

- The details with regard to items (i) to (iii) are given in the satatamem attached. [See Appendix LXXIV, Annexure No. 93]

12 NOON

REPORTED FALL IN THE LEVEL OF THE BHAKRA RESERVOIR

- [MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the chair.]

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF IRRIGATION AND POWER (PROF. SIDDHESHWAR PRASAD) : Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, due to poor in-Hows into the Bhakra Reservoir, the reservoir has filled up only to 65% of the normal full capacity. The level of the reservoir on 14th December, 1970 was 1588.36 feet as compared to 1633.91 feet on the same day last year. With the present low level of the reservoir, the water releases have to be adjusted during the depletion period beginning from 15th

3. The restrictions imposed on power supply to Nangal Fertiliser would not result in its closure. The output, however, at the Nangal Fertiliser Factory will be reduced to about 2/3rd of its normal production capacity to that power availability to other consumers in the Bhakra Service Area is increased while at the same time maintaining essential production in the Nangal Factory to the extent practicable.

SHRI M. K. MOHTA : Sir, the famine of electric power in the northern region in general and Punjab in particular is nothing new. Even at present there is a power cut of 10 per cent on the agriculturists and industrialists. During the period July-October, 1970, this area had suffered electric power cut of the order of 40 per cent with the result that production amounting to Rs. 105 crores was lost consisting of Rs. 25 crores in agriculture and Rs. 80 crores in industry.

Now, Sir, the present power cut in Punjab amounts to 10 per cent and according to the hon. Minister it will have to be stepped up to 22 per cent in order to meet the general ton shortfall, but according to the calculations made by the Punjab Government the cut would have to be 30 per cent in order to absorb this. Therefore, my first question to the hon. Minister is : Since the Nangal Fertiliser Factory is taking up as much as 23 per cent of the present generation of power in the Bhakra Nangal complex will it not be advisable to close down the Nangal Fertiliser Factory and make this power available to the agriculturists and the small-scale, medium-scale and large-scale industrialists of the State, particularly when the fertiliser situation in the country is comfortable and the closure of the fertiliser factory at Nangal would not mean any undue hardship to the agriculturists if it is closed for a short period of two months or so ? So, the closure of this factory would mean a loss in production of Rs. 52 lakhs whereas if the entire 30 per cent cut is imposed on the agriculturists and industrialists of the State the loss would amount to Rs. 40 crores. So it would be in the national interest to sacrifice the production of Rs. 52 lakhs in the Nangal factory rather than having a loss of Rs. 40 crores over the entire agricultural and industrial sector. That is my first question to which I would like to have the reply of the hon. Minister.

PROF. SIDDHESHWAR PRASAD : Sir, as I have made clear in the statement, we are making every effort to meet the power shortage in Punjab. I have also made it clear in the statement that due to scanty rainfall in the Bhakra reservoir catchment area there is not enough water for more power generation in the Bhakra system. Even then we have taken all other steps for meeting this power shortage.

It has been suggested by the hon. Member that we should close down the Nangal Fertiliser Factory. Even if we close down

this factory it would not meet the whole power shortage in that area. While we are imposing a 22 per cent power cut in Punjab, the power cut in the fertiliser factory is about 40 per cent, and we shall see that, wherever economically feasible, we will try and make every possible effort to make power available.

SHRI M. K. MOHTA : Sir, my question has not been answered in its essence. After all, my point was that there is a comfortable fertiliser position in the country and the closure of the factory for two months or so would not affect the agriculturists and the 23 per cent of the power that is being generated and being consumed by this factory can be consumed by hundreds of small-scale industrialists and agriculturists.

My second question to the hon. Minister is, whether note is taken of the requirement of power in this area over a period of, say, five or ten years from now. It has been estimated by the Power authorities of the respective States that power shortage in the States would increase to 363 MW in 1970-71 and would go on increasing every year to 687 MW in 1979-80. So, what are the long-term plans of the Government to augment the power supply in this area ? Is the Government going to locate two atomic power plants of 200 MW each as has been demanded by the northern States because hydro-electric resources there have more or less reached their saturation point and more hydroelectric power cannot be generated there ? If so, I want to know whether the Government would announce a long-term plan including the installation of these atomic power plants in that area.

PROF. SIDDHESHWAR PRASAD : Sir, as far as I am aware, there is still fertiliser shortage in the country and we are spending a lot of foreign exchange for the import of fertilisers. We have taken all steps by sanctioning quite a few projects, some in Himachal Pradesh, some in Jammu and Kashmir, many in U.P. and one each in Delhi and Punjab to meet this power shortage. Then we are also considering whether it will be possible to have an atomic power plant. A committee has been appointed to go into this matter and as soon as we get their report we will take a decision on their recommendation.

SHRI DEV DATT PURI (Haryana) : Having regard to the fact that the Bhakra system is likely to run into shortage for a

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[Shri Dev Datt Puri.]

very long time to come, are the government aware or have they investigated that by modification of the process employed in the Nangal fertilizer plant at a cost of less than Rs. 10 crores, the power consumption can be brought down to less than one-third, that is, from 165 to between 40 and 45 ? Are government aware of that ? Is it a fact that the allocation of power between Haryana and Punjab has been made by the Bhakra Control Board from time to time and Punjab has overdrawn by 21.38 million units between 10th and 19th July this year, 23.84 million units between 20th July and 2nd August and 8.5 million units between 3rd August and 23rd August ? What do the government propose to do to stop any State from overdrawing beyond what is their due share ?

SHRI M. K. MOHTA : Haryana is not experiencing any power shortage whereas Punjab is experiencing a 40 per cent cut. Still the hon. Member wants Punjab to suffer more.

PROF. SIDDHESHWAR PRASAD : As far as the first suggestion of the hon. Member is concerned, I believe that the hon. Minister for Petroleum and Chemicals will take that into consideration. As far as the second suggestion or complaint is concerned, we have taken that into consideration and have called meetings of the officers from Punjab and Haryana and the Bhakra management board has also taken these things into consideration and they have tried to see that no beneficiary State tries to draw more power than what is due to them.

SHRI K. P. SUBRAMANIA MENON : (Kejala) : It is clear from the statement of the Minister that the State which is likely to suffer most from the power cut in the Bhakra system is the Punjab, because the other States have not got that much demand and they have got some other sources. It is unlikely that the Punjab government's plan to set up diesel generating sets will fructify before May and therefore the power cut in Punjab is likely to continue for some more time than what is expected or what is stated now, namely, February. Even if the position is taken that between December 15 and February 15 there will be the proposed cut of 30 per cent in addition to the present 10 per cent, the loss in production in Punjab State alone due to agriculture will be 20 crores and industry about Rs. 10 crores. On the other hand, if there is a cut from

2.38 million units to 1.8 million units in Nangal factory, the loss in production during the same period is only likely to be Rs. 52 lakhs. Here it is a question of rational outlook towards the whole economic situation and not whether a particular factory incurs a loss. The country, as a whole, will be losing a bigger amount of production by the cut imposed on Punjab than a cut imposed on Nangal. By imposing a cut of 30 per cent on the Punjab electricity system, the country is likely to lose Rs. 40 crores in production, both in agriculture and industry. If the cut is further extended upto June, the loss is likely to be over Rs. 100 crores. Is it not better for the economy of the country as a whole to suffer smaller losses by cutting the production in the Nangal Fertilizer factory and diverting the electricity to the Punjab ? And, secondly, Sir, may I know from the Government what steps the Government is taking to expedite the construction and commissioning of the fifth unit of the DESU at Badarpur and whether it is possible to start its commissioning earlier than the present stipulated date ?

PROF. SIDDHESHWAR PRASAD : Sir, as far as the first point of the hon. Member is concerned, I have already replied to that aspect of the question. As far as the commissioning of the fifth unit of the DESU is concerned, we are making all efforts to see that it is commissioned as early as possible. The difficulty has been about the supply of equipment and that has been delayed and therefore, the commissioning has been delayed. We shall see that this is commissioned as early as possible.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Mr. Misra.

SHRI S. D. MISRA (Uttar Pradesh) : Sir, during the past few years, especially during the last four or five years, it has been constantly seen, from year to year, that these reservoirs, hydro-electric stations, especially in the North, dry up or reduce their water to a certain level which reduces the capacity for electricity generation. This is not only in this Bhakra reservoir, but it happened in Rihand. Even today it is happening in Rihand and there is a constant cut, almost every day, since the last five years in the North. This year, besides this Bhakra reservoir and the Nangal project suffering, it is the cultivators who are suffering in the Punjab and in U.P. In U.P., there has been a cut recently of 25% on production excepting, of course, the fertilizer factory and it is

proposed to have a 50% cut on electricity for cultivators. In view of the demand, persistent demand, which has been there from the Parliament and in view of the uncertainty of rains in the North because the rains come in the North only for two or three months—and in view of the fact that the coal jits are so near the Punjab and UP and Bihar, why don't you have more thermal power stations in this area where the shortages are growing? But you just have these hydro-electric stations because it costs one paisa or half-a-paisa cheaper, but ultimately it becomes costlier, much costlier. I want to know from the Government whether it is not accepting that request. And, what is happening to the atomic power plants which were also requested for? I think this should also be gone into. Is there anything to be said by the Ministry of Irrigation and Power in this matter or not? Can he let us know what has happened to the cut in Rihand and how much cut is going to be there? I understand that already there is a 25% cut and there is going to be more. Am I right? And how would you like to relieve this position?

PROF. SIDDHESHWAR PRASAD : Sir, the hon. Member is very correct when he says that there should be a proper balance between hydro-electric and thermal power generation and that is what we are actually doing. Now, we have more and more thermal power stations, one at Bhaini and then a complex at Indraprastha and then another complex at Badarpur. Besides these, we are also having in this region another power plant at Rana Pratap Sagar. About having a new atomic power plant, as I have told earlier, a committee has been appointed and after receiving the recommendation of the committee, the Government will take the necessary step.

SHRI S. D. MISRA : Sir, a committee was appointed which said that Narora in Aligarh district in U.P. is suitable. Now, another committee is being appointed. How many committees are there? Sir, what is the actual position? Why so many committees? When one committee makes a recommendation, the same matter comes to another committee. What is this?

PROF. SIDDHESHWAR PRASAD : Sir, this is under another Ministry. After the recommendations of one committee, another committee has been appointed because, besides U.P., other States like Haryana and in Punjab have also made claims that they should have atomic power

plants. Therefore, this Committee will take into consideration all the suggestions from the different States and give its recommendations. About Rihand, there is a shortfall in that area, and there has been a cut. About the latest position, Sir, as far as I am aware, there is going to be no cut.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI (Maharashtra): I want to ask a very small question. Will the Government, due to the power shortage in Punjab, take very seriously the question of an inter-State grid. What is the programme in this direction?

PROF. SIDDHESHWAR PRASAD : We are giving the topmost priority for the creation of an All-India grid. For the proper functioning of the inter-connections we are thinking of constructing load dispensing centres. For that some arrangements have to be made and the agreement between the concerned States has got to be made. That has to be sorted out.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS (1968-69) OF THE CENTRAL INLAND WATER TRANSPORT CORPORATION LTD., CALCUTTA AND RELATED PAPERS

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS, AND IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SARDAR IQBAL SINGH) : Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy each of the following papers (in English and Hindi) under sub-section (1) of section 619A of the Companies Act, 1956:—

(i) Second Annual Report and Accounts of the Central Inland Water Transport Corporation Limited, Calcutta, for the year 1968-69, together with the Auditors' Report on the Accounts.

(ii) Review by Government on the working of the Corporation.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT-4545/70 for (i) to (ii).]

STATEMENT SHOWING ACTION TAKEN ON ASSURANCES, PROMISES AND undertakings GIVEN DURING THE VARIOUS SESSIONS OF THE RAJYA SABHA

SARDAR IQBAL SINGH : Sir, I also beg to lay a copy each of the following statements (in English and Hindi) showing the action taken by Government on the