

[Shri K. C. Pant] Power is being given to the Controller to prepare a scheme for amalgamation of one insurer with another in the circumstances stated in the Bill. An insurer can be amalgamated when the Controller feels that such a step is in the public interest or in the interest of the insurance business of the country as a whole. Both the insurers concerned in the amalgamation will be given an opportunity of making representations on the scheme and the scheme will be final and legally binding only after the Central Government has approved the scheme. The Joint Committee have added a provision that no such scheme shall be prepared without the prior written consent of the transferee insurer.

There is also power for the Government to acquire the undertaking of an insurer which continues to be persistently mismanaged, if such acquisition is in the public interest. There is provision for payment of compensation and in case the compensation offered is considered too low, an appeal to a Tribunal is provided. The original Bill provided for payment of compensation to the shareholders but the Joint Committee amended this provision so that the compensation can be paid to the insurer itself. This means that the company can continue to carry on some other business if it wants to do it.

The Bill as introduced made some of the provisions of the Insurance Act applicable to the general insurance business carried on by the Life Insurance Corporation as well as the State Governments. The Joint Committee have expanded this provision and it can be now said that all the relevant provisions of the Act will apply to such general insurance business.

With these remarks, Madam, I beg to move that the Bill further to amend the Insurance Act, 1938, so as to provide for the extension of social control over insurers carrying on general insurance business and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto and also to amend the Payment of Bonus Act, 1965, as passed by the Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration.

The question was proposed.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : This will stand over. We go to the other

debate fixed ; we go to the motion to be moved by Mr. Chitta Basu. Mr. Chitta Basu.

MOTION RE FLOOD SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY

SHRI CHITTA BASU (West Bengal) :
Madam Deputy Chairman, with your permission I beg to move:

"That the statement on the flood situation in the country, laid on the Table of the Rajya Sabha on the 18th November, 1968, be taken into consideration."

Madam, while moving this I want to place before this hon. House certain facts regarding the damage and devastation caused in many parts of the country during the last few months. Of course floods were mere in early part of July and August in certain parts of West Bengal. Floods were there in Gujarat. Floods were there in Orissa. Madam, excuse me when I say, from my own personal experience about the flood damage or devastation caused in North Bengal, that it surpasses the imagination of everybody. While expressing my sympathy with the flood victims of other parts of the country I want to draw the attention of this House to the sufferings and sad plight of the flood victims, the North Bengal people, which are really inexpressible. Language is not there, so much meaningful or so much expressive, which can really describe the damage and devastation caused in North Bengal. Madam Deputy Chairman, after going through the newspaper reports and other reports heard from persons I could not really make an estimate of the magnitude of that devastation before I did personally go to the area of devastation. After my personal visit I could really find out the extent of the damage and devastation. Likewise, you can comprehend it only if you could see things with your own eyes.

Madam, before going to the figures I only want to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to the magnitude of the devastation caused. I do not speak for myself, because I am just one of those who had been in the affected area, like many other persons including Members of Parliament, like the Gover-

nor and many State Government officials of West Bengal. Also the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Food Minister visited the affected area. It is estimated, Madam, that about five million people have been affected by the floods in North Bengal in five districts. This admission has been made not by any odd private person or any political worker or anybody belonging to the Opposition. For your information, Madam Deputy Chairman, I want to say that this estimate was made by the Secretary to the Government of West Bengal in the Department of Relief and Rehabilitation, that five million people have been affected by the deluge. This very fact has also been admitted by the Congress leader, Shri Atulya Ghosh; he also comes out with a statement that not less than fifty lakhs of people have been affected by the floods, by that deluge. Not only that, Madam, you will be shocked to learn of the toll of human lives and cattle lives. Non-official estimates put the toll of human lives as being any thing from 10,000 to 20,000. When I mention the figure 20,000, there may be many Members opposite who may not believe it, but if they are Congress Members, I simply want to draw their attention to the statement made by Mr. P. C. Sen, a former Chief Minister of West Bengal. According to his statement, the number of persons who died due to floods and subsequently due to the devastation caused by those floods is 20,000. But what is the estimate of the Government of India given here in Delhi? Kindly hear it; in a statement made by Mr. K. S. Ramaswamy, Deputy Home Minister, on the floor of this House on December 4, 1968, he says, "2,704 persons have died out of which in Jalpaiguri district alone there were 1,975, in Darjeeling 704 and in Cooch Behar 23." Now this is the report which the Government of India in Delhi accepts. They have not taken into consideration the estimates made by the Government of West Bengal. They have not taken into consideration the estimates made by their own former Congress Chief Minister of West Bengal. They have not taken into consideration the estimates made by their own Congress leader, Mr. Atulya Ghosh, not to speak of us. Therefore, Madam Deputy Chairman, you will understand what is the attitude of the Government of India in the matter of their having underestimated the magnitude of the problem.

And according to that statement of Mr. K. S. Ramaswamy this is what he has further stated: "The total damage to houses in these districts except Darjeeling is estimated at over Rs. 10 crores. The damage in Darjeeling district is still being assessed." Even after months this Government could not even make a proper assessment of the damage caused in the district of Darjeeling. And the number of houses damaged, they say, was only 96,318. But, Madam, according to my own assessment the number of persons who died is not less than 10,000; according to my own estimate the number of cattle that died is not less than one lakh, and five lakhs or even more of houses have been completely damaged. Parts of Jalpaiguri town—I think Mr. Roy will bear me out when I say this—namely the Kadambari area and the Domohani area have been completely swept away. You cannot find out any trace of the fact that there was human habitation there only six months ago. Therefore this is the attitude of The Government of India in the matter of making assessment.

Madam Deputy Chairman, you will also be very much shocked when you learn what allotment has been made by the Government of India so far for relief and rehabilitation. In all fairness I would say here that the period of routine relief is over but people could not get immediate relief that ought to have been distributed among the victims. I have toured the affected areas and I found how callous the Government officials were. They were indifferent; even weeks after the deluge no Government official was ffit to render any help or distribute any relief to the victims. I found how the district officials of Jalpaiguri were callous and indifferent and indifferent to what extent? I think the Minister of Irrigation will bear me out that the officials of the Jalpaiguri district were forewarned about the impending flood but they did not care to forewarn the people. They did not care to give sufficient warning to the people. Had there been some sort of a warning to the people, many lives might have been saved and many cattle might have been saved. What actually happened was even after the flood there was not a single relief party or rescue party to come to the rescue of the people. I do not like to (ake much of the time of the House in describing these things. What I mean to say is, the Government not

[Shri Chitta Basu] being responsible to the people of the State, the people were denied even the most elementary relief during that period. This is how the bureaucratic Government functions and the callousness and indifference of the bureaucratic Government increased to a very great extent the sufferings of the flood victims.

Now I am coming to the question of relief and rehabilitation. My feeling is this that the period of routine relief is over and we should now enter the phase of rehabilitation. Madam, you will be astonished to learn that the magnitude is such that 50 lakhs of people have been affected of whom about 15 lakhs of people require rehabilitation because they have lost everything. They have lost their lands; they have lost all their belongings and they have to be rehabilitated in a new life. And what has the Government of India so far done for them? As far as I know, Madam Deputy Chairman, there is no rehabilitation blueprint for these flood victims. In the name of rehabilitation what is being done today is, certain loans or grants are being given. The loans vary from Rs. 50 to Rs. 300 as house building loans. Can you say that a house which has been completely dilapidated, which has to be built a new, can be built with a sum of Rs. 300 in that part of the country? I think Mr. Ray will bear me out that at least 300 bamboos are necessary to erect a simple mud house and the cost of 300 bamboos is Rs. 300 today. Here he says it will be Rs. 500. But the Government of India has decided to give only Rs. 300 by way of house building loan. It is not at all possible to have a house with that little amount. Cultivators are given only Rs. 300 when all their agricultural implements have been swept away, when all their utensils have been swept away, when all their cattle have perished.

Madam, I also want to draw the attention of the Government to one more thing. Those peasants and other inhabitants have lost all their documents; they have lost all their passports, dakhilas etc. but the Government asserts that they will be given loan benefits or rehabilitation benefits only on the production of documents which are all lost in the floods in the sea. Therefore many of these flood victims are

denied these rehabilitation benefits. The Government, as I have said already, has no rehabilitation programme at all and what is wanted today is a blueprint for rehabilitation. Unless that blue-print for rehabilitation is there, you cannot save these 15 lakhs of uprooted humanity who are destined to die. They are destined to lose their identity for ever if that blue-print for rehabilitation is not there.

Madam Deputy Chairman, you might have known that a study team visited the flood-affected areas of West Bengal three weeks after the flood. I think they have submitted a report but even today we do not know what the Government of India's decision is on the report of this Central study team. It was reported in the Press that the West Bengal Government on the basis of the assessment made by them suggested to the Central team that Rs. 39.5 crores would be needed to give effect to the rehabilitation programme for these people but we do not know to what extent the Central team has accepted this suggestion. But what is again reported in the Press is that they have recommended Rs. 12 crores to be sanctioned against the demand of the State Government of Rs. 39.5 crores, whereas myself and a large number of Members of Parliament from West Bengal met the Prime Minister and suggested to her that about Rs. 50 crores will be needed to give effect to the rehabilitation programme. Madam, the Prime Minister is on record to say that in the matter of rehabilitation, finance would not stand in the way. The Prime Minister told me herself that finance would not stand in the way of rehabilitation. Similarly the Deputy Prime Minister has publicly said that finance was not standing in the way of relief and rehabilitation of these unfortunate helpless flood victims. But what do we see today? According to the statement made by Mr. Ramaswamy, Deputy Home Minister of the Government of India, on the 4th December, it is said :

"The Central Government has advanced Rs. 5 crores to the State Government as interim assistance. The State Government has also sanctioned Rs. 1.97 crores for various relief and rehabilitation purposes. Until November 26, Rs. 12,56,940 have been spent in Jalpaiguri District. Details of actual amounts spent in other Districts are being collected."

Madam, up till now Rs. 5 crores have been advanced by the Centre and Rs. 1.97 crores have been sanctioned by the State Government. It comes to about Rs. 7 crores in all which they are distributing in the name of rehabilitation at rates varying from Rs. 50 to Rs. 300. Is it not a farce? Is it not deception? While the Prime Minister of the country says that finance shall not stand in the way, while the Deputy Prime Minister says that finance shall not stand in the way, while the Government of West Bengal says that at least Rs. 39.5 crores are needed to meet the situation, only Rs. 7 crores have so far been released. And what is much more alarming, Madam Deputy Chairman, is this that the bureaucratic machinery is so inefficient that even this amount they could not spend. That small sum of rupees they could not spend. They could not even distribute the small amount of relief. They could spend only Rs. 12,56,930 up to the 28th November. This is the position. Therefore, the callousness, indifference and inefficiency of the administration of the Government of West Bengal, under the leadership of Mr. Dharma Vira, is responsible for the havoc and sufferings of the people.

Again, I want to draw the attention of the Government of India to the fact that there was a demand from the Government of West Bengal right from the year 1965 that there should be master plan for North Bengal, so that the flood might not recur. There was a master plan which was prepared in consultation with the Geological Survey of India and the Government of West Bengal. That was called the master plan of North Bengal. It was to be implemented at a cost of Rs. 200 crores. That cannot be implemented without the financial assistance of the Government of India and the Government of India is sitting tight over it. Now, this time when we had the flood and such widespread havoc, damage and devastation, I urge upon the Government of India to immediately give effect to and implement the master plan of North Bengal. That can save North Bengal's economy. You should know that it is North Bengal which earns about Rs. 100 crores of foreign exchange a year by way of export of tea. Therefore, North Bengal cannot be neglected.

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THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : There are so many speakers. Please give them a chance.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: Only two minutes. Again, I demand that there should be a judicial enquiry into the failures of the State Government officials in the matter of forewarning the people of that area. A high-powered committee to enquire into the causes of floods should be diere. Unless that enquiry is there, nothing can be got. I also want to know from the hon. Minister as to what happened to the Man Singh Report. Had it been implemented, this calamity might not have overtaken the State of West Bengal.

With these words, I once more urge upon the Government of India to take up in right earnest the programme of rehabilitation, for which the lands have to be requisitioned, for which many things have to be done. Your rules and regulations have to be given the go-by if these people are to be saved. I think the hon. Minister will answer the points raised by me.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : There are three amendments, one each in the name of Shri Chitta Basu, Shri Bhu-pesh Gupta and Mr. Sen Gupta.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: Madam, I move:

1. "That at the end of the motion, the following be added, namely :—

'and having considered the same, this House recommends to the Government to take the following measures for the relief and rehabilitation of the flood-affected people of North Bengal, namely :—

(a) effective Committees be formed at district levels in all the affected areas in North Bengal with representatives of all Political Parties, other mass and relief organisations and prominent citizens to prepare plans for rehabilitation and to advise the Government in all matters, relating to such rehabilitation;

(b) the Central Government should immediately grant at least Rupees Fifty crores for the purpose of rehabilitation;

(c) for poor people, housebuilding grants (non-returnable) upto Rs. 5,000 be immediately

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sanctioned. For other people grants upto Rs. 2,500 and interest-free long-term loans upto Rs. 15,000 be given. Materials for house building be supplied to all by the Government;

(d) all the affected people should be given adequate compensation for the loss of their property;

(e) small businessmen be given grants upto Rs. 5,000, and other businessmen grants upto Rs. 2,500 and loans upto Rs. 25,000 according to their requirements;

(f) grants and advances to all categories of employees be given;

(g) daily wage-earners be given adequate help till normal economic life is restored;

(h) grants and loans to people of different professions (*e.g.*, lawyers, doctors, owners of small journals, etc.) be given;

(i) to restore cultivation, cattle, plough and other materials for cultivation and seeds and seedlings be immediately supplied to the cultivators, and cash money in the form of grants and loans be given to them;

(j) all kinds of taxes and revenue in rural and urban areas (including municipal taxes) be waived; and

(k) students be supplied with books by the Government immediately.'"

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Madam, I move :

2. "that at the end of the Motion, the following be added, namely:—

'and having considered the same, this House recommends to the Government to take the following measures:—<

(i) the Central Government should take all necessary steps for flood control, in particular to control the rivers Teesta and its tributaries Jai Dhaka, Torsha, Rai Dak and Sankosh and a master plan should be drawn up without delay;

(ii) remove expeditiously the silt from 2i lakh acres of land which have been silted;

(iii) the loans advanced to the Central and State Government employees should be recovered in thirty-six to forty eight instalments;

(iv) the Government employees should be given housebuilding loans;

(v) the primary school, college and other teachers should be given Rs. 1,000 per teacher as grant and Rs. 500 as loan in addition to six months' salary which should be given as flood advance;

(vi) the students should be given a book grant for Rs. 75—Rs. 100 each and the amount should be disbursed by the head of the school or college requiring certificate from a legislator or as gazetted officer;

(vii) small traders should be given loans on easy terms and without dilatory formalities;

(viii) artisans should be given the needed loans on easy terms so that most of them are in a position to avail them;

(ix) advocates, doctors and the medical pharmacies should be given adequate loans and grants;

(x) libraries, clubs and other cultural institutions should be given adequate loans and grants;

(xi) vigorous measures should be taken to remove the silt from the agricultural land; the peasants of this land should be settled in the Government land and other lands belonging to the Tea Estates; and all peasants must be given grants ranging from Rs. 500—Rs. 1000 each plus fertilisers and free seeds;

(xii) small land-holders and bargadars should also be given adequate loans and grants; and

(xiii) rules regarding granting of loans to the agricultural labourers and bargadars must be liberalised."

3. "That at the end of the Motion, the following be added" namely:—

'and having considered the same, this House recommends to the Government that permanent measures for prevention of such calamity should be taken by Government at all levels."

The questions were proposed.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Now, the motion and the amendments are before the House. There are about 18 speakers who want to participate. The time allotted is 2½ hours. You will have to restrict yourself to eight or ten minutes each.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: If it is only eight or ten minutes, better stop the debate. We shall sit longer.

[THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA) in the Chair]

SHRI S. P. RAY (West Bengal) : Mr. Vice-Chairman, I am the only victim here and I should be allowed to speak. The House is aware that all the districts of North Bengal more or less suffered from the recent flood, but I would like to deal with only the district of Jalpaiguri, because I hail from Jalpaiguri. I was the only victim among the Members of Parliament during that flood.

Please allow me, Sir, to narrate about the flood that occurred in Jalpaiguri district on the night of 4th October. In my opinion, this was not merely a flood, but a deluge. I was myself a victim of the holocaust that had taken a heavy toll of human lives and had caused extensive damage to properties, rendering thousands of flood victims homeless destitutes. This was because not only the flood water came, but along with it a huge quantity of big logs with strong current, mixed with crude oil and kerosene oil that came out after the bursting of the main pipeline near the Sevok bridge, damaged most of the dwelling houses of the town and carried away their belongings. A large number of people, who were in their houses, lost their lives, while many others were swept away in the course of their efforts to reach places of safety. None could take measures to protect household properties, as people could only think of saving their

lives. I will not give you the details of the ordeal which I myself, with the members of my family, had to stand with all the residents of the town. The water rose between 8 feet to 18 feet at different places and we had to stand the ordeal without food and drink, sitting on housetops or treetops, under drenching shower for many hours. The experience of the trouble still haunts me like a nightmare and I am sure everybody who had the misfortune to share the agony and sufferings has still the horrors fresh in his mind. With the gush of water entering the town, there was immediate power failure and electric lights went off. The town was plunged into darkness, the telephone and wireless also went out of commission.

Members have already received the supplementary statement of the flood situation laid on the Table of the House on 18-11-1968 and I do not like to make a statement on matters which may be a repetition. You have seen from the statement that the flood has affected in varying degrees about 5 million people living in North Bengal districts. Amongst them the Jalpaiguri people and those living near several breaches have suffered the most. Records in Government offices and courts have either been washed away or damaged and the estimate of loss suffered on different accounts may be more imagined than described. The courts and offices have opened, but there is absolutely no work and the members of the legal profession will have a very difficult time for many months to come. Traders, big and small, and all the physicians have also lost everything.

My account of the sufferings will remain incomplete without a reference to the loss of the teachers and students and the educational institutions have suffered. A large amount of money will be required to attend to the needs of normalising the condition of schools and colleges and to help the persons affected.

The House may be aware that the river Teesta is one of the most turbulent rivers in the eastern part of India, originating from Tibet now in occupation of the Chinese army. It flows through the gorge in the hills of the Himalayan belt and at Sevok in Darjeeling district the river debouches into the plains and about 30 miles

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down flows by the east of Jalpaiguri town. There was heavy rainfall in Sikkim and Bhutan hills and in the plains of North Bengal in the first week of the October. The heavy rainfall caused landslides and floods of an unprecedented magnitude, and the river Teesta was in full fury. This river, which may be called the river of sorrow, had been causing lots of distressing floods at regular intervals for a long time. In 1954 there was also flooding of Jalpaiguri town, after which the State Government, with the assistance of the Centre, had constructed an earthen embankment along the western bank of the river for a length of about twelve miles. Only a portion of this embankment covering Jalpaiguri town is armoured at the base, while there is no such work in the upper portion of the long embankment. This embankment was under the supervision of the officers of the Irrigation Department who practically did nothing to discharge their duties and for over twelve years nothing was done for strengthening the weak points in the embankments.

The people of Jalpaiguri had been clamouring that the embankment had become weak at places and that they were apprehending disastrous consequences to follow. The Irrigation Department took no serious notice of this public demand and did nothing. There was another embankment on the other side of the town to protect the localities like Domohani and the Railway colonies but nothing was done about this embankment also for its reinforcement.

Heavy rains for the hills for some days caused landslides and River Teesta was in full spate. The flood water of this river rose to unprecedented height, washed away the Anderson bridge, the only line of communication to Kalim-oong, and the approaches of the railway bridges at Sevak at both ends were also washed away. The water rose 40 ft. high between the hills and rolled down into the plains with full fury carrying with its strong current massed logs and boulders. One of the channels which was flowing eastward forced its way further east by making breaches in Kathambari embankment and several hundred square miles of human habitation and paddy lands went into the river. The Domohani embankment

was breached at 2 A.M. in the night of 5th October and then Teesta overtopped the Jalpaiguri embankment at Rangdhamali and Paharpur north of Jalpaiguri town causing several breaches and the entire river rolled down into Jalpaiguri town at 2.30 A.M. Within fifteen minutes the whole town went under water.

The people of Jalpaiguri feel very strongly about the conduct of the officers who were in charge of the administration in the town on the fateful night. It has transpired that they were fully aware of the danger but did not care to warn the people though there are five sirens of the Civil Defence which were in working order. I presume all members of the House are by now aware of the findings of Mr. S. N. Roy, ex-Chief Secretary of the Government of West Bengal who has concluded that some lives might have been saved, had the public been warned of the impending danger well in advance. In my opinion also not more than 5 to 10 per cent of the lives would have been lost if the warning had been given in time. The authorities, for reasons best known to them did not think it worthwhile to take the public into confidence though they had sensed the trouble and had apprehended that the embankment might not withstand the fury of the flood.

The flood caused heavy deposit of silt everywhere. When the flood receded, the town was found littered with carcasses and dead bodies and the whole area presented a ghastly sight worse than what one finds in a cremation ground. For the first few days it was almost impossible to live in the town without food and drink and it was apprehended that there might be an outbreak of epidemic in the town. When it was all dark everywhere the only silver lining which came to our sight was the relief and help which the people of Siliguri town rendered to the affected people. The whole of Jalpaiguri acknowledges with a sense of gratitude the service that the people of Siliguri rendered for keeping their fellow brothers in distress in living condition.

The people of Jalpaiguri are grateful to Mr. Dharma Vira, our Governor, for the splendid work done by him for speedy removal of the carcasses and dead bodies . . .

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA (West Bengal):
What is that? Not at all.

SHRI S. P. RAY: You will not like that. I know it. To continue my speech—for providing drinking water and restoring normal conditions as much as has been possible under the extreme circumstances.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Mr. Vice-Chairman, will he say on oath that the people of Jalpaiguri are grateful to Mr. Dharma Vira? On oath?

(Interruption)

SHRIMATI YASHODA REDDY (Andhra Pradesh): A Member cannot take an oath to give a reply.

SHRI S. P. RAY : He drafted some very able officers along with some military personnel who worked under his close supervision for improving the condition of the affected areas and for maintaining sanitation. It was due to his special efforts and of members of the medical profession that an outbreak of epidemic could be prevented. With all that he has done, Jalpaiguri still remains a "dead city" and I do not know when it may be bristling with life.

The State Government with the help of a large number of non-official organisations and institutions have started relief operation but in the context of what is needed, the relief so far received in cash or in kind is grossly inadequate.

The people who have lost their hearths and homes, lands and plough cattle and even wearing apparel have to be provided with everything they require to maintain their mortal existence. Traders who have lost their wares have to be provided with sufficient fund for rehabilitation. The loan payment scheme which has been introduced by the banks at the instance of the State Government hardly meets their requirements and is a mere drop in the ocean. The people who have suffered and are still living in distress are entitled to ask the Government to take proper care of them and to arrange for their speedy rehabilitation. The task is stupendous. But the Government cannot disown its responsibility on the score of paucity of funds. The Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Food Minister during their visit to Jalpaiguri have all assured us that in this task . . .

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : What had that to do with the Deputy Prime Minister?

SHRI S. P. RAY : . . . money shall not stand in the way. I sincerely hope that the promises they have held out to the people of Jalpaiguri shall be implemented.

The next important work which the Government has to undertake is restoration of lines of communication, repairs of the breaches in the embankments and taking proper and permanent measures of flood control. There is no doubt that in this matter the Government must act on the advice of the experts. What I like to emphasize is that the need of taking proper measure for protection from floods should be uppermost in the mind of all concerned. Dr. K. L. Rao, the Minister of Irrigation, who was very kind to fly over the affected areas a few days after the flood, has suggested that (a) that waterways which have been designed for a discharge of 14,200 cusecs have to be increased suitably, and (b) embankment along the Teesta river for protection of Jalpaiguri town should be raised and strengthened with substantial paved top width both upstream and downstream of the Railway line. I understand that this work has already been undertaken by the State Government without waiting for the sanction of the Central Government.

The beds of North Bengal rivers are rising every year and Teesta river bed has risen by 4 ft. during this year's flood. The experts must consider this when they suggest the improvements to be effected in the embankments.

Though not pretending to be an expert, my view is that the construction of the Broad Gauge Railway link with a narrow span and also the road bridge a few hundred yards down with similar spans has affected free flow of flood water and has caused violent impact in the upstream waters which released themselves by overtopping the embankment and causing breaches and then flooded the whole of Jalpaiguri town. The experts should consider this matter seriously.

Though belonging to a very obscure part of the country, I come from an area which has great strategic importance both from defence as well as communications point of view. The whole

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of Assam is connected with the rest of India through Jalpaiguri district. We belong to an area which brings large amount of foreign exchange every year through export of tea, and the country can ill-afford to be indifferent to the needs of this area. No amount of money should therefore be considered too high for protection of a strategic area which is now ravaged by floods.

Though the West Bengal Government has approached the Central Gov-ment for funds, it is regretted that the entire amount has not yet been sanctioned. Unless the amount is sanctioned immediately, I am afraid full work for saving Jalpaiguri town and other parts of district will not be possible as the rain sets in from early part of June in this area.

I will finish with one or two more points. Regarding the study team which went to that area three weeks after the flood, they have not completed their study and we understand that they are again visting area within a short time. But, Sir, as you know, I have already mentioned that the rains set in in that part of the District from May, some time from May. And we have a record of having had flood on the 10th June in Jalpaiguri District. So, unless the bunds are repaired and the work is completed, there is every possibility of the Jalpaiguri town being washed away. The 'Amrita Bazar Patrika' dated the 8th December, 1968 says :—

"The Study team is said to have pointed out that Centre would bear only that portion of the cost which would be required for construction of the bunds which were either breached or damaged and which existed during the pre-flood stage. As the Government has decided to raise the heights of the embankments by 10 ft. in order to ensure a better protection against high floods in future, the State will have to find its own resources to construct the additional portion of the embankment which would be raised beyond the pre-flood level."

I may point out that at Jalpaiguri, the River Teesta has changed course many times and from the point where the bunds begin, on the north of that portion, the levels of the river bed and the road have come to the same level.

Some new bunds have to be constructed. It is for the experts. But our only concern is that the town must be saved; anyway, it is for the experts to decide how the town can be saved ... {Interruptions}. We will have to depend upon the experts. My friend, Mr. Chitta Basu, said in the House that the total death roll may be 20,000. In my opinion and in the opinion of many others, who live in that part of the district, the death role will not be less than 30,000. In one area where the • breach occurred, 22 villages have been washed away; at a stretch for 40 miles many villages have been washed away. {Time bell rings}. Sir, I have told you at the very beginning that I am the victim and I have personal experience of that flood.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: He comes from Jalpaiguri and being a very prosperous tea planter, he does not need to be a victim.

SHRI S. P. RAY: Tha* fo not again . . .

SHRI AKBAR ALI KHAN (Andhra Pradesh): That is not very fair. He is giving a very good description.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I agree with him about that. I only disagreed when he said that he was a victim because he is a tea planter with a lot of money in the bank.

SHRI S. P. RAY: I can say that I am a victim. I know the cases of the people of that area. My only appeal is to begin the work immediately and to save that part of North Bengal.

Thank you.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA (Orissa): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, it is indeed my painful duty to narrate the miseries and sufferings of the people who have become victims either of ' floods or of cyclones {Interruptions} or of famine; because we had a separate discussion on drought, I do not want to bring that in because I have very ' limited lime. I would try to do justice as far as possible within the very short time that you have allotted to me.

To begin with, I would indicate that even though many times flood is followed by cyclones or cyclones are followed by floods, I want to separate them into two categories, one, being controllable

and the other, being uncontrollable. Floods could have been controlled within these 20 years, and I would ask the hon. Minister to kindly give us a satisfactory reply in this House as to how far he has been able to control the floods . . .

SHRI CHITTA BASU : He can give the reply.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: I mean, the Government. They have an expert body which is called the Water and Power Commission which is supposed to be manned by eminent people in the country who know about floods, water and power. How far have they been successful in controlling the floods?

When I come to cyclones, I do not want to blame anybody unnecessarily, not even the Government because neither can they predict them nor with all their efficiency, with all the technological developments, as they call them all the time, have we ever received a warning in time so that the people could take the necessary precautions before the cyclone comes. At least, before the recent cyclone, nobody received any warning. I do not know where the difficulty or defect lies. I think the people could be forewarned, I think much of the damage that was caused during the last cyclone could have been averted.

Now, Sir, we have had floods in almost half the States of India during the last year. West Bengal, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Assam and last of all, but the worst, came to Orissa.

THE DEPUTY MINISTER
IN THE MINISTRY OF IRRIGATION AND
POWER (PROF. SIDDHESHWAR
PRASAD) : What about Andhra?

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: Andhra I have said. I cannot forget the Minister. He is sitting right in front of me.

SHRI MULKA GOVINDA REDDY
(Mysore): Bihar.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: Unfortunately, I forgot Bihar. I forgot the Deputy Minister unfortunately.

SHRI AKBAR ALI KHAN : Cyclone in Andhra Pradesh?

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA : I have mentioned that. If the hon. Members are not attentive enough, I am not to be pardoned, they have to be pardoned.

Now, Sir, I will not waste my time on interruptions. The point is that the cyclones and the floods came together to certain parts of the country, while in other parts it was only the floods. While I extend all my sincerest sympathies to the people affected and to the States also which are affected by the floods, I would try to put some emphasis on the colossal damage caused. These interruptions have provoked me to retort but I will be the last to do so now. I will confine.

SHRIMATI YASHODA REDDY:
I will not provoke you about Orissa.

SHRI AKBAR ALI KHAN: You must have a soft corner for our State also.

SHRIMATI YASHODA REDDY: I will support you.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: What do you support?

SHRIMATI YASHODA REDDY:
I support that there is a calamity . . .

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: I am one of the unfortunate victims in the House of interruptions. Probably, the only two Members who constantly face interruptions from both sides of the House are Mr. Bhupesh Gupta and I. I do not know why.

SHRI AKBAR ALI KHAN : You are such a nice man smiling always that every body is attracted by you. I do not know about the ladies.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: As I was saying, I want to put all my emphasis on the last cyclone and the devastation it caused to Orissa. The other friends who come from the different States would probably take up their cases and do justice to the cause. Therefore, I would be pardoned by hon'ble Members and the House if I confine myself to my State of Orissa which commands a lot of attention both from the hon'ble Minister in-charge of this motion now and from the Government of India as a whole.

Sir, the cyclone started on the 27th of October and had a speed of 120 kilo-

[Shri Lokanath Misra]

metres an hour. It descended on the Srikakulam district from the Bay of Bengal with the result that the *udyan* of coconut trees and banana trees of Andhra Pradesh was completely devast-ed. I am told there is not one coconut tree that stands erect today in the *udyan*; they have all been uprooted. I do not know what would be the economic condition of the people in that area.

The cyclone next visited Orissa because the next district is Ganjam. Then it came to the Puri district and partly visited the Cuttack district and then, probably, took off towards the Bay of Bengal again. During the cyclone the damage that had been caused to Orissa is so colossal that unless I enumerate some of the losses it would not be possible to convince the House.

From the latest report that I have received, Sir, the villages that have been affected are 4,808, the area affected is 2,02,451 sq. miles, the population affected is 13,47,752, the number of dwelling houses damaged is 1,58,699 and the number of school buildings damaged come to 4,200. Apart from this there has been also severe damage to other government properties. The national highway which connects Calcutta with Madras was partially swept away. The railway line was also severely damaged. Now it is almost two months after the cyclone but the Railways have not been able to revive the line. There is also a very justifiable reason for it because after the first cyclone, there was another cyclone in about a fortnight's time. Therefore, earthwork which had been done was again swept away into the Bay of Bengal.

AN HON. MEMBER : Probably that was on the 12th or the 13 th November.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: Yes, within a fortnight of the first cyclone. Therefore, I cannot blame either the Railway Ministry or the Works Department and the Government of India because they have been trying to do it as soon as possible. Since nature acted against them, it has been impossible for them to revive the lines.

Now, Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, the Orissa Government did whatever it could in the matter. But their resources, as everybody knows, are limited.

Secondly, the present Orissa Government inherited a bankrupt legacy. Mr. Biju Patnaik and his supporters and followers during the Congress regime had emptied the entire public exchequer to their own advantage and benefit. Therefore, we started with not from a zero but, as they say, a minus.

AN HON. MEMBER: He again wants to come back as an M.P.

SHRI MULKA GOVINDA REDDY : He is going now to the Punjab. Let the Government of India, which is in charge of Punjab, take care of him.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: We have done with him.

SHRI N. PATRA (Orissa): This is the type of cyclone he is very seriously dealing with.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA : I thought you at least understood the context in which I was speaking. I want the Orissa Government to be able to do anything. The trend of my hon'ble friend is very much evident in Orissa also, not that he takes any particular stand here.

Sir, the Chief Minister and the other Ministers rushed to the scene as quickly as possible. They did everything possible. The other political parties also did their very best and I want to pay my tributes to them minus the Congress. Sir, the Congress was fiddling like Nero while Rome was burning. The Congress fellows thought that they could take advantage of the disaster, the suffering and the misery of the people. They tried to spread dissatisfaction among them during this natural catastrophe. Was it the time otherwise to stage a demonstration? They tried to stage a demonstration before the Assembly on the first day but nobody responded. They then postponed it. They are all the time indulging in a pincer attack. The Congress leaders from there probably come and whisper into the ears of the Central Congress leaders here, the Ministers. Hence Orissa does not get the same attention that it used to get during the Congress Ministries there. There is definite discrimination that I find now. And once they have spoken to their leaders here who are apathetic to the disaster and other things in Orissa, these very fellows go

back to Orissa, talk to the local Congress leaders and then tell the people there that the Orissa Ministry could not do anything because they were not in the good books of the Government of India.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI (Maharashtra) : Why do you not name them? Who are they?

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: Obviously those who must be hated in the society. And, incidentally, they belong to the Congress Party.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: Along with you.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : Mr. Biju Patnaik is the Gangotri of corruption.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: I am speaking about the general situation in Orissa.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: I thought you were speaking of the Congress and the non-Congress parties.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: I would request Mr. Kulkarni to sit down kindly because I am not presently talking of the small-scale co-operative society which is the only source of his information and, probably, fortune also. Now you have the good fortune of inheriting all the co-operatives whereas I do not have.

SHRI AKBAR ALI KHAN : I do not understand what he means when Mr. Bhupesh Gupta said that Mr. Biju Patnaik is the Nambodiripad of Orissa.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : Mr. Biju Patnaik is the Gangotri of corruption. It is very relevant in the context of the discussion on floods.

SHRI M. N. KAUL (Nominated): So much so that he has been swept away.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: No. He was flushed out. I want you to use a still better word.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: Kindly allow me to come back to my subject.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: We want you to come back to the floods and not to the Congress.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: Mr. Vice-Chairman, you will kindly give me more time because of all this disturbance and interruption.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: It is more interesting to hear him on the floods.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA): Permit him to do so.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: The Orissa Government wrote to the Centre for help. I am told Central team went round and recommended Rs. 5 crores as help for the areas which have been damaged by cyclone and floods.

SHRI MULKA GOVINDA REDDY : Very conservative people.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: Yes, very conservative people. Maybe, the pincer attack has also worked. That is why I mentioned about it; otherwise I normally never mention that there is any kind of apathetic consideration towards the States which are not headed by the Congress. But in this particular case I have somehow developed an impression that the Central Government has not given the same consideration to Orissa as it has given to the other States which have been affected by natural calamities. Anyway it is for the Government of India to decide now. A Central team went and they have recommended for Rs. five crores. But the damage has been so enormous, so colossal, that nothing can be done with this Rs. five crores. Many things have to be done now. There are many schools which have been swept away by floods, within forty-eight hours we had about thirty-seven inches of rain, and you may imagine what the deluge would have been like in those areas. It is almost a repetition of Jalpaiguri; after I heard the two Members describe about Jalpaiguri, I think it is a repetition of Jalpaiguri in some parts of Orissa, I would therefore urge, Sir, that the Government Of India should, number one, increase its assistance at least to Rs. ten crores if not more. How far they can do, is their lookout, but I would definitely urge that it should not be anything less than Rs. ten crores. Number two, in the case of assistance to the agriculturists, there must be some special assistance from the Centre. The Five-Year Plans are being postponed; they are doing things now on an annual basis. And through these annual Plans they expect us to pay back the interest and the outstanding dues to the Government of India, dues which were incurred by their party

[Shri Lokanath Misra]

people, by the Congress Government, by our predecessors. It all went down the drain; if it is not all, much of it went down the drain, so much so that we are not getting any benefit out of it. They left the exchequer in a state of bankruptcy. They incurred a loan which no Government probably would be in a position to repay. In rescheduling the loans there must be some effort done so that we do not have to pay immediately the interest on the loans incurred by our predecessors.

SHRI MULKA GOVINDA REDDY :
Why, the entire loan should be repudiated.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: I would be thankful to the Government if they can write it off as being money misspent, wasted by their own people at a time when they had affluence.

Now, eight of the districts of Orissa, Sir, have been repeatedly visited by droughts. We had drought conditions for the last three years in eight districts of Orissa, and in the remaining five districts sometimes we had droughts and sometimes we had floods, and the last one was a cyclone. Therefore, how would the Government of India expect from us, in these adverse circumstances, in the financial condition in which we were left, the money, the huge amount, that has been taken already from the Centre and wasted by the predecessor Government? Nothing fruitful is coming out of it; it has been without any return. And number three, in the present deplorable condition of all the thirteen districts of Orissa how would they expect us to collect money from the people of the State and repay them? Therefore, that particular aspect must be taken into consideration, and I strongly urge on the hon. Minister, Dr. K. L. Rao, whom I find to be the most humane among the many I see adorning those benches, to recommend this particular aspect to the Planning Commission and to the Government of India, so that immediately we don't have to repay anything to the Government of India, for recommend to write it off, if possible. In the meantime he should give assistance of at least Rs. ten crores to the State of Orissa, and I hope we shall try to save the people out of the deplorable condition, in which they are, at least to some extent.

Thank you, Sir.

SHRI T. CHENGALVAROYAN
(Madras): Mr. Vice-Chairman, anything that happens to Bengal, I am deeply touched by. If it is a political disaster, I can find a remedy. If it is an economic catastrophe, I can find a way out. But when the elemental wrath manifests itself in the swelling and surging fury of floods, I stand before you, Mr. Vice-Chairman, absolutely benumbed. But may I at the outset offer on my behalf and on behalf of my comrades in this august House our very sincere sympathies and solid support to all those who have suffered on account of this great calamity.

Mr. Vice-Chairman, I must submit that in recent times we have been witnessing, rather unfortunately, the wrath of God—if I may be a little ecclesiastic—that today we find in one part floods, not damaging but totally destroying; in another part drought completely taking people almost to the verge of starvation and death, and in the third we find the gale of wind leaving devastating effects upon the people and a territory. Now, may I on this occasion beg of this House to consider this problem much more deeply and rather widely? And I here appeal to the hon. Minister, Dr. Rao, who is a doyen of engineering skill and power, that today we have to consider the five river systems in our country. We have the north-western river system. We have the Ganges river system. We have the Brahmaputra river system. We have the peninsular river system, and we have also, what we call, the tributary river system. Now in an examination of the catastrophe of floods, which have become rather fairly seasonal in recent years, every second year or tenth year or third year, we now have to come to an analysis of the fundamental causes for this flood wrath. In the first place, Mr. Vice-Chairman, may I most respectfully recall what very eminent engineers have said after an elaborate scrutiny and study of the root causes of the floods in different parts of the country? They have come to the conclusion that some of these important factors have contributed to this calamity. Firstly, there is the question of the erosion of banks. Secondly, there is the question of what we may call inadequate drainage channels for the purpose of taking excess water. Thirdly, we have what we usually call want of proper dams and constructions in the

course of the river. Fourthly, we have the question of the curious and very erratic conduct of the course of the river. Now, any policy that is contemplated to control flood havoc in our country must undoubtedly take note of these fundamental factors which account for the cause of the flood.

Now if we examine the causes, Mr. Vice-Chairman, there has been some murmur here and elsewhere that in the past the Government of India and also the Government of Bengal had not done anything towards safeguarding against, or even considering beforehand what steps should be taken. I do not want to tire the patience of this House by quoting elaborately the several portions on the pages of the several plans, the First Five-Year Plan, the Second Five-Year Plan, and the Third Five-Year Plan, and showing what has been done in this regard. I can very confidently state before this House that we have given the utmost consideration and anxious attention to how to avert the flood havoc in this country. I grant and grant without any reservation that what has been done so far may not be equal to the stupendous nature of the problem. I equally confess that we must have done much more than what we have done. But I cannot at all yield to any criticism that in this direction and in this matter we have not moved even a finger. I therefore very humbly submit that in the face of this great calamity that faces our country, and particularly Bengal, we should take note of this situation and try to enlarge the scope of financial, technical and other assistance in the matter of averting floods in the future.

I may also bring to the very kind consideration of this House that in the matter that now faces Bengal I do not want to follow the method of my very esteemed comrade, Mr. Chitta Basu, of enumerating the cost of damage. To me it is not damage; it is total destruction. Secondly, I do not want to picture the extent of the tragedy that has been enacted because it is so colossal; but what I would beg of this House and also the Government, if I may, is in the face of this great and grim tragedy let us realise what should be done immediately and let us also realise what should be done in the future. So far as the immediate task is concerned, may I most respectfully submit that the Governor of West Bengal with his limited resour-

ces and with his limited scope has done a splendid job in the matter of rehabilitation but when I pay this compliment, Mr. Vice-Chairman, I realise and perhaps none better, that what has been done is nothing but a pie in the sky; but to the extent to which it has been done I am sure we are sufficiently cultured to be grateful for the work that has been done. Really the bloody bugs of bureaucracy would not descend to such a level for the purpose of giving succour to the people but in the case of the Government of Bengal headed by the Governor I have every reason to offer my sincere thanks for what he has done; but equally may I say that the Government of India has done a good job for offering immediate financial assistance for the purpose of rehabilitation. My friend, Mr. Chitta Basu and equally my friend, Mr. Lokanath Misra and I anticipate my friend, Comrade Bhu-pesh Gupta, would certainly feel that it is absolutely not adequate. I realise that but may I appeal to the Government of India that whatever financial assistance may be given it has to be canalised and it has to be implemented by what we might call a specialised rehabilitation agency. I have no faith, Mr. Vice-Chairman—and pardon me for that lack of faith—in the usual agencies; if this financial assistance and the rehabilitation work is to be entrusted either to a State agency or a Central Government agency exclusively, it may be imperfect and it may be incomplete. What the situation requires, what the tragedy demands, is a specialised rehabilitation agency which will have the supreme and absolute power not only to assess the extent of rehabilitation work but also to raise funds for the purpose of giving succour in the matter of that rehabilitation work. I hope and trust the Government of India with its traditional care and anxiety to help the people, whoever and wherever they are in distress, will heed to this suggestion; I hope this humble suggestion of mine will find an echo and response in their hearts.

One word more, Mr. Vice-Chairman, and I have done. What is it that we are doing? Every now and then, every third year or fifth year we are faced with this problem of floods. Can we not think for a moment? Should not in the face of this tragedy some wisdom dawn upon us, should not some broad outlook prevail with us? We think that a river flowing in my State

[Shri T. Chengalvaroyan]

is exclusively my property; we are not willing to share its waters with others. We are so self-centered that we will rather suffer from floods than partake the waters with our comrades in other States. May I most respectfully appeal to our hon. Minister, Dr. K. L. Rao, one of the Trojans of this great profession—after him we may not find a suitable successor—to fake up the idea? It is not a romantic idea, it is not a vagabond idea, when I tell him that he must take up the plan which our great leader Shri S. Srinivasa Iyengar as President of the Gauhati Congress said, that all the rivers of this country must be connected together. That is the solution to this flood problem. For that purpose may I appeal to him to consider whether it may not be possible and necessary to constitute a National River Board Commission for the purpose of investigating this grand and gigantic plan to avert once and for ever the floods in our country? With these words, may I convey our sincere sympathy and solid support to all those persons who have suffered on account of these floods? And let us take a lesson from this that we have to see that the wrath of God does not descend upon us and let us reform our ways.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I am glad that we have this chance of a discussion on the flood situation. I only wish that we had more time to go into the situation in greater detail than we are going to do this afternoon.

I should like to concentrate mainly on the floods in West Bengal. As you know, in June and August there were floods affecting several districts of our State of West Bengal—Midnapore, 24 Parganas, Purulia, Birbhum, Howrah, Bankura and so on. The damage at that time was also very great and it was estimated that nearly 65 lakhs of people out of three crores were affected by those devastating floods. Even now we are having the same situation months after the floods and the rehabilitation work is by no means satisfactory.

In fact in some places, as in Midnapore, rehabilitation work is being discontinued. Here I must point out that even from the Opposition made certain

submissions to the Government as to what we considered to be the reasons for the aggravation of the floods in those areas and we asked for certain investigations to be done but nothing of the kind has been done. Yet it remains to be investigated as to why such severe floods could take place. Our view is that there was negligence, criminal negligence, on the part of the DVC authorities and others which aggravated the situation. However, I am not going to deal much with the floods of June and August. I should like to concentrate on the recent floods in North Bengal districts. It is impossible to give a graphic account of the terrible suffering and devastation that was caused by the floods of October. In fact, it is humanly impossible to do so. Attempt has been made by eminent writers who can write well, who can express very well, but even they have not succeeded in describing the terrible calamity that overtook the West Bengal districts and the human suffering that followed in its wake.

Mr. Vice-Chairman, the first thing that I should like to say about the North Bengal floods is that it is the result in a way of accumulated neglect and dereliction of duty on the part of authorities over the last so many years. The behaviour of the Teesta and its tributaries has been causing concern for a long time. Everybody knows that when the floods came, when water came down from Himalayas, they brought timber, stones and so on with the result that all the time the river beds began to rise. That has been going on for a long time and when the river bed goes on rising the river forces its way in various ways and naturally it creates conditions for the kind of calamity that took place. The Government did not do anything. The authorities did not do anything. The expected schemes and projects were not carried out. On the contrary, they had started building all kinds of bridges, embankments with culverts and so on without any regard, for what would be the effect of these constructions on the course of the river and from the point of view of the flood situation. Therefore, over the past several years and many years, I should say especially under the Congress rule, there has been a colossal failure and neglect on that score, with the result that conditions were created for the terrible flood to take place and for such unprecedented devastation.

Now, as far as the damage is concerned, according to our estimate, the damage would be of the order of not less than Rs. 100 crores. In fact, even according to the statement of the Minister, it is said that floods all over India have caused damage of the order of Rs. 160 crores, out of which they say that half of it is due to the floods in West Bengal. Even the Government comes very close to our figure. The Government's statement is still an underestimate. The damage in the North Bengal area alone would be of the order of not less than Rs. 100 crores. Now, as has been said 20,000 people have lost their lives, or more. My friends from the Congress Benches say 30,000. Nobody knows. That is the tragedy of it. Countless loss of human life has taken place and yet we are not waking up. Village after village has been swept away, flooded completely and land under cultivation has been ruined and destroyed. People have lost in many ways their property, their land, their hearths and homes. Well, to call it a flood would be a wrong thing. It was a deluge in the true sense of the term. It was not flood to which we are normally accustomed. It was a mighty deluge sweeping before it everything that was there. That is how you can picture it. Such a misfortune should shake up the Government and the authorities; and what happened we know. Well, we have had the visits of the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister there. The Deputy Prime Minister came losing his temper and provoking even the Congressmen. The Prime Minister ended her visit by allowing the police, directly or indirectly, to beat up the people of Jalpaiguri. Therefore, when we asked for bread, when we asked for relief, when we asked for rehabilitation, we got insults and lathis initially from the authorities, from the Prime Minister and from the Deputy Prime Minister. They have to explain why the people were treated in this manner. They should have expected that certainly people would not come there to greet them, garland them. They came to meet them with sorrow, with anger, with agony, expecting that something would come from them which would assuage their feelings and give them a little succour and relief. But instead, they were met with haughtiness on the part of the Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister and the Prime Minister made it a sort of ritual courtesy visit to the North Bengal district. We

protest against such behaviour on the part of the leaders. They must know, first of all, how to react to a natural calamity or a calamity of this kind, but was it a natural calamity? No Warning was given, but the warning was not heeded. This is stated even in the report of the Government, which I will read out. The report which was laid on the Table of the House on the 18th November, on behalf of this Government, said:—

"The warning messages sent by Ka'limpong wireless were not conveyed to the public of Jalpaiguri town. Even after information about threats to Domohani and Barnes on the opposite bank and Mandalghat to the south of Jalpaiguri town had been received, none of the officers either of the Civil Branch or the Irrigation Department apprehended any real danger to the town."

Now, this is stated even in an official document submitted to this House by the Government. Now, it is much worse I can tell you. There was utter callousness. You will be surprised to hear that when the flood came suddenly in this manner at night, they were unaware of it and taken completely aback. They found themselves completely submerged in water, which was moving at the speed of some ten miles or whatever it is, but destroying everything at that time. Well, the message was sent immediately, I believe a little later, to the Government House in Calcutta and Darjeeling. Do you know what happened? The next day, far from the Governor coming to make an on-the-spot study, the banquet in the Government House in Darjeeling was held as scheduled.

SHRI M. N. KAUL : In whose honour?

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : I do not know in whose honour. The banquet was held and some businessmen were there. Even that banquet was not given up. When the message reached by one o'clock, the next day everybody knew what had happened to Jalpaiguri town. The Governor, the big authorities did not rush there. They had helicopters and they did not come. When the suggestion was made that the dinner or the banquet should not be held in the Government House in Darjeeling, even that was not accepted by the soulless, callous administration, of which

[Shri Bhupesh Gupta]

Mr. Dharma Vira is the most stinking representative and to whom my friend pays his handsome tributes. And he calls himself a victim of the flood. What sort of victim, are you, Mr. S. P. Ray? I ask you that. Even out of this agony and inhuman suffering of your friends and neighbours, of your relatives, of your kith and kin, of the people around whom you live you do not know who are the culprits who behaved in that manner in this period of unprecedented and unheard of calamity.

Therefore, I mention this thing. You must know that the officers had been guilty of dereliction of duty. This is the callous, inhuman, cruel administration the twenty years of Congress rule has bred in our country. When you give a warning, they do not take any notice of it, do not convey it to the people. If it had been done, many lives would have been saved. Between 1891 and 1968, in 78 years, 11 floods took place in North Bengal, out of which in the first forty years only four floods occurred. In the last twenty years, between 1948 and 1968 floods occurred seven times. Therefore, you will see that the flood had been very frequent in this period of the last twenty years. An explanation should be found. The explanation lies in the fact that the Teesta has been behaving in this manner and the riverbed has been rising all the time, and when the river changed its course or altered its course, it has created a serious situation. The river-bed could not carry the water in the normal course and that is one of the reasons why flood could be so devastating this time. One must remember it. I am not going into the details of it. Who am I to tell you about the engineering and other aspects or the technical aspects and scientific aspects of flood? My friend, Dr. K. L. Rao, knows it much better. He can teach all of us. He need not be told about what he knows very well. I know it, but the trouble is he belongs to a Government which would not understand it.

Even now, you see what happened? This week-end, Mr. Morarji Desai, the Deputy Prime Minister, was in Calcutta and the gentleman utilised the occasion to slander the Communist Party, to slander the left movement, to say all kinds of things. He did not have even a word of sympathy for the

afflicted and suffering people in the State of West Bengal. He 5 P.M. went there to give more assurances to the big business people and others and called the Communists spies owing allegiance to the Soviet Union—a damnable lie uttered by a man in high position. Such men are there in the Government. If he had gone to West Bengal, he should have discussed with the leaders of public opinion in order to understand what agonies our State is passing through, with floods having devastated vast areas of our State, the floods of June and October. Yet he did not consider it necessary. Let Communism or fear of Communism or fear of Left Communism haunt him, but certainly this is not what is expected of a member of a responsible Government who goes to an afflicted State in order to understand the situation there. Therefore, I am concentrating on these things.

First of all, the demand for Rs. 50 crores is the minimum demand—In fact, it should be much more. They have given us barely Rs. 9 crores or so. The demand is for Rs. 50 crores. It is a very legitimate demand. As far as the West Bengal Government is concerned, it itself has demanded Rs. 40 crores, and we are told that Mr. Dharma Vira would resign if the money was not forthcoming. I read in the newspapers that Mr. Dharma Vira had decided to resign if the Centre would not give the money. But I know Mr. Dharma Vira is not made of that stuff who is capable of resigning on an issue like this. But all the same the West Bengal State Government has made the demand, and why the Deputy Prime Minister is not coming out with a commitment? It is a pittance we are getting from the Centre with which nothing could be done.

The second thing is this. The Centre and Dr. Rao's duty is to draw up a master plan of flood control, and naturally effort should be made how to control the Teesta and its tributaries Jai Dhaka, Torsha, Rai Dak and Sankosh and other rivers. It is very very essential. Otherwise people cannot get an assurance at all, after what they have gone through, that their hearths and homes and their lives and properties are safe because they fear another flood may come and finish them off, completely wipe them off the face of the earth altogether. So, I think steps should be taken.

Mr. Vice-Chairman, in the statement of the Government I find they are claiming that normal conditions have more or less returned. This is entirely wrong. There is no normalcy at all. Normal conditions have not at all returned. People are suffering. Everything is uncertain. A bleak future faces the people there and the situation remains very, very bad indeed even today. The General Secretary of our party, Shri Rajeshwar Rao, visited the Jalpaiguri district and he went from place to place and he has returned today to Delhi, and he has told me what he saw there. This has been published of course in the form of a statement by him. But I find from him that even the day before yesterday the situation was extremely bad. So, I would make the following suggestions—and some of the suggestions are in my amendment:

First of all, one must realise that 21 lakhs of acres of land have been silted. I know that the whole thing cannot be reclaimed or recovered again, but those who have lost cultivable land should be resettled on the land belonging to the Government or to the tea estates and tea planters. There should not be any hesitation to resettle the destitute in the lands available to the Government and also available easily from the tea estates.

Loans and advances to the Central and State Government employees should be recovered in 36 to 48 instalments. Today their plan is to recover this loan in 12 instalments. It is impossible. You cannot do so. You extend the period of recovery to 36 or 48 months.

Then again, I find that the teachers there are not getting what they were promised. According to our reckoning and finding, Government order is only to give them one month's salary as flood advance. What we demand is, the Government should give them a grant of Rs. 1,000 per teacher and Rs. 500 as a loan, and the loan should be recovered over a wide period of time. As far as the students are concerned, the D.P.I. has assured that they would be getting Rs. 50 as book grant, but actually nothing much has been done. Our suggestion is that the book grant should be Rs. 70 to Rs. 100 per head, and it is the head of the institution who should be authorised to disburse the funds. At the moment the funds are being disbursed on the

basis of certificates or recommendation from the M.Ps, or M.L.As., or M.L.Cs. or gazetted officers. It is impossible to carry on in this manner. Therefore, this suggestion is there. Then, the primary school, college and other teachers should be given adequate assistance as they require.

Small traders should be given loans on easy terms without the dilatory formalities. Many of them are not in a position to avail of the loans which are sanctioned for them and according to our information the big business people, those who are at the top in the business world in the local region, are grabbing most of the funds supposed to be disbursed for giving relief and assistance to the small traders.

Artisans again, Mr. Vice-Chairman, are suffering. They are not getting loans on easy terms. The result is that the smaller artisans do not get anything. Those who are at the top may manage to get something.

Advocates have lost everything. Doctors have lost everything. Everything was swept away. They should be given the necessary assistance, grant or loan as the case may be. Medical stores, services, etc., should be given assistance in loan or grant with a view to supplying medicines to the people. Otherwise there will be serious condition from the point of view of disease and other things. Vigorous measures should be taken to remove the silt from the agricultural land. The peasants should be settled, as I said, not only in the Government land and the tea estates land but what is more, they should be given grants ranging from Rs. 500 to Rs. 1,000 plus they should get free fertiliser and free seeds. This is very important today in the conditions of North Bengal. Small landholders and bargadars should also be given adequate loans and grants. The rules regarding the granting of loans to the agricultural labourers and bargadars must be liberalised. Unless that is done, they would not be in a position to avail of what is technically or formally promised to them in Government declarations and announcements.

Mr. Vice-Chairman, now I need not go into these amendments. The suggestions are contained in the amendments, and my friend Mr. Chitta Basu has also made a number of suggestions; together they make the demands on

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behalf of the flood-stricken people of West Bengal, demands which should be met. As far as the bigger issue is concerned, as I said, short-term and longterm measures are called for. The longterm measure is proper flood control on the basis of a master plan. I understand there is a fight going on between the Central and State Governments as to how the matter should be approached. I think this is very, very wrong. There is conflict developing between the Centre and the States over administrative and other matters relating to the projects of flood control. I think Dr. Rao should himself take the initiative in this matter and settle once and for all as to what should be done from the point of view of long-term measures for controlling floods, for controlling the Teesta.

As far as relief and rehabilitation is concerned, I wish the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister were present here because our friend, Dr. K. L. Rao, is not the person to deliver the goods; as far as relief and rehabilitation are concerned, funds come from the Finance Minister. I charge the Finance Minister that he is punishing the people of West Bengal. He suffers from a prejudice against the people of West Bengal because West Bengal is left-minded, democratic. Because West Bengal is a source of struggle, movement and agitation, he has a long-cherished prejudice against it and it is finding expression in his utter niggardliness in the matter of providing funds to West Bengal. We know that it will not be easy for us from West Bengal to get funds from the Finance Minister of this country, who is in every way against all fighting people and hence against the people of West Bengal, because they are a fighting people, not because we are West Bengalees. He likes the big business in West Bengal, he likes the landlords in West Bengal, he likes the capitalists in West Bengal, he likes every corrupt man in West Bengal. Therefore, I would not accuse him of anti-Bengali feeling as such.

SHRI T. CHENGALVAROYAN:
He also likes Mr. Bhupesh Gupta.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : He never likes me. You ask Kanti Lal Desai, he will tell you. The son knows better.

I know, I am surprised. My friend flew over West Bengal in a helicopter. It has become now a fashion. As far as he is concerned, I do not question his personal *bona fides*. But I know that in these empires of Morarji Desai, Indira Gandhi and Yaswant Rao Chavan, our friends play a secondary role. It is a very secondary role. They are very much in the wings in such matters. Sometimes they appear in the State and shy away from it. Therefore, I would not blame him in such a matter. It is for the Finance Minister to settle it. Why is he not here? The gentleman had time to be in Calcutta yesterday, and you see, the statement is carried in lead news, statement wherein he has accused the Communist Party. Even he did not provide some material for the statement to say that Mr. Morarji Desai has got at least some little human sympathy. Must he have sympathy only for his son, not for the stricken people of West Bengal? Must he have his affection only for his son and not for those who suffered in West Bengal, hundreds and thousands of people, men and women and children? Not a word of consolation for them. On the contrary, he said that money would not be given, moneys would not be found. Who is he to say that? I ask the Congress Members who express sympathy from that side of the House for the stricken and afflicted and suffering people of West Bengal: Impress upon your Finance Minister to give a little partial expression of your sentiments, not in terms of speeches but in terms of funds he controls. If he does not hear, it is open to you to remove him from the leadership of the Congress Party and from the position he occupies as the Deputy Prime Minister and the Finance Minister of the country. Therefore, it is no use trying to shed here crocodile tears when you allow your leader, the Finance Minister of the country who visited Jalpaiguri, only to insult us, only to show his arrogance so much so that even the Congress Members revolted. Do you know, Mr. Vice-Chairman, that he met the public of West Bengal not in the Congress Bhawan, not in that bungalow, but in the house of one of the rich planters of Jalpaiguri, Mr. Ghosh? And even Mr. Ghosh found him to be of an overbearing attitude when he asked him, "Are you mad?" Mr. Ghosh shouted a little because he was himself a little worked up because of the suffering there. He shouted a

little. Mr. Morarji said, "Is he a mad man? What does he get? By shouting, will he get anything from me?" Well, it was the treatment that he received there. I need not go into that. But mind you, a planter, a Congressman, a millionaire, could not put up with the superlative arrogance of the Finance Minister, Mr. Desai. Well, I do not know; the Leader of the House is here. Why don't you ensure the presence of this guilty man?

THE LEADER OF THE HOUSE (SHRI JAISUKHLAL HATHI): Are we not discussing the flood situation? I thought so, and the Irrigation Minister is here.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: What can you do? I know Dr. Rao. But where is the Finance Minister? Why don't you make him the Finance Minister? Why do you point your finger towards him? Make him the Finance Minister of the country.

I do not wish to say anything more. All I can say is that the challenge of flood has to be met. I think we are living in a scientific age. Rivers can be tamed, floods can be controlled, devastation can be reduced. And also we can forewarn ourselves. Should we be every time affected by such natural calamities over which man has control with all the wherewithal of resources, to alleviate the suffering of the people and reduce the aftermath of flood and such other calamities? I think the Government is failing at every point. In preventive measures it has failed; in warning it has failed; in dealing with the aftermath, it has failed. Its record is one of shameful, cruel, cynical failure. And I would ask the House to take note of this. West Bengal people will fight for their cause. West Bengal people may have had suffering, they may have lost everything in the flood affected area. But then see how manfully they have stood up when Mr. Morarji Desai went there and confronted him. You have seen how they were united in demanding that flood relief measures should be carried out.

I would suggest finally that anti-flood measures and relief measures must be carried out in co-operation with the people and the scientific and technological talents must be mobilised by Dr. K. L. Rao in order to work out the Master Plan for taming the Teesta and other rivers. I think he can, do so not 7—57 R.S./68

only in West Bengal but in every other part of the country also.

As far as relief measures are concerned, Mr. Vice-Chairman, the first thing is that moneys must be given. West Bengal must be given the money that it needs. It receives only a small amount from your administration. We want Rs. 40 crores. Our demand is higher by Rs. 10 crores over the minimum. People's co-operation should be sought. Flood relief is being used with a view to enhancing the chances of the Congress in the election. I know, many may not like it. But I can prove it that in Midnapore and other places, popular co-operation, co-operation with other parties, is being shunned, is being disregarded because they want to administer the whole thing in a manner which enhances the chances of the Congress. I must tell you : the Congress is treating this in a partisan manner. If I were to take it in a purely partisan spirit on the eve of the elections, it would be helping us to win the elections. But the human problem stares us in the face. This is a programme for every party to co-operate and carry out. Therefore, we say, the anti-flood work or the work of relief and rehabilitation of the stricken and the suffering should be carried out collectively through the united effort of all, all parties I mean. Goodwill and initiative should come from those in authority in this matter. And I can tell you, so long as Mr. Dharam Vira remains in his position in West Bengal, such an initiative will never come because he has tied his fortunes to the apron strings of the ruling Congress* Party. He will sink or swim with the Congress. But we want West Bengal to be saved by the united, collective effort, by the mobilisation of the public opinion of the people of the State. Hence, on the floor of the House I am voicing the demand of the West Bengal people and I hope the demands will be met. We have given suggestions in the form of amendments. Mr. Chitta Basu and myself. These should be considered at the Cabinet level by a special meeting of the Cabinet and we should be told as to how many of these demands are going to be met.

Again, I would like to ask the House to take a humane, sympathetic view of the terrible flood situation and impress upon the Government to show a little respect for human life and human decency in matters like this.

SHRI MULKA GOVINDA REDDY : Mr. Vice-Chairman, famines occur almost every year and we will have an opportunity of . . .

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA): I would like to assure hon. Members that this change has been made that leaders of the respective parties are meeting the Prime Minister at 5.30. Therefore, we have gone out of the way to accommodate them.

SHRI MULKA GOVINDA REDDY :... and this House and the other House are discussing the famine and the flood situation every session.

Sir, for the last 21 years the States as well as the Centre have been governed by the Congress Party and they have not been able to control or devise methods for controlling the floods and for mitigating the evil effects of famine. It is a strange phenomenon that while in some parts of the country we are faced with floods, in some other parts of the country we are faced with famine conditions. But if there was a planned programme, this could have been done and the havoc and the devastation that has been caused by the floods as well as the famine could have been avoided. But unfortunately the policies of the Government are such that they have not been able to control the floods.

Mr. Vice-Chairman, this year in Gujarat, in Assam, in Bengal, in Orissa, in Bihar and in some other places thousands of people have died because of floods. Crops worth crores of rupees have been devastated. Thousands of houses have been demolished and lakhs of cattle heads have perished as a result of the floods. It is unfortunate that proper warnings were not given.

Sir, the Enquiry Officer appointed by the West Bengal Government has concluded in his report that some lives might have been saved had the public been warned on the morning of the 4th October about the floods. This clearly shows callousness on the part of the officers concerned. If only proper precautions were taken and proper warning was given to the people, some of the lives could have been saved and some losses could have been avoided. It is unfortunate that the bureaucratic officers have got the same way of thinking and are not very much interested in saving the lives of the people,

Mr. Vice-Chairman, the statement that was laid on the Table of the Sabha on the 18th November is an understatement. According to the Minister a loss worth only Rs. 170 crores has been caused because of the floods. This is an under-statement. A proper assessment of the loss that has occurred in the different parts of the country has not been made. I know whenever some famine conditions or drought conditions occur in some State or the other or some floods devastate some area in some State or the other, the Central Government sends a team for assessment of the loss and the assessment of the relief that is needed for that particular area. It is unfortunate that this team has been a very conservative team; they did not make proper assessment of the devastation caused by the floods and proper assessment of the relief that is needed has not been made. The State Governments asked for relief measures worth Rs. 10 crores, Rs. 20 crores or Rs. 40 crores, but the assistance that is granted to the different States is almost negligible. The statement of the Minister, which occurs on the 19th page, clearly shows that very meagre sums have been provided for tackling this problem in the different States of India. Bihar gets only Rs. 50 lakhs while Bengal gets only Rs. 2 crores. Likewise, the other States got Rs. 2 crores, Rs. 1 crore or Rs. 50 lakhs. Therefore, it should suffice to say that they have not properly estimated the relief measure that is needed for solving this problem. In the Jalpaiguri district alone, according to the memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister by the West Bengal unit of the Praja-Socialist Party, more than 20,000 people have died. If that is the case in the Jalpaiguri district alone, in the other four districts of West Bengal another few thousands must have died, and in the other States many more thousands must have died. So proper estimates have not been made of the lives lost, the cattle heads lost and the crops lost in these areas. I, therefore, urge that a proper solution should be found and adequate and immediate relief measures should be given by the Central Government. Sir, it is very difficult for any State Government if it is overtaken by such calamities to provide relief measures in an adequate measure. Therefore, the Centre should come to the rescue of the State Governments in an abundant manner and provide adequate relief assistance for the people who are affected by these floods or famine conditions.

I agree with Mr. Bhupesh Gupta, Mr. Vice-Chairman, there is some sort of politics in providing relief measures in certain States. I know when the Mysore State went through the ordeal of famine this year, relief measures were undertaken. The Central assistance was very meagre, and whatever relief measures were undertaken they were undertaken not to give relief to the people who were suffering but they were undertaken in order to provide some sort of relief to some of these Congress agents. This was the fate of relief in the Mysore State and, naturally, this was the fate of relief in almost all the States. This political aspect of the matter should be taken into consideration. Whenever relief measures are taken they should be given to the people at large and not for a particular party or for a particular group of people.

Mr. Vice-Chairman, I am glad to learn that it has now been realised that this vast problem requires a remedy. For the last twenty years they have been telling us that they have been preparing plans to control the floods. But unfortunately, properly co-ordinated plans have never been formulated. In a statement made on the 18th November, the Minister stated that he had suggested certain measures for controlling the floods in the Bihar State. I would like to ask: "Why did you not suggest these measures till now?" Why did the predecessors of the Minister not suggest these measures earlier? There should have been some plan to control the floods for the last 20 years they have been in office. But it is unfortunate that they have never bestowed any thought over the problem of floods.

Mr. Vice-Chairman, I am glad to learn from the statement that the Minister had some sort of discussions with U Thant, the Secretary-General of the U.N.O., and the other officers in charge of water resources at the U.N.O. He has visited some areas in the U.S.A. and has seen how flood control measures have been implemented in that country and has studied how the effects of flood devastation have been mitigated in that country. I am glad that a concerted attempt is being made by the Minister. I would like to see that such discussions will not arise again and that he will see to it that these floods are controlled properly and that the people are saved from the evil effects of floods. Thank you.

SHRI N. PATRA: Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, the year 1968 seems to be a most inauspicious year. Several States of our country experienced floods this year. From Gujarat to my State of Orissa natural calamities devastated many States. On the 26th October I was waiting at the Khurda Road station to return home. I was to get the Janata Express that day at about 10 o'clock. But it was announced that the train could not proceed beyond a short distance beyond Khurda Road because the railway track had been damaged at several places. I had to wait at Khurda Road till the evening. Then I got the Janata Express and went by that train up to Bhubaneswar. Bhubaneswar and Khurda Road stations are ten or fifteen miles apart. Then on the 28th of October I boarded the Puri Express, the Express coming from Puri, at Bhubaneswar. At that time I noticed in the train that some of the passengers were from Puri, and they were perhaps going to places of safety seeing that their stay any more in Puri was dangerous for them. I did not know that such a calamity had happened during the day. Some Gujarati passengers were also returning by the same train. They were occupying one of the compartments of the train and they were chanting *bhajan* in a loud voice. I wanted to know what that chanting business in that high pitch was for. I went and asked them and joined with them in the *bhajan*. When I asked them I came to know that, while they were in Puri earlier in the day, due to heavy floods the sea water had entered into certain parts of Puri and that even the market place was flooded. So they were returning home cutting short their stay in Puri. Since they were God-fearing people, they wanted to please Him by chanting *bhajan* so that He might save them from any such calamity that might be ahead of them. Therefore, they were in communion with God and they were doing *prar-thana*.

Now, these days from the 26th to the 28th of October were very miserable days for my State. Not only during the days 26th to 28th, afterwards also, after a fortnight we had another devastating flood. Now during this current year we have had cyclones and floods occurring alternately, and during the last five years these natural calamities have become a recurring feature. And you know Orissa is a poor and backward State. (Interruptions) Yes, it is a

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backward State and a poor State, poor because its natural resources have not been exploited and put to profitable use. It is not poor in the sense that we have got sufficient natural wealth for exploitation. Because we have not got all the infrastructure and wherewithal to put our natural resources to use, we are still backward. Orissa is in the backwaters of Indian politics also because of what they have said in a press report which I was reading today and which says, "But curiously it always is in the backwaters of Indian politics. It seldom gets the national attention it deserves." Certainly, Sir, I was very much impressed with such a description of Orissa because of this. Soon after the Bengal floods an association called the Indian Press Photographers Association had put up an exhibition of photographs in the IENS building, which was inaugurated by the ex-Governor of Bengal, Miss Padmaja Naidu. I had occasion to visit that exhibition and I was moved by the very wonderful work they had done and exhibited to catch the attention of the people. But when I came to know that except in relation to Bengal they had not taken photographs of the devastation in other places, I wondered how they could style themselves as the Indian Photographers Association when by that time everybody knew that the calamity suffered by Orissa was in no way less. It may be that the Bengal floods had washed away thousands of people but the damage caused to Orissa was in no way less in magnitude.

Then, on me 1st of November, after having made a personal study of the calamity in Orissa, I addressed a letter to the Prime Minister and I received a prompt reply from the Prime Minister. I want to show how the Central Government has been very prompt in paying attention. This is my letter to the Prime Minister dated November 1, 1968 :

"Respected Madam Prime Minister,

Again the table has turned against the economically poor and backward State of Orissa. The vagaries of monsoon and the angry and unkind nature has upset our hopes of economic recovery.

The torrential rains and the devilish cyclone weather of Saturday the 26th and Sunday the 27th October 1968 have devastated life and property in the districts of Puri and Ganjam, and

to some extent of Cuttack district lying in the east coast of India. Thousands of houses have been blown off, valuable lives have been lost, tens of thousands of acres of flowering paddy crop have been submerged under water for days together, and also the life-line of activity, the railway track and the National Highway in between Khurda Road and Berhampur (Ganjam) were badly breached at several places. As a consequence, all trains running in between Calcutta and Madras and back became inoperative.

As such it is our earnest hope that you may spare a few moments of your valuable time, to pay a kind visit, as you were pleased to do previously on such emergencies, to assuage the plighted life of the poor people of Orissa. We realise your difficulties and the tight schedule of activities you have to attend to after your return from the long visit to Latin American countries in the Western Hemisphere. And the A.I.C.G. Session, at Goa for the first time, is ahead. In case, it is not possible to have time for an immediate personal visit to Orissa, may I humbly request your goodself to be pleased to order the deputation of a batch of Central officers for the assessment of the losses sustained due to the recurring natural calamities, and suggest remedial measures for the economic recovery of the unfortunate State of Orissa?"

By about the time my letter had reached the Prime Minister, I read in the press that she felt great concern about the floods that wrought havoc in Orissa, knowing it from the newspapers here— she has her agencies to make her know of this. She was so much concerned that she sent a letter expressing her feelings and offer of help to the Chief Minister of Orissa. Being moved by the havoc caused by these devastating natural calamities, she had already intimated her concern to the Chief Minister of Orissa. Not only that; immediately she got the letter from me, on the 2nd November, 1968, she sent a reply to me as follows :—

"Dear Shri Patra,

I have your letter of 1st November.

I have been deeply concerned at the reports of the damage done by

the recent cyclonic storm in Orissa. I would have liked to visit the affected areas myself, but find that it is not possible to change commitments already made.

I am sending your letter to the Food and Agriculture Minister. I am sure he will give due consideration to the question of sending a Central team to Orissa to discuss with the State Government the need for any Central help."

Immediately after this the Food Minister took action. He sent a letter to me dated the 13th November, 1968, as follows :—

"Dear Shri Patta,

Please refer to the correspondence resting with D.O. letter No. 349-PMH/68, dated the 2nd November, 1968, from the Prime Minister to yourself regarding the damage done by cyclone in Orissa.,

A Central Team would be in Orissa during the next two or three days to assess the damage done by cyclone in Orissa. The Team would also deal with the extent of Central assistance to be given to Orissa."

Immediately thereafter, after two or three days the Team left for Orissa. But then, again there was a recurring flood. Therefore this Central Team could not proceed to the affected areas in Orissa. It was not only cyclone but also again flood. That was the situation faced by Orissa, and because the affected areas were inaccessible to the Central Team by the time they could arrive in Orissa, they had to go back to Delhi from Calcutta. But after some time, after a few days, they visited Orissa to make an assessment of the situation. Therefore, the calamity suffered by the people of Orissa was very devastating, and it made the people very miserable, which the Orissa Government reported to the Centre, though belatedly. This is the information about cyclone damage in Orissa in 1968. My friend, Shri Loka-nath Misra, mentioned a few of the points; he could have referred to the whole thing. In that case I would not have done it. He has left a lot of material items from that. About the nature and extent of damages it is said that eight Blocks of Cuttack were affected by the floods. In Ganjam District, 28 out of the 31 blocks were affected; in Puri District, 25 out of the 25 blocks were

affected; it means cent per cent, of the Blocks were affected. The villages affected were: 4808 of which about 2450 are in Ganjam and 988 villages in Puri. The total area affected in square miles is 2451.80 and the people affected are 13,47,752.. The number of dwelling houses damaged comes to 1,58,699. Therefore I said previously that this is in no way lesser in intensity than the effect of the deluge that happened in West Bengal. Because Orissa is backward, politically backward, it cannot attract the attention and sympathy of others.

SHRI BRAHMANANDA PANDA (Orissa): Because there is no Congress Government, Orissa has become backward?

SHRI N. PATRA: It is a poor region. We are economically backward. Of course, he is very forward but we feel that our economy is backward. When we cannot make both ends meet, we are backward. And almost one-third of the State of Orissa is inhabited by Adivasis who are backward people. The natural resources are not utilised fully. Therefore still we are backward. To say that we are backward is not derogatory. We feel that if proper attention is paid to fully exploit all the natural resources, we can improve our lot.

SHRI P. C. MITRA (Bihar): You mean Mr. Panda is forward?

SHRI N., PATRA: Yes; he is forward. He is a brahmin. Brahmins are more forward intellectually than other people there.

SHRI BRAHMANANDA PANDA: I have neither any caste nor any religion but intellectually I am forward.

SHRI N. PATRA: They are a class of people who are always forward. They are the rich people in Orissa. But 30 per cent of the people are still backward and they need all kinds of help. The Central Government has to see what the State Government is doing for them. I would not have referred to this in such a situation of calamity faced by Orissa but my friend over there must have been serious in dealing with this matter. He unnecessarily brought in the name of Mr. Biju Patnaik and other personalities, which has nothing to do with this question. When the Orissa Government has taken up the responsibility of Government, if such a

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situation has occurred they must shoulder the responsibility completely and cheerfully. Instead of doing that they are saying that the Central Government is misguided, that the Congress people are not alert and that they are doing nothing. This is not the way to explain away things. Here I would like to mention that there is an allegation which we hear that the Orissa Government received some funds last year for meeting the needs of the people in the flood affected areas but those funds were diverted to other Plan projects. This is an allegation which has to be looked into. *(Interruptions)* I would leave it to the Central Government to investigate it.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA : I would like to enquire from you . . .

SHRI N. PATRA: This is the allegation. The Central Ministry was kind enough to give a few crores of rupees for this purpose but we know what this Government has been doing. They have actually dried up all the sources of revenue. In order to benefit themselves they have abolished the land revenue. Even in Madras State which is economically most stable or even in Maharashtra they have not thought of abolishing this land revenue but in Orissa they have abolished land revenue because the Rajas and Maharajas stood to benefit by it. During the British days they were treated as their henchmen and were free from paying land revenue. But now that they got their own Government they thought, "The Government machinery is with us; why should we go, and pay this land revenue?" It would have been a really good thing if the poor people had been given this relief, people having five to ten acres of land. But these Rajas and Maharajas who own large amount of land have gained by the abolition of the land revenue. These people are having hundreds and thousands of acres of land in their own name, in their wives' names, in the name of their children and other relatives and they are also enjoying lakhs and lakhs of rupees as privy purse.

AN HON. MEMBER: He is a big landowner.

SHRI N. PATRA: I am not a landowner. I want that this principle should apply to people having five to ten acres

of land; it is they who should get the relief and not others. Now, as I said, they are drying up all the sources of revenue and then they clamour for help from the Centre. When you have taken up the responsibility you must shoulder it properly; otherwise get out. Do you think that the Centre will go on helping you and you will be administering the territory? Whenever there is some situation or other, some political party is going to explain the situation. People cannot go on sleeping and be lethargic doing nothing..

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: On a point of personal explanation. What I intended to say, Sir, is that when there was such havoc in the State nobody expected the Congress which is also the ruling party in the Centre to go in for these demonstrations and to sabotage the help that was being rendered to the people.

(Interruptions)

SHRI N. PATRA: You have dried up all the sources of revenue and have throttled the economy and how can you expect the Central Government to come to your rescue all the time? If you are not able to manage properly, then get out. People certainly know whether the Central Government is responsive to the plight of the people or not.

With these words, I conclude.

SHRIMATI YASHODA REDDY: Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I expected on an occasion like this, an occasion when people are hit by floods, an occasion when people are suffering from natural calamities beyond the control of human agencies, we would forget politics and party barriers but unfortunately, Sir, in this House and outside I see that whatever the matter may be, politics must enter and sometimes I feel that in our retorts to one another we tend to forget the sufferings of the people which have been caused by the floods in various States. Certainly, I am one of those who are prepared to take the blame because most of the States are ruled by our party; it will be very unfair to say that we have done everything, and we are not to be blamed at all. Certainly having ruled the country from the Centre for over twenty years and in all the States till 1967, certainly if there are any shortcomings I entirely agree that the Opposition has got every right to blame us. *(Interruptions)* Sir, I do not

want to be interrupted. I hope they understand with what spirit I am speaking. But to say that for everything we are responsible in season and out of season, I think we are going beyond all limits. I never expected a person like Mr. Misra at least to bring in politics, though it is too much to expect Mr. Bhupesh Gupta to restrain himself from condemning the Congress Party and personalities on any occasion. Having said this, I must convey to the people of West Bengal our sincere congratulations on the way in which they survived this natural calamity and our heartfelt sympathies for all the sufferings they have undergone in the recent past.

SHRI CHITTA BASU : Thank you very much for your kind sentiments.,

SHRIMATI YASHODA REDDY: My hon. friend should realise that I am not here to give lip sympathy. I am certainly going to plead that West Bengal must be treated on a special priority basis. I am going to plead not only for him, but for every Indian in every State. I am going to plead with the Central Government to do their best in emergencies, whether they are ruled by the Congress or by other parties. Please do not forget that they are Indians first. Parties may come and go, but the people go on for ever. Why I say this is because Mr. Misra had felt it right to say that the Congress Government at the Centre was not treating the States, especially States ruled by the Opposition, with the same care as they are treating the Congress States. If I may confess, the feeling we have is that the Centre is always partial to the States which are ruled by non-Congress Governments than to the Congress States. It is right because whatever faults we have in our own Party, we are prepared to accept them and sometimes forget them. Certainly we will not expose them. But if they are extra-partial, I am not going to question them. I would appreciate it, if there was any truth in their allegation. If there is any suggestion of truth in the allegation in what Mr. Misra has said, I would plead with the Central Government : Please do not have party politics in treating the State Governments in their requests which are very genuine and especially in cases like this. That will be my sincere appeal to the Central Government.

So much has been said about West Bengal that I do not think I can add one word more and so also Orissa. To-

day on this occasion of the discussion on flood; I would like to bring to the notice of the Government of India, especially the Minister of Finance, through Dr. K. L. Rao, who is the Minister of Irrigation and Power, the cyclone havoc that hit Andhra Pradesh. Whenever anything comes up for discussion, Andhra is treated as the richest State, not because of its other material resources, but we are the biggest surplus State in the country. Unfortunately, this year we had first been hit by a very severe drought, which is only equalled by the drought that had hit Rajasthan recently. At that time we came and appealed to the Central Government to give us some money. Before we could recover—certainly we have not actually recovered from it—another part of Andhra Pradesh, Srikakulam and Visakhapatnam, starting from Krishna and West Godavari, the whole east-coast of Andhra Pradesh, about 150 to 200 miles north of Madras, up to Orissa, had a very severe experience of cyclone for three days between the 26th and 29th October. I do not know whether I should place before the House the facts and details, but I would just like to bring to the notice of the House what a terrific deluge of rainfall we had. The normal rainfall for October is 206 mm. We had 180 mm on the 27th October, 305 mm on the 28th October and 80 mm. on the 29th in one place, in Chicacole district. The whole annual rainfall is 106 mm. Even on one day there was more than the annual rainfall. I cannot give the details, but I would like to place before you certain facts about the damage. Out of 620 villages, 430 villages were affected. Loss of human life was very little. Here numbers do, not count. Every human life lost is something to be reckoned with. About nine people died, including men, women and children. About 1962 cattle had been lost. Eighteen thousand one hundred and thirty-seven houses were damaged, out of which 7,000 houses had collapsed; 87 roads were affected and 70 buildings were damaged. Paddy crop in an area of 19,238 acres was damaged; 274 acres were sand cast. Above all, the coconut Topes, about which my friend, Mr. Misra, had mentioned, in about 13,000 acres of Ichapuram, Sompeta and Chicacole, all in Srikakulam district, 3,30,684 coconut trees, were uprooted. He was right when he said that not one coconut palm is standing. The whole coconut Tope covering nearly 13,000 acres has been just wiped off,

[Shrimati Yashoda Reddy] as if by a magic wand, at one stroke, in those three days. All the coconut palms have been damaged. This is only to tell the House in a brief way the details of loss in that particular district. Regarding cattle I do have the figures, but I do not want to quote them.

I just want to bring to the notice of the House one important fact. This district which had to face cyclone on the 26th, 27th and 28th October, had again suffered on the 11th and 12th November. The State Government had assessed the total damage at not less than Rs. 24.50 crores. As an immediate relief only Rs. 50 lakhs have been sent for immediate relief measures. I know that this is a very small amount and people affected either by cyclone, flood or famine cannot be monetarily satisfied. The relief that we give monetarily can never meet the damage psychologically and materially which they have suffered. But this is what the Government of Andhra Pradesh could do immediately. In passing, I must also convey my sense of great admiration and congratulations to the officials of that district. For two days or three days all communications were cut off, whether by road, rail, boat or even by telephone. There was absolutely no facility of communication between the affected areas. I know there will be criticism and there has been criticism, both in our Assembly and outside. I have heard from the people of both the sides that the Government officials had done a very good job. I must congratulate them. Usually we only try to pick holes and never try to give them the credit due. In this case I will not be doing my duty if I do not congratulate the officers of these two districts for the immediate action they took and later on for providing relief measures either given by the Government or by philanthropic 6 P.M. organisations. On this occasion I know that the Government of India have got a demand from almost every State, whether it is for drought, whether it is for floods, or whether it is for some reason or other. We in the Central Government will have to treat the miseries of the people in all the States almost on an equal basis, and I also know the heavy demands the Government of India has got from different States. I very well know also the difficulties and the limitations of the financial resources of the Government of India. But we cannot help asking because on such occa-

sions the only place we can turn to is the Central Government. Whatever the States have done they have done, whether it is Orissa or whether it is West Bengal., I think whatever their demands have been the Central Government should come forward as far as possible and try to give them relief. As far as my State is concerned, my information is—subject to correction—our Chief Minister on 23rd of November has written a letter to the Finance Minister of India for only Rs. 3.43 crores. I know when damage to the extent of Rs. 30 crores has been there, to ask for Rs. 3 crores may look very small. But realising what commitment the Central Government has got throughout India and realising that Rs. 30 crores cannot be met, the immediate need for us is to give time to those people, who have been hit, to recover and come back to normal economy. That will take five or six years for those districts. But to restart their life—for building a house or to buy cattle—whatever little we can do for immediate benefit I think the Government of Andhra Pradesh has been very, very reasonable, and I request Dr. K. L. Rao, who knows more about that than any other, to please convey our request to the Finance Minister and see that this amount is immediately granted.

Sir, before ending I must also say one word about the city of Masulipatam from where my hon. friend comes. Within one day what had happened was—I think Dr. Rao knows better than me—almost the whole town was flooded with water. Even the police station which is in the heart of the town was having about 5 to 6 ft. of water, and even today I am told that the fields round about Masulipatam and some of the roads of Masulipatam have still not been—I mean the water has not been drained off from them. In one single town the loss is about Rs. 3 crores. As far as Masulipatam is concerned, I do not think the Government of Andhra Pradesh have assessed it yet, but about this request of Rs. 3.43 crores which our Government has asked for, I think Dr. Rao will be kind enough to convey it to the Finance Minister and see that it is granted.

Lastly, I must say one thing. I agree with Mr. Bhupesh Gupta in one thing. After twenty years of independence, I do think the Central Government has been guilty in not preparing a master

plan for flood or drought relief, because every time there is a flood or drought we believe in giving some sort of relief, and if the amount of money that we have spent in the last twenty years had been spent in a phased programme for permanent relief measures, I think the benefit which we would have achieved would have been much greater than trying to spend as and when a flood comes or a drought comes. We do have in this Ministry of Irrigation and Power a gentleman who, I think, is the last word as far as irrigation and power are concerned. You find Ministers holding portfolios, their knowledge is not as great as their offices demand, but in this Ministry we do have a Minister whose knowledge nobody can question in this field. I think at least in his regime he must see that he gets his Master Plan sanctioned, and we all Members of Parliament, on this side or that side, will wholeheartedly support him; we will see that we back up his proposals. Whatever we can do from our side as Members of Parliament we will support him and see that the Finance Minister gives sanction for this thing.

One more suggestion was made by my senior colleague from my side that the rivers of India should be treated as national rivers. I do agree that the river and water disputes we are having are a shame.. Sometimes I think even dividing India on a linguistic basis has been a shame and that has brought so many troubles. At least let us not further the troubles. I appeal to Dr. Rao to see that the waters of India in these great rivers are distributed on a national basis for national benefit and not on grounds of petty politics and regional considerations. We would support him in his national effort.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA): As the hon. Members know, 2½ hours were fixed for this discussion. We have already exceeded that time limit. So, if the Members so desire, we can ask the hon. Minister to start his reply at 6.30.

SHRI D. L. SEN GUPTA (West Bengal) : I have my amendment. I should be allowed to speak.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA : Since some of the other major parties have not participated yet, we can extend the time by half an hour.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA): In any case the time would have to be extended by an hour and a half. Even if the Minister starts at 6.30, it would take another hour. I am willing to extend it by a few minutes more provided hon. Members agree to limit their speeches so that all could be accommodated. If they show a little restraint, that would be helpful. Mr. Shejwalkar.

श्री ना० कृ० शेजवलकर (मध्य प्रदेश) :

उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, बाढ़ की चर्चा करना अत्यन्त कष्टदायी परन्तु आवश्यक इस सदन के लिए है। दुर्भाग्य से इस प्रकार की चर्चा करने का अवसर गत सत्र में भी आया था और आज भी उपस्थित हुआ है। भिन्न भिन्न प्रान्तों में जो क्षति हुई है, उसके बारे में समाचार-पत्रों में जो विवरण प्रकाशित हुए हैं और सदन में जो भाषण अभी तक हुए हैं उनके द्वारा बहुत कुछ जानकारी प्राप्त हो चुकी है; प्रश्न यह है कि क्या हम इस प्रकार की परिस्थिति में कुछ करने के लिए असहाय हैं या हम प्रयत्न ही प्रारम्भ न कर पाये हैं। जो कुछ भी क्षति हुई है उसके बारे में भी कुछ भिन्न भिन्न मत यहाँ पर उपस्थित किये गये हैं। विशेषतः पश्चिमी बंगाल के अंदर जो जन क्षति के आंकड़े प्रस्तुत किये गये हैं, उसके बारे में बड़ी भिन्नता मालूम होती है। कांग्रेस दल के ही एक माननीय सदस्य ने सदन के सामने बतलाया कि 30 हजार जन क्षति हुई है जबकि जो आंकड़े प्रस्तुत किये गये हैं, उसके अन्दर अब तक की जो जन क्षति हुई है, वह 2,730 बतलाई गई है। 26-8-68 को पश्चिमी बंगाल के बारे में जो विवरण दिया गया था उसमें जन क्षति की संख्या 26 बतलाई गई है और अब 2,730 बतलाई गई है : इसका अर्थ यह होता है कि 2,724 व्यक्तियों की हानि पिछले अक्टूबर की बाढ़ में हुई है। मैं माननीय मंत्री के प्रति बड़ी श्रद्धा रखता हूँ। पिछले समय भी जब इस प्रकार का विवरण प्रस्तुत हुआ था तो उसके आंकड़ों के बारे में मैंने चर्चा की थी और उस समय शायद वे यह समझे थे कि आंकड़ों पर बंधास नहीं किया जाना चाहिये ऐसा मेरे

[श्री ना. कु. शंजवलकर]

मत है। यह मेरा मत नहीं है। मेरा मत यह है कि ये आंकड़े जो प्रस्तुत किये जाते हैं उनको दुबारा देख लेना आवश्यक होता है कि जब कि इस प्रकार का विवाद उसमें हो। उदाहरण के लिये यह जो आज का विवरण है इस विवरण की ओर आपका ध्यान आकर्षित करना चाहता हूँ। इसके कालम 5 में आप देखिये। इस कालम 5 में अभी जो वर्तमान में आपने विवरण प्रस्तुत किया है उस विवरण में 9.3 लाख हैक्टर क्षेत्र आपने प्रभावित बताया है जब कि वह मूल जो प्रति है, उसमें कोई टाईपिंग मिस्टेक रह गई हो तो मैं नहीं जानता, परन्तु मेरे पास जो है और जिस में 26-8-1968 तक का विवरण प्रस्तुत किया गया था उसमें 13.6 हैक्टर प्रभावित बताया गया था। यह समझ से बाहर की बात है कि जो बाद वाला आंकड़ा है वह छोटा और पहले वाला आंकड़ा बड़ा हो। जब कि 18 नवम्बर तक की क्षति 9.3 हैक्टर बताई गई है तो यह इस प्रकार इसमें भिन्नता या कांटे-डिक्शन क्यों है। इसी लिये मेरा यह आग्रह

कि इस प्रकार जो आंकड़े प्रस्तुत होते हैं उन आंकड़ों के बारे में ध्यान दिया जाना अत्यन्त आवश्यक है और उनका ठीक प्रकार से चेक किया जाना अत्यन्त आवश्यक है।

एक बात मैं और निवेदन करना उचित समझता हूँ कि पिछली बाढ़ के समय जो विवरण सदन के सामने प्रस्तुत किया गया था उसको मैं पूरा पढ़ना नहीं चाहता क्यों कि समय कम है। परन्तु उसके उपसंहार के जो अंतिम चार पांच वाक्य हैं उनकी ओर आपका ध्यान आकर्षित करना चाहता हूँ। उसमें इस बात को स्वीकार किया गया है :

“इस वर्ष के दौरान अनुभूत स्थिति का बार बार सामना न करना पड़े इस लिये यथासंभव उपायों की योजना बनाने के उद्देश्य से राज्यों के विविध भागों की विशेष समस्याओं और आवश्यकताओं का उन्होंने अभी विस्तृत अध्ययन करना है। इस वर्ष की बाढ़ों से पता चल गया है कि कुछ

उपायों को प्राथमिकता देने की आवश्यकता है, जैसे कि वर्तमान तटबन्धों को ऊँचा और मजबूत करना, तापती आदि पर जलाशयों को पूरा करने में जल्दी करना, नये तटबन्धों का निर्माण, निकास नालियों का निर्माण और बाढ़ पूर्व सूचना कक्षों की स्थापना। इस वर्ष की बाढ़ों के दौरान इन तथा अन्य विशेष समस्याओं को चौथी पंचवर्षीय योजना, जिसको जल्दी ही बनाया जाना है, में बाढ़ नियन्त्रण के कार्यक्रम को बनाने समय ध्यान में रखा जायगा।”

इसमें अंतिम जो बात थी इसके सम्बन्ध में श्री माननीय बंजी जी ने अपने विचार उस समय प्रस्तुत किये थे कि बाढ़ के बारे में पूर्व सूचना दी जाय। जो कुछ योजनाएँ इस सम्बन्ध में आगे बढ़ी हैं वे तो वे स्वयं बतायेंगे परन्तु कम से कम एक बात बहुत आवश्यक है कि इन चार महीनों के अन्दर यदि बाढ़ की पूर्व सूचना दी गई होती तो चाहे हम धन-हानि नहीं रोक पाते परन्तु जनहानि पूर्व सूचना से बहुत कुछ बचाई जा सकती थी जैसी कि समाचारपत्रों की रिपोर्ट है उसमें पता होता है कि वह समय दिन का था, न कि रात का और दिन के समय अगर पूर्व सूचना उन स्थानों पर पहुँचा दी जाती, जब गुल दूट रहा था और उसके ऊपर से पानी बहना प्रारम्भ हो गया था उसी समय अगर यह सूचना पहुँचा दी जाती तो बहुत संभावना थी इस बात की कि इतनी बड़ी जनहानी जो हुई है उसे हम बहुत कुछ बचा सकते थे। परन्तु वह सूचना नहीं दी गई और यह बड़े खेद की बात है। उसके लिये शायद मनुष्य ही जिम्मेदार है और उसके लिये हम असहाय अपने को कहें यह उचित नहीं होगा। पृष्ठ 13 में इसका उल्लेख है और इस बात को स्वीकार किया गया है कि इस सम्बन्ध में चेतावनी समय से नहीं दी गई। इसी प्रकार जो सैन्य मदद ली जानी आवश्यक थी, वह नहीं ली गई और यह वास्तव में बड़े खेद की बात है। बाद में इसकी जांच होगी और जांच होने के बाद संभवतः इसके कुछ तथ्य सामने आयेंगे, यह बात तो ठीक

है, और वैसे मैं ईश्वर से प्रार्थना करता हूँ कि वे इस प्रकार की स्थिति अपने देश में लायें नहीं, परन्तु इस प्रकार की यदि पुनरावृत्ति हो तो ऐसी स्थिति को मैं अक्षम्य समझूँगा और अपने कर्तव्यों का पालन न करना एक चरम सीमा है और उसमें भी सैन्य मदद न मिले और लोगों को अपनी जान से हाथ धोना पड़े इस प्रकार की स्थिति वास्तव में बहुत ही चिन्तनीय होगी।

मुझे याद है, मुझे स्मरण है कि पिछली बार चर्चा के समय भी अनेक मुझाव दोनों पक्षों की ओर से दिये गये थे। मुझे अच्छी तरह से याद है कि हमारे माननीय सदस्य बंक बिहारी दास जी ने अनेक मुझाव इस सम्बन्ध में प्रस्तुत किये थे और उनका स्वागत माननीय मंत्री ने भी किया था और गत सत्र में उन्होंने आश्वासन भी दिया था कि उनको जल्दी से जल्दी कार्यान्वित करने का हम प्रयास करेंगे। उन्होंने यह भी कहा था कि किसी भी कारण से इसमें अधिक विलम्ब नहीं किया जा सकता और चौथी पंचवर्षीय योजना में इस पर विचार किया जायगा—जिस की जल्दी संभावना नहीं है—और उसके बाद कोई इसका निर्णय लिया जायगा। अगर इस तरह की स्थिति रही तो मैं समझता हूँ कि हम जल्दी से कोई प्रबन्ध नहीं कर पायेंगे। विशेष रूप से पिछले वर्षों में जब लगातार दोनों समय इस प्रकार की बाढ़ों का प्रकोप अपने पूरे देश के अन्दर फैला है, ऐसे समय में यह अत्यन्त आवश्यक हो गया कि किसी और बात का विचार न करते हुये इस ओर विशेष प्रकार से ध्यान दिया जाय और इसके लिये शिघ्रातिशीघ्र आर्थिक प्रबन्ध करके और उसकी पूरी योजना बना कर के उसको कार्यान्वित किया जाय।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA): Mr. Malli-karjunudu. Please be very short.

SHRI K. P. MALLIKARJUNUDU (Andhra Pradesh): Yes. Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, it is a great tragedy that our country is subjected constantly to cyclones and droughts. The tragedy is

more serious because there is a shortage of foodgrains and shortage of agricultural produce which cannot be used by some of our industries, with the result that our entire economy is under a great strain. It contributes to more unemployment, loss of purchasing power and so on and so forth. Under those circumstances, the visitations of these cyclones have a very, very deleterious effect on our economy. I am glad that our Government is taking some steps to relieve the people of this distress. In this connection I might submit that our hon'ble Minister, Dr. K. L. Rao, is taking energetic steps to see that some kind of mechanism to forecast the coming floods is set up. From the statement given to the House we find that he had gone into consultation with many engineers to ascertain as to the methods adopted by other countries in similar conditions. Hence he deserves our congratulations and our praise.

Coming to Andhra Pradesh, I would like to say a few words. I do not want to cover the ground already covered by Shrimati Yashoda Reddy, but I would like to stress a few points which are not covered by her speech. The recent cyclone affected the Srikakulam district very much. According to the estimates of the Andhra Pradesh Government, the loss is to the tune of Rs. 24 crores and the Government there have asked for Central assistance to the extent of only Rs. 3.43 crores. I do not know how much assistance has been granted by the Central Government. If it is granted, well and good. If not, I would request our hon'ble Minister to impress upon the Finance Minister to release the necessary funds.

Sir, with regard to the loss sustained in that district, I think my friend, Shrimati Yashoda Reddy, has given the details. But I would like to state once again the loss so that the magnitude of the problem may be understood. The number of houses collapsed or damaged is 26,899, the number of irrigation sources breached and damaged is found to be 1,004 and the partial damage to the paddy crop has been to the extent of 60,000 acres. That is the extent of damage caused by the cyclone in that one district alone, a district which is adjacent to the Orissa State.

Apart from that, Sir, some damage was caused to my district of Krishna. The Masulipatam town was subjected to a heavy downpour of rain unprece-

[Shri K. P. Mallikarjunudu]

dented in history.. Since I was here I was not present there at that time. Subsequently I had occasion to go there and I was informed that the town was subjected to very heavy flood and immense suffering as a result. From the statement given I see that the Andhra Pradesh Government has not yet sent a report to the Central Government in regard to assistance. But I can very easily inform the House, Sir, that the damage may run into crores of rupees.

You know, Sir, that our district is the granary in Andhra Pradesh so far as rice is concerned. It is irrigated by the Krishna waters. So it supplies rice to other States too which are deficient in rice. That district now is subjected to this heavy flood damage. Recently I had occasion to visit, seven or eight days ago, and I saw some parts of Masulipat-am and its surroundings. The position was that even after 21 days of the downpour I found water on the paddyfield. One reason for this is perhaps want of drainage facilities for that district. In my opinion irrigation and drainage must go together. They must run on parallel lines. If there are irrigation facilities there should simultaneously be drainage facilities. In my opinion the one fault committed by our people in the olden days is that the irrigation system went ahead of the drainage system. Now attempts are being made in Andhra Pradesh to set right that defect. Now the Andhra Pradesh Government have recently passed an Act under which the farmers would have to contribute something to build up a drainage system to drain off the flood waters. Therefore, in my opinion, wherever some irrigation systems are going to be introduced, care should be taken to see that drainage facilities are provided; otherwise the irrigation system cannot yield the best results possible.

Then, Sir, the second thing is that some kind of fund has to be built up in the Centre. In conditions like severe cyclones or drought there should be a drought fund or famine fund or flood fund. Some fund has to be built up by the Central Government so that whenever such contingencies arise there would not be any difficulty on the part of the Central Government to meet the situation and to render relief. Therefore, I suggest that the Central Government may build a fund which could be pressed into service in times of distress and difficulty.

Apart from that, Sir, my friend, Mr. Chengalvaroyan, suggested" the linking up of all rivers in order to avoid flood, situations. If I am right, Prof. Coup-land who came here before the Constituent Assembly days suggested the division of India into five political zones. He suggested the building up of four or five river valley systems. That, I hope, would go a long way in solving this flood and irrigation problem. I think this is a suggestion which requires a lot of study and a great amount of funds, I do know. But anyhow, the Government should take steps from now onwards to see that all these rivers are linked up into one big river system, divided into four or five subordinate zones. This suggestion, I believe, is worth consideration by the Government.

With these remarks, I close my speech.

श्री बालकृष्ण गुप्त (बिहार) : उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, अभी अभी 20 तारीख को ज्योतिर्मय बमु के साथ मुझे जलपायगुड़ी जाने का सौभाग्य प्राप्त हुआ। हम लोग 6 पार्लियामेंट के मेम्बर वहां गए और हमने वहां यह दृश्य देखा कि हजारों आदमी सड़क पर त्रिपाल ताने पड़े हुए थे और उनको बहुत ही कम मात्रा में खुराक मिल रही थी, सर्दी में वे ठिठुर रहे थे, कम्बल उनके पास नहीं थे और लाखों एकड़ जमीन बिलकुल नष्ट हो गई थी, घरों में लकड़ी और चीजें भरी पड़ी थीं और घर के घर बह गए थे। हम लोगों ने तीन दिन में 700 मील की यात्रा की आसाम बार्डर के तूफानगंज से पाकिस्तान बार्डर के बारमेस घाट, खालमवाड़ी, खालापाड़ा और जहां जहां गांव के गांव बह गए हैं वे स्थान हमने देखे। उससे पहले सहरसा जिले में कोसी बांध के बीच में जो दोनों तरफ पूर्वी और पश्चिमी तटवन्ध हैं उसके पीछे के लोगों की दुर्दशा देखी। इन सब चीजों को देखते हुए मुना जाता है कि फाइनेंस मिनिस्टर कुंजी हाथ में लिए ताले को रोजाना कस रह हैं। क्या हो रहा है, क्या नहीं हो रहा है? हिन्दुस्तान के लाखों आदमी ऐसे निराश और निर्जीव होते जा रहे हैं कि उनको देखने वाला उनको सम्भालने वाला, उनका हाथ पकड़ कर उनको बचाने वाला, उनको वापस जमीन दिलाने

वाला कोई नजर नहीं आता। यह कैसी दुर्दशा है, यह कैसी विडम्बना है। लोककल्याणकारी राज्य का नारा 21 वर्ष तक इस सदन में, उस सदन में और हिन्दुस्तान के हर गली-बाजार में कांग्रेस वालों ने लगाया है लेकिन जब हम जन-मानस की दुर्दशा देखते हैं तो कुछ समझ नहीं पाते। भारत सेवाश्रम संघ के एक रिफ्यूजी आश्रम में हजारों लोग पड़े हुए थे, वे आदिवासी हैं, वे राजवंशी हैं, वे संथाल हैं, वे मुसलमान, हिन्दू सब तरह के लोग हैं उनकी जो दुर्दशा थी उसमें संन्यासियों की आंखों में भी आंसू आ रहे थे। मैं तीन दिन वहां गया उसके बाद तीन दिन तक बिल्कुल ऐसी मानसिक अवस्था में रहा कि मैं क्या कहूं और क्या नहीं कहूं किसे कहूं, किसे नहीं कहूं। इस तरह हिन्दुस्तान का आज यह हाल हो गया है।

हर साल बाढ़ आती है, हर साल सूखा पड़ता है और हमारे यहां बड़ी बड़ी योजनाएं बनती हैं, उनकी बातें होती हैं लेकिन फिर भी कहीं पीने को पानी नहीं है और कहीं पानी है तो गन्दगी से मिला हुआ है जिसको पीनेसे हैजा, पेचिश आदि बीमारियां हो जाती हैं। यह सब देखकर, मि० के० एल० राव और मि० सिद्धेश्वर प्रसाद से दोनों मेरे परम मित्र हैं और हमारे साथी भी हैं उनसे मैं क्या कहूं वे एक ऐसे विभाग के ऊपर बैठे हैं जो कि रुपये के अभाव में कुछ भी नहीं कर पाता। हिन्दुस्तान में लाखों करोड़ों रुपया खर्च हो रहा है, लाखों चीजें हो रही हैं, अशोक होटल की बड़ी बड़ी इमारतें बन रही हैं और श्री कर्ण सिंह जी विलायती टूरिस्ट्स को यहां लाने के लिये रिवालगिंग टावर वगैरह चीजें बना रहे हैं, जब कि हिन्दुस्तान की 27 करोड़ जनता डा० राम-मनोहर लोहिया जी के कथनानुसार 3 आने पर जीवन-निर्वाह करती है। जब उसकी दुर्दशा हम देखते हैं तो ये सब होटल और ये सब खेल-तमाशे हमें उनका एक उपाहस-मात्र नजर आते हैं। मैं क्या कहूं, मुझे इस वक्त टाइम मिला है, मेरे मित्र श्री भूपेश गुप्त ने पहले ही मुना दिया कि अंदाज लगाना ही

मुशिलक है कि जलपाईगुडी के इलाके में कितने आदमी मरे हैं? कोई भी हमको बताने के लिये तैयार नहीं हुआ। जब तिस्ता बाजार डूब रहा था और वहां के एक टेलीफोन आपरेटर ने जलपाईगुडी में टेलीफोन किया और जलपाईगुडी के लोग बचाये जा सकते थे लेकिन जलपाईगुडी के जिला मजिस्ट्रेट मि० सुनीति मलिक फौज वालों से यह प्रार्थना कर रहे थे कि उनके अपने परिवार को किसी तरह से बचाया जाय, वह जलपाईगुडी के बाकी 15 लाख आदमियों को बिल्कुल भूल गये थे जिनके ऊपर तिस्ता का 15 फुट पानी एक जल-समाधि की तरह उनको दंड दे रहा था। यह सब देख कर के सोचता हूं कि आज हिन्दुस्तान को क्या हो गया है क्या नहीं हो गया है किस व्याधि से हम फंस गये हैं। कितने करोड़ रुपये हमने खर्चा किया है छः हजार करोड़ रुपया तो हम विदेशों से ऋण ले चुके हैं और पंद्रह हजार करोड़ रुपया अन्दर के लोगों से ऋण ले चुके हैं लेकिन वह रुपया कहाँ गया उसकी कौन सी इमारतें खड़ी की हैं जब कि जनता को चुल्लू भर पीने को पानी नहीं और खाने को दाना नहीं। वह एक औरत बेचारी मोवाबीन के आटे की रोटी बना रही थी और वह कितना सा आटा था। 3 रु० 30 पैसा वह पांच सौ आदमियों को पकाने के लिये दिया जाता है उसमें मसाला भी आ गया, उसमें इंधन भी आ गया। वह 3 रु० 30 पैसा कभी बड़ी चीज रही होगी लेकिन इस कांग्रेसी-काल में जो मुद्रास्फीति हुई है उसमें 3 रु० 30 पैसा केवल 30 पैसे के बराबर है। यह सब देख कर के किसका हृदय नहीं पसीजता, किसका दिल नहीं टूटता। आज हम वाम-पंथियों की पार्टी के सदस्य उनकी दुर्दशा पर आंसू बहाने के सिवाय कुछ नहीं करते, लोग यहां बड़े बड़े लेक्चर देते हैं। गृह मंत्री साहब कहते हैं कि नक्सलवाड़ी का दमन कर दें, इनका दमन कर देंगे, उनको उखाड़ फेंकेगे लेकिन ग्रामीण जनता की दुर्दशा पर कोई आंसू बहाने वाला नहीं। जनता भी सहनशील है, अब भी वर्दाज़ कर रही है, अब भी सर्दी और सूख से ठिठुरते

[श्री बालकृष्ण गुप्त]

हुये भी चुपचाप बैठी है लेकिन किसी दिन उसकी सहनशीलता की अवधि भी समाप्त हो जायगी और उस वक्त चाहे हम माओ को कितनी ही गालियाँ दें और नक्सलवाड़ी को कितना ही बुरा बतायें सारी जनता नक्सलवाड़ी वालों के साथ हो जायगी और तब हमारे ओर आपके कृप्य करे कारये नहीं होगा।

चीन ने ह्वांगहो नदी को, जिसको 'रिधर आफ सारो' कहा जाता था उसको बांध कर के नहर जैसी बनाया है। जलपाइगुरी में, उत्तर बिहार में, हिमालय से जो नदियाँ निकलती हैं उनकी दुर्दशा हो गई है, वे रेत से भर गई हैं, जब मामूली पानी बहता है तब तो वह बहा कर ले जाती हैं लेकिन जब बड़ी वर्षा होती है, जब लाखों क्यूबेक्स पानी हिमालय से उतर कर नीचे आता है तो गांव के गांव बह जाते हैं, खेत के खेत नष्ट हो जाते हैं और तब उनको देखने के लिये कोई रिलीफ कमेटी, कभी कोई रिलीफ आपरेशन वहाँ पहुँचता है, कितना रुपया ऊपर वालों को मिलता है और कितना नीचे तक मिलता है इसका कोई हिसाब नहीं रहता।

मेरे बंगाल के मित्र ने 50 करोड़ मांगा। उड़ीसा के मित्र 10 करोड़ मांग रहे हैं लेकिन यह रुपया कैसे काम में आये किष्ट तरह से इसका सदुपयोग हो, किस तरह से यह गरीबों के पास पहुँचे, किस प्रकार उनका ठिठुरी हड्डियों के ऊपर मांस और चर्बी लाये, यह बड़ा भारी सवाल है। हम करोड़ों की बातें करते हैं और गरीबों की अंतर्द्वियों की रक्षा नहीं कर सकते। यह सब देख कर के, सुन कर के, मेरा तो हृदय टूट जाता है, क्या कहूँ।

बामपंथी हैं वह अपने चुनाव का प्रचार कर रहे हैं और दक्षिणपंथी हैं वह अपने चुनाव का, प्रचार कर रहे हैं, सब लोग एक विचित्र तरह की राजनैतिक कुश्ती खेल रहे हैं और जनता मारी जा रही है। जनता अत्यंत दुखी है, अत्यंत हीन अवस्था में है, उसके पास न कपड़ा

है, न मकान है, न फूस है, न बिजली है, न रजाई है, न खाना है, न पानी है, न ईंधन है, न खेत है और न काम है, कुछ भी नहीं है। उनको ऊपर उठाने के लिये आप लोगों को कोई ठोस योजना बनानी चाहिये। इस तरह के प्रकृति के प्रकोप तो दुनिया में सब जगह हैं। वर्ष की आंध्रियों और देशों में भी आई हैं और ऐसा सूखा और देशों में भी आया है जहाँ कि पांच पांच वर्ष तक बारिश नहीं होती लेकिन वहाँ के लोग इतनी आफत में नहीं हैं जितना कि हम हिन्दुस्तान में अपने 50 करोड़ लोगों को धकेले हुये हैं। हम ऊँची जाति के लोग, ऊँची श्रेणी के लोग आज इतने क्रूर और हृदयहीन हो गये हैं कि हमें वे अपने भाई ही नजर नहीं आते, हम एक दफा उनके पास से हाथ फहराते हुये निकल जाते हैं और फिर उनको भूल जाते हैं, हमको इतनी ही फिक्र करनी पड़ती है कि अखबारों के मुख्य पृष्ठों पर, हेडलाइनों में, किस तरह से हमारा नाम आ जाय। ठोस योजना जब तक नहीं बनायेंगे, जब तक अखबारों में नाम छपाने की घोड़दौड़ चलती रहेगी, जब तक एक दूसरे को हरा कर गद्दी पर बैठने की प्रतिद्वंद्विता चलती रहेगी तब तक इनका कल्याण नहीं होने वाला है।

(Time bell rings.)

मैं कांग्रेसी मित्रों से कहता हूँ कि वह कोई ठोस योजना बनायें, वह इन गरीबों की हालत को दुरुस्त करें। उनको ऊपर उठाने की चेष्टा करें।

{Time bell rings} «f)TTR,

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SHRT BRAHMANANDA PANDA: Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, during most of the days in this session I was absent from the House; it is not that I was at Bhubaneswar enjoying the fruits of a party in power as my friends previously did. But I was moving from village to village in the flood and cyclone affected areas. I am no "Gopabandhu" to weep the woes of my people. The cyclone had its fury on the 27th October. On the 26th evening at about 2 p.m. there were rains. The gale began to grow stronger towards midnight and below the

whole of the 27th and 28th morning. There were incessant and heavy rains, and the gale blew at a speed of 120 kilometres per hour.

Mr. Vice-Chairman, you come from a region where floods are rare, and during the discussions here you have heard mostly about the Parliamentary aspect of the flood problem in India. I shall try to impress upon you the human aspect of the problem. Imagine for yourself a small hamlet of 20 or 30 houses surrounded on all sides by water. No individual can come out of his house. The entire place is soaked and children half naked are sleeping there on the floor. In the outskirts of Berhampur on the national highway, for the last seven years, a bridge has been damaged and nobody has taken notice of it. There was a diversion and during the eye lön; and the floods, that diversion collapsed. For complete three days Berhampur was cut off from the rest of the world. There were neither telecommunications, nor lights. Every road had breached. On the 30th morning, a circuitous route, I had to reach Bhubhneswar to send a telegram to the Prime Minister.

Mr. Vice-Chairman, figures of damage or destruction, whatever you call, have been given from both sides, by Mr. Patra and by my friend, Mr. Misra, and I need not repeat them. But one thing I have learnt. Even now it haunts me in the nights that misery, that helplessness of those people who suffered. Under a foothill not on the main road, but some 30 miles interior near Poda-mari, about 300 cows were herded. In our villages they generally keep the cows near foothills where there is some shelter. On the 27th, all of them were there. But on the 28th we found not a single cow was living. All of them perished. It is a problem how the people will again put themselves on their feet. If you think that you have given relief to them, I understand you have given something lest they die. I cannot blame my officers in Orissa. They did their best. On the 28th morning itself the Revenue Minister was there on the spot where the first breach had occurred on the national highway. On the third day, the Chief Minister was at Berhampur. I do not blame my Government.. Rather I am proud of my Government. I do not also blame any other party. Everybody did his best because when that was the situation nobody could have kept quiet. The Centre is main-

taining an attitude of frozen indifference. I tell you, Sir, that just three or four miles from Berhampur on the national highway towards Ichchapuram in Andhra there was a small brook called "Ghudukanala". That has turned into a river. Drainage has become a very imponent problem. Dr. Rao knows more about our rivers than myself. Most of the rivers in Orissa are rivers of sorrow, and, added to that, the national-highway has become another sorrow because water-logging continues to be there. If there is a little flood, water does not flow out because adequate drainage measures have not been taken there.

Mr. Vice-Chairman, if I accuse the Central Government of a type of frozen indifference towards us, I shall not be unjustified because here they say in the report itself—it was placed in the House on the 18th—so far as Orissa is concerned, no detailed report has so far been received from the State Government. This is something doing injustice to us, because by that time, I know, on the 12th the Central Team was at Calcutta, and because of another spell of rains, which started on the 11th night, they reached there on the 14th.

I can tell you many instances, Sir, about the highway that is being reconstructed now where the breaches have occurred. Unless some drainage system is set up and water-logging is cleared, this flood problem will not be over there and it is a recurring effect every year. The flood waters will not clear unless something is done on the national highway. Water-logging will be there and it will be difficult for those people in those areas on the other side of the national highway to have a healthy and hygienic life. Mr. Vice-Chairman, I do not blame particularly anybody here. From the beginning in some districts we had drought. Then came the floods. Then floods and cyclone. Then another spell of rain and, at last, whether Mr. Narayan Patra agrees with me or not, that virus which originates from the vice of modern civilisation and which corrupts all human values, Mr. Biju Patnaik, is again there. We can eradicate him from Orissa's life. Everybody is anxious that he should be eradicated...

SHRI N. PATRA : What about your leader Mahatab who has spoiled the political life in Orissa?

SHRI BRAHMANANDA PANDA: I am only mentioning about the virus because I feel your Mr. Biju Patnaik is a potential danger to democracy . . . (Interruptions) Persons do not count for me. I am a man of principles. Had I been after persons, you know what I would have become in Orissa . . . (Interruptions) Let us not waste time.

SHRI N. PATRA : Where is that report, that Madholkar Commission's report, going to be placed by the Chief Minister before the State Assembly? Why is Shri Mahatab preventing the Chief Minister?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA): Please do not argue.

SHRI BRAHMANANDA : Mr. Vice-Chairman, I know for the eradication of such evils, whether they are natural or man-made, the entire economic structure of the country must be revolutionised. After seeing that misery, the distress, the helplessness of the people in those areas, if the country goes the Naxalite way, I will not be very much sorry. What is this life we are living? I remember when I was an adolescent in 1942, there was a big cyclone. In our small village naturally the people who were hurt, who lost everything, were the Harijans. But on the next morning when the sun rose, when there was no more cyclone, my father and the elders of the village came forward and by sun-set that entire Harijan street was reconstructed. But what is happening today? Even if somebody is dying of hunger in the next house, we are not heeding. Our transistors do not stop—There is also this Government agency, the system that works without a spirit. Somebody will say because we do not have a Congress Government there, we try to blame the Centre. If there is a Congress Government, the Centre will take a partial view. Actually this thing is perceptible as I have shown you in this report. We must all make up our minds and I would rather appreciate the way shown by my esteemed friend, Mr. Chengalvaroyan; such things are to be tackled with an impartial mind, not with a party bias. Therefore, I wish the things proposed here like giving prior notice when there is going to be a storm, etc., should be implemented soon. So far as floods are concerned, some devices have to be taken so that people living in those areas are not put to difficulty.

Another point I would like to make. They have mentioned about raising some embankments. But the Chilka embankment is not included in that. I would draw the attention of the Minister to see that Chilka embankment is also given due attention because the lands reclaimed by Chilka embankment were given to the East Bengal refugees. I do not know what will happen to them otherwise.

Then about crop failure. Sugar-cane is completely gone throughout the district. Betel leaves crop is also completely gone. There is not a single coconut tree standing. On the 30th morning you should have seen what Berhampur looked like, almost a desert. Since my boyhood I have never known that people in their own homes could not cook their food even on the next day of the storm. That was the havoc created. And I wish that in future at least we have no grievances against the Centre. As for political considerations, I wish, without being politically guided, because he happens to be one of our reputed engineers, Mr. Rao should not take politics into his head. I would request him to go and see things for himself because he knows much of Orissa. Because he was associated with our Hira-kud dam project, he knows Orissa better than I so far as technically it is concerned. Politically or culturally I may know Orissa better than he, but he knows Orissa in his own way. So I wish and request that he should pay an early visit to that area, see the Chilka embankment, look to the drainage of the National Highway, and see that the bridge in the outskirts of Berhamr . . . damaged for the last seven years, is 8-38 reconstructed.

Thank you Mr. Vice-Chairman, for giving me this opportunity to vent my views.

SHRI D. L. SEN GUPTA : Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, my amendment suggests that permanent measures be taken for prevention of such calamity at all levels.

Mr. Vice-Chairman, as you all know, there was a series of floods also in the State of West Bengal, and in many other States. Even in the last monsoon we had a big flood in Midnapore, Howrah and Hooghly, but we did not bring that issue before Parliament in the manner we are doing it today, because the North Bengal flood of 4th of October is not a flood in the ordinary sense of

the term; it fe something more than that, and it may be appropriate to describe it as a deluge.

Now on Friday last, when the Business Advisory Committee decided on the business of the House for this week, and the Leader of the House announced it, I made the point that the North Bengal floods should not be taken along with the all-India floods, that it should be taken as a separate item and that separate time should be allocated for this discussion. Why? Because I wanted to highlight the problem of Norh Bengal and to delineate it in its proper perspective. Now Dr. Rao is here. He has visited this area and he knows all the difficulties there. Therefore I am not going to waste my time on that. But I would like to tell this House through you, Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, that here is Mr. S. P. Ray, a Congress Member who comes from Jalpaiguri. Now on the 4th of October, at about 5 P.M. he rang up the Superintendent of Police there at Jalpaiguri and told him that he had got a message from his tea garden manager over the phone that the Teesta had crossed the danger level. That Superintendent of Police told him over the phone, "Don't care for this type of rumours. This is all non-sense." I got this news from the Press. Here is Mr. S. P. Ray who can say whether it is correct or not.

SHRI S. P. RAY : It is correct.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Note it.

SHRI D. L. SEN GUPTA : Noted. Now he says it is correct.

That fe one thing; here is a callous Police Superintendent. Now there was a committee appointed by the Government of West Bengal with Mr. S. N. Ray, an ex-Chief Secretary, heading it, and he held some of these officers to be guilty. But what was the punishment? Just a transfer. If they were not transferred, possibly they would have been torn to pieces by the mob there, because if a man is murdered, the murderer will be hanged to death, but this type of officers were responsible for the death of thousands and thousands of people.

Here I am quoting again Mr. S. P. Ray. He is a leader of Jalpaiguri. He is a great tea planter. He is a very responsible man. He is a very old Member of this House. I got this news

from him. Under the police station Mal there were 22 villages, and from out of these 22 villages, 14,000 people have been rescued, and the other people have been washed away, and in those 22 villages alone the residents inhabiting them numberd 50,000. And if out of these, say 50,000 people or 40,000 people, 14,000 were rescued, you can imagine how many people died in those 22 villages alone. Here is Mr. S. P. Ray again. And it is not that in the villages covered by Mal police station alone there was flood. The flood affected many other police stations also, the villages coming under them, in Jalpaiguri district, and it included some portions of Cooch Behar also. You can imagine what was the number of the death roll. This is about human beings.

Then there is the question of animals; I am not talking about that, Mr. Chitta Basu has given the number as more than a lakh.

Now I would like to put before this House two very important things. Then I shall finish. Now may I know from Dr. Rao, the Minister here—possibly his Government has enquired into this—why the military took charge of the situation four days after? Can he give a reason? We expect the military to act promptly and we say, "Let us treat it as a war and take measures promptly as in war." But if four days' time was taken for the military to come in, certainly the Government must take the responsibility for it. Then, at the same time, you will take note of this fact. The people of Siliguri came with water and food immediately after this flood news had reached them. While I congratulate the people of Siliguri, I condemn this Government for their worth-lessness, including the military. We have great respect for the military. We expect promptness from the military. We expect that they will sacrifice their lives when they are called. But they failed here and we must take note of it. It is no good saying every time that the military is all good, the military is all good. If the military is all good. If the military is wrong, we must say that also.

Then I would like to know from the Minister what punishment is proposed in the case of the officers who were responsible for the crisis there, those who did not give the warning in

[Shri D. L. Sen Gupta]

spite of their getting the signal from the meter-man at the Teesta and from Mr. S. P. Ray.

Regarding Government's help, even a person of the stature of Mr. Atulya Ghosh, who is a leader of the Congress, is saying that Government is not giving proper relief, that Government is not coming forward with all the seriousness they should come with. I am quoting Atulya Babu. And the Governor is threatening his resignation. He says that "unless I gave proper funds, I am not here. I shall be resigning." Now these two factors are there. Taking these two factors in view, I would like, Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, through you, the Government to give us an assurance that the Jalpaiguri flood-affected people will not "be treated in the same manner as the East Bengal refugees were earlier treated. We don't want any dole for these people. We want economic rehabilitation in the manner the West Pakistan refugees were settled. Don't give them a hundred rupees and two hundred rupees. Give them all the money required so that they can rehabilitate themselves, build their houses as well as build their economic rehabilitation themselves.

Thank you.

THE MINISTER OF IRRIGATION AND POWER (DR. K. L. RAO) : Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I shall be very brief because the time is already late and hon. Members must be wanting to go back. At the outset I would submit that I have listened carefully to the various suggestions made by hon. Members. I shall analyse all of them, and such of those as I can deal with I shall certainly deal with them. Those about relief measures and others, I shall pass them on to the Home Ministry and to the State Government for necessary action.

Now, there is no question that this year's flood was the most disastrous for the last several years because it has caused the loss of a number of human lives, of very innocent human lives and it is all the more tragic that this has occurred from two tiny rivers, the river, Tapti and the river Teesta, which are by no means big rivers when compared to what we have in this country like the Ganga and the Brahmaputra. That this thing should have happened

from these two small rivers is no doubt tragic but it is still more tragic to think that it has happened as a result of the neglect of the Government. In the case of Surat though the floods came in the daytime, as there was no adequate warning some 300 people died as a result of that; but the number was much more in the case of Jalpaiguri because the floods occurred during the night time. The breach occurred in the night time and people were not warned beforehand so that the sleeping population was swept away.

In the case of the Tapti river we are constructing a dam, called the Ukai Dam, which when completed will fully protect the Surat town and the Tapti valley. Therefore there is not much trouble so far as Tapti is concerned. We expect the dam will be completed in two years or at the most in three years and when it is completed, floods in the Tapti will be a thing of the past.

But in the case of Jalpaiguri, it is a different story. These rivers, the Teesta, Torsha, Sankosh, Mahanadi etc. come from the Himalayas. They come from the neighbouring States from a great height. They run only for a short distance before they pass on into Pakistan and join the Brahmaputra. Therefore they carry a large amount of silt. And floods do not occur often in these rivers. In the case of the Teesta for example we did not have floods for the last 13 or 14 years. In fact it was one of the things that made the people feel not very much afraid of the great dangers of that river. And the tragic thing in the case of the floods in the Teesta was that the people in charge did not pay proper attention. They had adequate warning of the impending danger. The whole of the day the water level was very high, much higher than any time ever known in the history of the river. The embankments of the river have been designed for a discharge of five lakhs cusecs of water whereas in those two days it had gone up to a maximum of seven lakhs cusecs. In spite of the fact that the water level was so very high in the river, it was very unfortunate that the officers probably did not have sufficient experience; otherwise, at least I could not understand how they could not have done their duty and given an ordinary warn-

ing to the people. In that case definitely many more lives would have been saved; only a few people would have been lost. This is a very serious lapse on the part of the officers and I entirely agree with the hon. Members that we should really see that the officers should not show that kind of behaviour.

SHRI D. L. SEN GUPTA : What have you done with them?

DR. K. L. RAO : We have drawn their attention. The West Bengal Government, as you know, has appointed the Ray Committee and it has come out with some suggestions about the action to be taken and I hope the West Bengal Government will take note of it. I entirely agree that such people must be dealt with seriously by the State Government. This is in regard to the Jalpaiguri flood.

But the main question remains as to what should be done so that this kind of tragic event is not repeated. I entirely agree that the embankment works must be made extra strong with greater dimension, with greater freeboard. That must be done immediately. But I find that adequate steps are not being taken because they say that there is no money, but I will see that those embankments are not only repaired but strengthened in such a way that in the future whatever happens, whether the Teesta carries seven lakhs of cusecs or eight lakhs of cusecs of water, the embankments do not breach. This sort of precaution is necessary not only here but in the whole country because in India there are 50 towns like this which are behind the embankments. They are vulnerable areas and if the embankment is breached people will be washed away because people live just behind the embankments. For example, there is Patna, Rajahmundry in Andhra Pradesh; there are fifty such towns and Jalpaiguri is one such town. Jalpaiguri is just behind a high embankment and if any breach occurs in the embankment, the water must go through the entire town and wash away the people. And this was exactly what happened. Cooch-Bihar is also one such town but fortunately in the case of Cooch-Bihar there was no breach. Therefore it is very necessary that the embankments should be strengthened, more strong than the usual standards. That is the first step that should be taken.

There is no question that the Railway waterways are not adequate at Jalpaiguri. It is only for 2,000 feet while the river is nearly 3 miles long there. I have drawn the attention of the Railway Minister and that is being sorted out. We have appointed a special Committee to look into these North Bengal flood control works and to find out what should be done immediately on a priority basis. I expect this Committee to report in the course of a fortnight or so. In this Committee the Railways and various other Departments are represented. That is the next step that we are taking.

More important than all these things is the question of flood forecasting. Obviously in the case of the Tapti and the Teesta if we had efficient forecasting, definitely the people could have been saved. Therefore we are establishing six flood forecasting units in this country. Jalpaiguri is one; Surat is another; Patna, Lucknow and like that we will have six units, we are taking steps to obtain the various equipment and we will put in the personnel after giving proper training and I am sure it will succeed with wireless sets and so on so that people will become aware of the impending floods. As soon as the flood begins to enter near Anderson Bridge if people came to know it, then five to six hours' time would be available for the Jalpaiguri area. Therefore we are going to introduce this flood forecasting system immediately. More sophisticated equipment of course has to be introduced later on in order to see that the flood warning shall not fail even if some of the equipment fails. That also has to be attended to.

There is one more important thing* to do and that is to have a flood fighting force. We propose to give a regular training course to some of the people so that we can have a regular co-ordinated system working in unison with the various Department and other public bodies in these vulnerable areas. The flood fighting force should come in as soon as the danger point is reached; whether the bank is breached or not, that is not the question. As soon as the danger point is reached which must be much below the previous highest floods, this flood fighting force will come in and attend to the requirements of flood fighting. When they are not able to tackle the situation then

[Dr. K. L. Rao]

they will have to call in the military. All this drill we are trying to organise. These are some of the steps that we are trying to take in the case of Jalpaiguri and some other regions.

I would like to submit that in such a big country as ours the finances that we have got are not such that we can undertake the works immediately all over the country and have complete flood control everywhere in the country. It is just impossible. We have spent Rs. 190 crores so far and we have done quite a lot of work. We have added about 5,000 miles of embankments, about 4600 miles of drainage and we have protected 160 towns. Nearly 4500 villages have been lifted above the floods; flood proofing that is called. So quite a large amount of work has been done. Many Members said that all these twenty years nothing has been done: it is not like that. But the point is if you want flood control for the entire country we will require thousands of crores. Even with all our economic methods, cheap labour and so on the total cost of all the flood control works will be anything like Rs. 2000 crores and that is why the question of priorities comes in.

Having regard to all these, I have drawn up priority project schemes worth about Rs. 400 crores. I am pressing for Rs. 400 crores in the Fourth Plan. If the House can support me and secure me that amount, I can assure you that most of these general problems of flood control can be dealt with but I am not sure whether that amount will be available to us in the Fourth Plan. We know which are the priority works. For example, in the Midnapore District we know exactly what has to be done. We know about the Contai, the Dubda, Kaliaghya where the river bed has to be cleaned up etc. We know completely about the Damodar river which is causing a lot of trouble because the river width has been completely shortened and there is no way out for the water to go. Therefore it is that though the amount of water that has been let down from the dam is only 100,000 cusecs, it has caused very heavy floods in the districts of Hooghly, Burdwan, Howrah and also in some parts of Midnapore. All these damages occur because there is no way

out for the river. The river has been occupied by people. We have to canalise the river. It will cost nearly Rs. 10 crores. That has got to be found. It is a question of priorities of funds. What I would submit is that we are aware of these works to be taken up but we have got to find some priorities and tackle these problems. Unfortunately these rivers do not repeat their disasters in the same river. Next year another river comes in. There is a small river here, the Sahbi river, in Delhi. It caused a terrific amount of trouble in 1964. We spent Rs. 3 to 4 crores and for the last three years there is no water coming in it. I fail to understand why the blessed river has not come with floods, after we spent Rs. 4 crores. It may be that next year flood may come. What is happening is that in India we have got to treat all these rivers one by one.

SHRI D. L. SEN GUPTA : Do you agree, therefore, that the DVC scheme has failed?

DR. K. L. RAO : I do not want to expand that. I know that the hon. Member, Mr. Bhupesh Gupta, had referred to it. I find that the DVC has done very well. They had in the month of August, 3 million acre, feet water and their storage capacity was only three-fourth of a million acre ft. If they had held on without opening the gates, then the dams would have burst. It was a great danger. They had to let out the water. They let out only one hundred thousand cusecs. According to the rules and regulations, it should have been two hundred thousand cusecs. The difficulty is that the river lower down has been occupied in recent times and there is no riverbed at all. The Damodar valley has been completely taken up by the people for cultivation. There is only 3-foot diameter pipe for the river to go out. The river width has been brought down from 2000 ft. and odd. Whenever even a little water flows in the river, naturally it spreads out. Therefore, it seems to me that the most important step that we should take in connection with the Damodar river is canalisation. We must re-excavate and form the banks for about 2,000 feet width of river and see that the water below the Durgapur barrage flows out and joins the Hooghly. That is not difficult. It can be done. It is only then we can free

several districts from floods. Whatever little water that is let down naturally spreads. There is no way for going out. It is not a question of money only. I think the West Bengal Government has also recognised that it should be given a very high priority and I hope that it will be one of the projects that will be taken up. It is not that the Government are not fully aware of it. They are doing what they can. It is a question of funds. What we have in the country we have to distribute to so many projects. Therefore, it is not possible to control the floods all at once. It will take many years. We have so far tackled only one-fourth of the problem. We have got three-fourth of the problem left. In another six months when the rains start, again there will be flooding. There is no doubt about it. To prevent any kind of floods, it is utterly impossible, at least for some time. All that we can do is that we can make certain preparations, so that human life, cattle life and other life is not lost. We have got several kinds of precautions. We can take those precautions and see that the disastrous damage that occurred this year is not repeated.

Many hon. Members asked: Why not control the floods by channelling these rivers, one into the other, and have a common system? Especially hon. Members from Madras have said this. It is quite understandable. Even the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha addressed a meeting of engineers and said that this problem must be solved by taking the waters of the Ganga down to Madras and join with the Cauvery. Now, there are some attendant difficulties, but this problem could be considered seriously. So, I am constructing a model showing the various rivers and the various levels. I hope that it will be ready by the time the next session starts in the month of February. I would request hon. Members to go round and see the model and make your suggestions. We can make a study of the whole problem. It is a very desirable study. We have got some excess water when the Brahmaputra is in flood and also when the Ganges is in flood and we have to take it elsewhere. I will be very happy if hon. Members will visit that model and make suggestions. Later on, we can discuss that particular aspect.

Now, hon. Members said that the money given by the Centre was much

less, Rs. 1 crore and so on. Since the last statement, more money has been given by the Finance Ministry. Nearly Rs. 86 crores they have released. They have put a ceiling on the various States and they can spend that money. They are prepared to give Rs. 86 crores. They have, so far, released Rs. 36 crores. The main question is one of doing the work. It is not a question simply of releasing the money for expenditure. Also, the Finance Ministry has said ...

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : Money is needed for relief measures also. We have suggested this thing and they say there is no money.

DR. K. L. RAO : That is meant for all the three types of relief. Also the Finance Ministry said that they are prepared to reconsider it in the month of February. I will have to call a meeting in the month of February.

SHRI CHITTA BASU : You should see what more can be given.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : We are prepared to come and see the model, but our seeing the model will not help the people there.

DR. K. L. RAO: This model is connected with something else, with diversion of water. Now, hon. Members referred to the cyclone in Orissa. It is true that Orissa is one of our areas rich with natural resources. It has got excellent land, beautiful rivers and all other resources, but unfortunately it has been subjected to successive drought conditions and floods and now cyclone. Unfortunately in the east coast of India on an average per year there are eleven cyclones. You cannot help it. It will occur somewhere, either in Orissa, Bengal, Andhra Pradesh or Madras. It has to occur. Cyclones occur every year. Out of this, it is estimated that six will be very ordinary. They will not affect us very much. Five may be serious ones. The recent cyclone is one of the serious categories and it has caused very heavy devastation in three districts of Orissa and in one district, Srikakulam district, of Andhra Pradesh, and also heavy rains fell in the Krishna district and the hon. Member referred to it. We cannot avoid much of cyclone damages. However, if we have the forecast beforehand, if we know, that cyclones are coming, about two days in advance, the crops can be harvested and grain removed. Cy-

[Dr. K. L. Rao] clones cause damage usually when the crops are ripe. That is the most unfortunate thing in the case of these cyclones. They come between October and December. When the crops are ripe, when they are about to be harvested, at that time the cyclones come and damage them very badly. When heavy rainfall occurs, entire fields are filled with water, with the result that the yield from most of the crops is reduced. Therefore, if we have a forecast beforehand, it will naturally be very valuable. It is easy to forecast these cyclones nowadays. It only requires some radar stations, four or five, on the east coast and some reconnaissance aircraft. If we have these, we can easily forecast, forty-eight hours ahead, about the intensity of the cyclone that is coming, when it is coming and so on. We can trace out its history. At the moment we have to depend on some reports from the ships which may be on the seas. They may not be giving accurate information. The meteorological department has been trying to organise some of these stations to forecast, for weather-tracking. It only requires about Rs. 6 to 10 crores and the question of priorities comes in. We have to decide whether we should give this Rs. 10 crores for this or it should go for irrigation projects, etc. We know the solution for reducing cyclone damages. It is quite simple to arrange that. Finally, I would only submit that there were some unfortunate references to the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister. It may be said that I am guilty and I accept that. But to say that the Prime Minister is involved in this, is not really correct. The Prime Minister has taken special interest this year. In fact, she called a meeting of the Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister, the Food Minister and the various Ministers concerned. She held a useful, constructive meeting and chalked out certain programmes which should be done in order to counteract the floods in future. It was a very constructive meeting. It was a very valuable meeting. Similarly, the Deputy Prime Minister rushed to the various flooded areas. Therefore, I only want to submit that at a very high-level discussion . . .

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : May I ask whether the Cabinet meeting was there?

DR. K. L. RAO : I think this was not necessary.

I would only submit that I have noted the various suggestions and also the points which have been made in the amendments, and while we will consider very carefully everything that is possible, I would request the various hon. Members who have given the amendments kindly to withdraw those amendments.

Thank you.

SHRI CHITTA BASU : I have got something to say in my reply.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : The hon. Minister has spoken, I believe, on behalf of the Government. We have made certain suggestions by way of amendments. He should give his views on the amendments we have submitted. These are concrete proposals we have placed before the Government through the amendments. He asked us to withdraw the amendments without saying anything on them.

DR. K. L. RAO : These amendments will be carefully studied and whatever is possible will be done. More than that I cannot say anything because the amendments call for so many crores of rupees and it is not possible for us to say offhand anything.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: I have carefully listened to the reply given by the hon. Minister. . . .

SHRI BRAHMANANDA PANDA: I have to make one submission. My submission is, in the cyclone-affected areas people have been given loans for rehabilitation. It is not enough. Why not this Ministry suggest to the Finance Ministry that the L.I.C. give loans direct to the affected so that they can construct their houses and pay back the money? I draw the attention of the Minister to this because for rehabilitation Rs. 200 or Rs. 250 is nothing. Let the L.I.C. come to the aid of the people who are prepared to take loans and pay it back.

DR. K. L. RAO : I will pass on the suggestion to the Finance Ministry.

SHRI CHITTA BASU : I had raised many points particularly with regard to the rehabilitation of the flood victims of North Bengal. "But during the intervention of the hon. Minister

he has said nothing about the rehabilitation programme of the Government for the flood victims of North Bengal. Mr. Vice-Chairman, you would be knowing by this time that the people of North Bengal including the flood victims have already started a struggle because they feel, if the Government of India continues this indifferent and callous attitude, the entire North Bengal will be destroyed, and I say in the form of a warning to the Government of India that unless the Government of India concedes the demand of the people of Bengal with regard to the rehabilitation of North Bengal, then there will be a mighty mass movement. As a matter of fact, Mr. Vice-Chairman, the people of North Bengal are going on a movement right from the 20th of this month in the form of North Bengal Bandh. I think the entire people of Bengal will rise and compel the Government of India so that the problem of rehabilitation of the North Bengal flood victims is properly solved.

Again, Mr. Vice-Chairman, another very humanitarian cause I want to raise, and in this connection I take this opportunity to place on record my deep sense of gratitude towards the people of Pakistan. A large number of Indian citizens have been swept away by the flood to Pakistan, and I possess definite information about certain ladies of India who have been washed away to Pakistan and I shall give the names and I say with all authority that I have collected this information through most trusted friends of mine who had been to Pakistan area. The names are : Gita Bagchi, Sarju Bala and Yashomayee. The Pakistani people in their generosity in upholding the human values have given them shelter. Therefore, I feel it my duty to place on record our deep sense of gratitude towards the people of Pakistan. At the same time, I would urge upon the Government of India and ask why they have not yet taken up this matter of taking back those Indian citizens at the diplomatic level. Will the Government of India take up this matter at the diplomatic level with the Government of Pakistan so that the sons and daughters of India who are now in Pakistan may come back to their homes?

SHRI M. PURKAYASTHA (Assam) : Do you know the whereabouts of Mrs. Gita Bagchi?

SHRI CHITTA BASU : Yes, I have got it. Have the courage to bring her back.

Again, Mr. Vice-Chairman, I say that there is no rehabilitation blue print at all. Therefore, it was on behalf of the people of West Bengal that we met the Prime Minister twice. Twice I have met the Prime Minister and urged upon her to consider the problem of rehabilitation of North Bengal on a special footing. Although she said, as I told earlier, that finances will not stand in the way, Mr. Vice-Chairman, I have shown you facts and figures as to how these assurances have not been implemented, and the plight and sufferings and miseries of the flood victims are incredible and indescribable. I would therefore urge upon the Government to once more think as to how best the rehabilitation programme can be immediately taken up by the Government of India. Again, in the course of his intervention the hon. Minister has discussed about the future programme with regard to flood control, but I specifically mentioned that the Government of West Bengal as late as 1965 and again in 1967 had placed a Master Plan for North Bengal. What about that Master Plan? I think if the Government of India cares to implement that Master Plan, that will make North Bengal safe from the recurrence of floods. The hon. Minister has been conveniently silent over that particular point. I feel as a technical man he should have said whether the Government is also contemplating to implement that North Bengal Master Plan which is irrigation-cum-flood control project and which will be the key to the prosperity of North Bengal both from the economic point of view and from the point of view of flood control.

Therefore, before concluding, I once again say that the Government of India should feel the pulse of the people of West Bengal today. We are not ready to take things lying low. We must have our rehabilitation and for that we are going on a struggle. I think with the sympathy and support of the rest of the people of India we will be able to force the Government of India to concede to the just and rightful demand for effective rehabilitation of the flood victims of North Bengal.

SHRI D. L. SEN GUPTA: Shri Chitta Basu says that Gita Bagchi is in Pakistan, whereas Mr. Purkayastha expresses doubt. May I know from the hon. Minister whether he is in possession of any fact about the whereabouts of Gita Bagchi who had been washed away by the flood from Jalpaiguri?

SHRI CHITTA BASU : If the hon. Minister is agreeable, I can give him the names, the place and the actual address of these three ladies in Pakistan. Will the hon. Minister take up the matter with the Government of Pakistan at the diplomatic level?

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : I have suggestion to make with regard to the amendments of three of us from West Bengal. I would suggest that the hon. Minister should call a meeting of the M.Ps., representatives from West Bengal, to discuss the proposals and suggestions contained in these amendments and also other suggestions that Members of Parliament may give. Let them be thrashed out at a meeting of the M.Ps, with the Minister and others in the Department.

SHRI MULKA GOVINDA REDDY : Also the Finance Minister.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : I do not know whether he will come, but these gentlemen are not arrogant; anyhow I am dealing with this Minister. If he agrees to hold an early meeting of the representatives of West Bengal, M.Ps., in order to discuss the various proposals that have been made in these amendments or that may come otherwise—we believe you will agree—we are prepared to withdraw these amendments because we would not like to force controversy without a proper discussion. But we strongly feel that these are the minimum demands which must be met. Anyway we are ready to discuss.

SHRI CHITTA BASU : I have given certain concrete suggestions which I feel the Government should take up,

but if the hon. Minister is agreeable to give an assurance that the Government will call us for a discussion on the points raised by us, certainly we are agreeable to withdraw the amendments.

DR. K. L. RAO : May I submit, Sir? Let him not lay down any precondition. It will be my duty and privilege to call a meeting of the Members of Parliament from West Bengal and discuss thoroughly the amendments or the other aspects. I shall be very glad to do so on the 23rd.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: You will be glad to do it on the . . . ?

DR. K. L. RAO : On the 23rd.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: In view of this, I think we can withdraw our amendments.

DR. (MRS.) MINGLADEVI

(Rajasthan) : I would like to know from the hon. Minister. Nobody has stated about the conditions in Rajasthan. He has not been pleased to mention about it. The type of flood from which the people of Rajasthan have suffered was the worst. What measures is he contemplating to control that type of flood?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA): The Minister will be pleased to meet the Rajasthan Members also.

* Amendment Nos. 1 to 3 were, by leave, withdrawn.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA): The House stands adjourned till 11.00 A.M. tomorrow.

The House then adjourned at thirty-three minutes past seven of the clock till eleven of the clock on Tuesday, the 17th December, 1968.

*For text of amendments, vide cols. 4250-4253 *supra*.