the Members of the House and on my own behalf, I take pleasure in extending a hearty welcome to our distinguished guests and wish them an enjoyable and fruitful stay in our country. We hope that during their stay here they would be able to see and learn more about our Parliamentary system, our country and our people and that their visit to this country will further strengthen the friendly bonds that exist between India and Venezuela. Through them we convey our greetings and best wishes to the Parliament and the friendly people of Venezuela.

Ground Water Management projects in various States

*323 SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether World Bank has provided Rs. 900- crores for ground water management projects in Karnataka, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh;

(b) whether people's participation is also essential for success of this scheme; and

(c) if so, the progress made in this regard and success achieved in creating awareness among people?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARY: I would like to know from the Minister of Agriculture whether the constant fall in the ground water level will have its impact on food production as well as on the intensive gross circle. I would also like to know whether the constant fall in the ground water level will affect the

potable water in areas where irrigation is the main source.

SHRI SOMPAL: Sir, large scale incidents are being observed where ground water levels are depleting at an alarming rate in certain areas. Rain precipitation in India takes place only during three to four months of monsoon, particularly within 80 to 90 days of three months of July, August and September. Most of the water flows out and takes a heavy toll of top soil. Only 17.25 per cent of this rainfall is utilised. The primary source during the rest of the months is the ground water. Overuse and overdrawal of ground water for intensive agriculture is causing depletion.

Naturally it will affect the crop production in due course. A wide concern is being expressed about this phenomenon not only in India but also globally. The Government is seized of the matter. There are several schemes for recharging underground waters. A National Watershed Development Programme for rain-fed agriculture has already been instituted in the Ministry of Agriculture and watershed management is being developed as the technique for sustainable recharging of underground water and its use for agriculture. Similarly, the drinking water supply also will be affected, and not only depletion but pollution also is another matter of concern. Pollution is taking place on account of several factors including overuse of chemicals in agriculture by way of fertilisers, insecticides, pesticides and also by other causes like industrial effluents going into river-flows and seeping into underground water too. All these things have already been taken note of and several schemes have been undertaken to tackle this phenomenon.

SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARY: From the answer given by the hon. Minister, it is very clear that agricultural production is going to be affected. Sir, the *Hindustan Times* carried an article on 22nd May, 1998, saying that the World

Bank has provided Rs. 900 crores for giving assistance for this purpose. I would like to know from the hon. Minister (a) whether any proposal at least has been sent to the World Bank for getting this assistance from them; (b) whether the Government of India is aware of the fact that for having better Water management there are irrigation projects being assisted by the World Bank and by bilateral agreements with other countries—with such assistance we have been in a position to increase our production and also have better irrigation facilities and (c) whether there has been any impact on such assistance after the imposition of sanctions by some of the countries. The imposition of sanctions is not against the Government of India but it is against the Mother India. We will no doubt meet this challenge. But is it not a fact that it is the failure of the Government policy and the failure of the foreign policy? Will the Prime Minister enlighten the House whether he has taken note of all these factors and will he kindly tell us whether it is going to have any impact on our agricultural production particularly in this area?

SHRI SOMPAL: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon. Member has enlarged the scope of the question to several issues and several Ministries. The report which appeared in the *Hindustan Times* that he mentioned about seems to be pertaining to a project which is being undertaken in three States of India, namely, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra. It is not for irrigation but it is only for rural water supply and improvement of sanitation. It is not for irrigation. So far as the Ministry of Water Resources is concerned, there is only one scheme which has been funded by the World Bank. This particular project is available for eight States and it is for updating the data of water, not only underground water but also surface water, and for metering and collecting the data because water management presupposes that we have a reliable data.

So far as the Water Resources Ministry is concerned, this is the only scheme which the World Bank has funded. As I stated earlier, this is available in eight States. If the hon. Member is interested, I can give the details. The World Bank through International Development Association signed in September 1995 a Development Credit Agreement and a Project Agreement with the Government of India and eight participating peninsular States to execute hydrology projects for an estimated total cost of 162.4 million US dollars and projects concerned Maharashtra and Karnataka States too, but not Uttar Pradesh. This aims at developing data base, including surface water and ground water in terms of quantity as well as quality. The brief features of this hydrology project in these two States are as follows.

In Karnataka, there is a target for data collection from 100 river-gaging sides, three hydro-meteorological stations, 500 seismometer observation well, besides upgradation of water quality laboratories, etc. In the case of Maharashtra, there is a target of data collection from 62 river-gaging sides, 18 hydro-meteorological stations and 700 seismometer observation well, besides upgrading water quality laboratories. There is no World Bank aided hydrology project in Uttar Pradesh, but six more States are covered. So, this is one project.

Regarding the other project...
...(Interruptions)... Yes, I will give. The list of the other States is: Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Kerala, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Central Ground Water Board. But, the other scheme which might have been mentioned in *The Hindustan Times*, though I have not seen it, is the Watershed and Sanitation Management Scheme which is available for the States of Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra. If the hon. Member is interested, I can give full details, but it will take a lot of time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is all right. Shri Gurudas Dasgupta.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA: Sir, we are discussing ground water level and the hon. Minister has expressed his alarm at the decline of the deposit. Sir, it is going to seriously affect our irrigation and drinking water supply. In view of the fact that there has been a steady decline in agricultural production and in view of the fact that our agriculture is still dependent on ground water and rainfed irrigation, my supplementary is this: What does the Government propose to do to augment supply of water for irrigation and drinking from other sources, specially taking into consideration the necessity of a better management of surface water supply? Secondly, in view of the complaint that there is arsenic infection and lead infection in a number of States, what steps would the Government like to take to ensure that people don't get affected because of the decline of ground water level?

SHRI SOMPAL: Sir, as I have already stated, there is a National Watershed Development Programme for rainfed areas. Recently, the Planning Commission has come out with a 25-year Perspective Plan to be implemented in five Plans, including the Ninth Five Year Plan. This Scheme will require 75,800 crores of rupees and it will develop watershed and ground water, particularly with recharging and other measures, like land levelling, gullies, check dams and providing wares and also storing water in the surface storage facilities, like tanks, bunds, *jheels*, lakes and also recharging ground water. This Scheme is likely to cover 64 million hectares. As the hon. Member has said, irrigation has been provided only to 37 per cent of our agriculture, 63 per cent is still without assured irrigation. This scheme is likely to take care of all the rain-fed areas.

Regarding arsenic and other factors causing water pollution, particularly ground water, there is a very heavy

incidence of arsenic noted in underground water of West Bengal. But this is from natural underground source and the only way is to come out with scientific measures for detoxifying water and installing water treatment plants and this is being undertaken as part of the National Drinking Water Supply Scheme.

SHRI M SHANKARALINGAM: Sir, sufficient fund has been allocated for water management for arresting rain water going into the sea by preserving it in tanks and dams. How many major dams, State-wise, have been planned? Can the Minister supply a list of big dams envisaged to preserve rain water in order to help people in irrigation?

SHRI SOMPAL: Sir, the question relates to construction of dams, major and medium irrigation projects. Though it is not connected with the present question, it concerns ground water management. I think, 269 schemes have been conceived since 1951 and 95 have already been completed and the rest are in progress. All other data can be supplied to the hon. Member, which is not immediately available.

SHRI R. MARGABANDU: Sir, farmers who are holding big lands, have drilled bore-wells to a great depth drawing the entire ground water. Adjacent to them are people who have small holdings having traditional wells and some bore-wells also. When big farmers extract the entire water from the deepest levels, wells and bore-wells of the adjacent areas become dry. Consequently, these people are not able to irrigate their lands. Is there any Plan on the part of the Government to bring in a legislation or a Government Order identifying areas saying that up to a particular depth only a person can extract water?

SHRI SOMPAL: Currently there is no plan to bring any legislation to control

underground water but the way the incidence is being observed, it seems something has got to be done for controlling underground water use. But, currently there is no plan for bringing any legislation in this regard.

SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAHL: Through you I would like to request the hon. Minister to let us know whether loans are given through the Land Development Banks for purposes of pumping out ground water by farmers particularly in those States where there are a lot of resources of ground water in the Eastern region and whether the aggregate amount of loan in 90's in real terms has gone down. If so, what is the Government going to do about this?

SHRI SOMPAL: So far as Eastern States of India are concerned, there is a lot of scope and potential for exploiting ground water because rain precipitation is usually higher in Eastern States as compared to the rest of India. There have been several recommendations by various committees including the one set up in 1983 by the Government of India under the Chairmanship of Dr. S.R. Sen, which had recommended that underground water should be utilised on a larger scale in Eastern States to increase productivity and production of agriculture. But, unfortunately, not much progress has been made. I happened to be associated with the Joint Committee on agriculture which had gone in May 1991 to monitor the level of implementation of S.R. Sen Committee's recommendations. Most of them had been accepted by a Conference of the Chief Ministers held in Patna in 1986. But we were pained to observe that not much progress has been made since then. I am not aware of the progress made during these last years. But, even now, generally I feel that the potential has not been exploited as it should have been. There is a need to do so. Therefore, the Government of India is trying to come out with schemes. We have already schemes for propagating and

expanding minor irrigation particularly with shallow hole tubewells in the Eastern States of the country.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Sir, the hon. Minister while replying to the main question, in regard to part 'a', stated a blanket 'no'. While replying to the second supplementary of Mr. Poojary, he gave some details of some of the projects which have been exposed for the World Bank's assistance. I would like to have some clarification on this. In this connection, he has also said that in 1985 an arrangement was made with the IDA to have 162 million US dollars for projects in two States, not U.P., but Karnataka and Maharashtra. I would like to know as to what has been the utilisation of these 162 million US dollars and whether any utilisation has taken place in the last two or two and a half years.

SHRI SOMPAL: Sir, I would like to re-state that this project is not for two States but for eight States. I have given the names of these eight States. This is only for strengthening the data base.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: What is the utilisation?

SHRI SOMPAL: Sir, the figures of utilisation are not available now. But, the details of the stations for metering and other things have already been given in reply to the question.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Can he collect the figures and give me? (Interruptions)....

SHRI SOMPAL: Why not? I can do so. I will pass it on to the hon. Member.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: He should pass it on to the Assurances Committee..... (Interruptions)....

MR. CHAIRMAN: AH right. (Interruptions).... Next Question.

*324. [The Questioner (Shrimati Basanti Sarma) was absent for answer vide col. 25 infra.]