

RAJYA SABHA

Monday, the 16th June, 1980/the 26th
Jyaistha, 1902 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the
clock, Mr. Chairman in the Chair.

Oral Answers to Questions

*101. [The questioners (Shri Bhola Prasad, Shri Yogendra Sharma and Shri Bhupesh Gupta) were absent. For answer, vide cols 38-39 infra]

*102. [The questioners (Shrimati Hamida Habibullah, Shri Gurudev Gupta and Shri Sawaisingh Sisodia) were absent. For answer vide cols. 39-40 infra]

Winding up the Dandakaranya Development Authority

*103. SHRI KALYAN ROY:†
SHRI AHMAD HOSSAIN
MONDAL:

Will the Minister of SUPPLY AND REHABILITATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item which appeared in the Statesman of the 29th May, 1980 under the caption "Third Change of Guard In Two Years" regarding exit of Shri Venkataramani as Chairman of the Dandakaranya Development Authority;

(b) if so, who is functioning as Chairman now;

(c) whether Government propose to give the Dandakaranya Development Authority more powers and financial autonomy;

(d) if the answer to part (c) above be in the negative, what are the reasons therefor; and

(e) whether Government have decided to wind up the Dandakaranya Development Authority and if so, what are the reasons therefor?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF SUPPLY AND REHABILITATION (SHRI P. K. THUNGON): (a) Yes, Sir. The news item appeared in the Delhi Edition of 'Statesman' of 30th May, 1980.

(b) Secretary, Department of Rehabilitation, is now functioning as Chairman, Dandakaranya Development Authority.

(c) and (d) All the powers of the Department of Rehabilitation have been re-delegated to the Dandakaranya Development Authority as permitted under the general instructions of Ministry of Finance. Consequently, the question of giving the D.D.A. more powers and financial autonomy does not arise.

(e) No decision has been taken to wind up the Dandakaranya Development Authority.

SHRI KALYAN ROY: Sir, the DDA was set up for the rehabilitation of to refugees from erstwhile East Pakistan and for the integrated development of the tribals in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Orissa. But, Sir, it is the biggest hoax perpetrated to deceive the people and the refugees particularly. Nothing is being done to rehabilitate them and the cat is out of the bag by the report of the Estimates Committee which must have been drawn to the notice of the Minister. My question is this: Is it not a fact that in the course of the last two year three Chairmen of the DDA have resigned out of sheer disgust and Mr. Venkataramani told The Statesman on the 29th May that all his proposals to rehabilitate were turned down by the Finance Ministry and other Ministries, that the whole purpose of the Government now is to wind it up and that already 300 employees had been retrenched?

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Kalyan Roy.

SHRI P. K. THUNGON: Mr. Chairman, Sir, there is no fact in saying that three officers have resigned. One officer, Mr. Venkataramani whom the hon. Member is referring to had requested to transfer him to the State Government because his wife had a major operation because she had brain tumour. On compassionate ground he wanted his transfer. He was reverted to Orissa and posted in Bhubaneswar.

SHRI KALYAN ROY: Is it a reply, Sir? Are you making a joke with us? What do you think of us? We asked a specific question. They should not take us for granted. After all there is decency in the House. It is not that I am only putting the question: the whole House is asking the question. Is it not a fact that three Chairmen of the DDA resigned in the course of two years? To the same newspaper he said that he was resigning because the Government wanted to wind up this particular rehabilitation centre and that all his proposals for rehabilitation were turned down by the Ministry. This is what he stated.

SHRI V. P. SATHE: I do not know why my friend is getting excited. Sir, he asks whether three Chairmen have resigned before this, within two years, in disgust. The facts speak for themselves. The facts are: an officer of the Orissa Government cadre, because Dandakaranya is there, is normally put as the chief executive there. The first was Mr. Natarajan. He was there from 2-5-77 to 31-5-78. And he, Sir, on his own request, on personal grounds, wanted to be relieved. When he was wanting to be relieved, there was a protest as to why he was being relieved from friends like Mr. Kalyan Roy from West Bengal . . .

SHRI KALYAN ROY: And from West Bengal Government.

Shri V. P. SATHE . . . and from West Bengal Government also. Therefore, on his request, he was relieved

and the Government sent Mr Puri. When Mr. Puri was being posted, there was a protest as to why Mr. Puri was being posted. Mr. Puri was there hardly for a few months, for three months. And when, on administrative grounds he was being relieved, there was a protest as to why he was being relieved. He had suddenly become popular within three months! Now, Sir, after Mr. Puri's going, we got Mr. Venkataramani, a senior officer of the Orissa cadre, to head the DDA there. When Mr. Venkataramani was being posted, there was a protest—"We do not want this officer. Why are you posting this officer?" Now, Mr. Venkataramani becomes popular. And it is good; he did good work. Sir, as was being explained, there is a specific letter from Mr. Venkataramani. Now, you may certainly not protest and say that we should not have humanitarian considerations. Sir, the letter of request, dated 3-12-79, from Mr. Venkataramani to the Government said:

"After the operation of my wife for brain tumour last November as the project had been passing through a difficult phase after the mass desertion last year, I have refrained from putting my personal difficulties to the Government till now."

A conscientious officer, he naturally suffered. Now he said:

"I have been thinking of making a request to you for my reversion to the State Government sometime during the middle of next year."

Now, you will definitely not say that an officer who does a good job in spite of...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Sathe, I think...

SHRI V. P. SATHE: Sir, why is he excited? We have not removed Mr. Venkataramani. On his own request, on humanitarian grounds, we revert him and now you are saying

that the Government is victimising some people. I do not really understand.

SHRI KALYAN ROY: Sir, you have heard my question. He has not replied to the other part of the question which I am repeating once again. Has his attention been drawn to the serious strictures, unanimous strictures, given by the Estimates Committee that while more power, and financial power, should have been given to the DDA Chairman, powers had been taken away and that the attitude of the Government has been one of utter callousness to rehabilitate the refugees in the Dandakaranya areas? In particular, has his attention been drawn to the statement given by Mr. Venkataramani to the correspondent of the *Statesman* on the 29th May, which is the subject of the question—"I feel frustrated; the Government wants to wind up the DDA; my proposals have been turned down; and no power has been given to me?"

SHRI V. P. SATHE: Sir, firstly...

SHRI PILOO MODY: He must give humanitarian reasons.

SHRI V. P. SATHE: ...we do not know. My friend is referring to Mr. Venkataramani's statement to the *Statesman*. We do not know whether Mr. Venkataramani has given any statement to the *Statesman*.

SHRI KALYAN ROY: Read the report.

SHRI V. P. SATHE: The report also does not say that this is the statement of Mr. Venkataramani. It is not saying so. It begins by saying: "On the exit of Mr. Venkataramani as chairman of the Dandakaranya Development Authority the Centre's reported decision... is another attitude, another example of the Government..." They were not quoting Mr. Venkataramani's statement. This is not correct. Another thing is what the Government has done is only to

actually implement the report of the Estimates Committee. The report of the Estimates Committee dated 9-4-79 says—I need not read out the entire thing, I shall read out only the relevant portion—"The remedy appears to lie in separating the offices of chairman and chief administrator—one to preside over meetings and the other as chief executive, and appointing an officer not below the rank of Chief Secretary of the State Government as part-time chairman of the Authority." What have we done? We have actually implemented this recommendation. This chief executive is Mr. Mahapatro who was the deputy chief till now and has been promoted, he is the chief executive. All the power and authority of DDA lies with the chief executive and there is no power other than the DDA with the chairman here. The chairman, who is a secretary, only presides at the meetings. So we are implementing the Estimates Committee's report. There is no substance in unnecessary apprehensions.

Rajadhyaksha Committee report on power

*104. **SHRIMATI SUSHILA SHANKAR ADIVAREKAR:** Will the Minister of ENERGY AND COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received the final report of the Rajadhyaksha Committee on Power; and

(b) if so, by when a decision on the recommendations of the Committee is likely to be taken by Government?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND COAL (SHRI A. B. A. GHANI KHAN CHAUDHURI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

SHRIMATI SUSHILA SHANKAR ADIVAREKAR: I would like to know from the honourable Minister what the original date was for submitting this report that was given to them, how many extensions were given to this committee and when this report