

"Jugantar", a daily of Calcutta, dated 31st August, that there has been unprecedented flood in the Harischandrapur police station in the district of Malda in West Bengal, which is a contiguous area to North Bihar, resulting in serious damage to standing crops and household properties of about fifty thousand people rendering them homeless and ten thousand people are still awaiting rescue operations. May I ask the hon. Minister of Irrigation and Power whether this is within the knowledge of the Government of India, if so, what does the Government of India propose to do to mitigate the unprecedented woes of the people who are suffering, for the time being and also to stop recurrence of this trouble in future ?

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED . This must have been • the effect of the floods in North Bihar. We have reports that some areas in West Bengal have been affected by these floods, but the detailed information I have not yet got. I hope that in the meanwhile something will be coming from the State Government about this matter. As soon as these matters are brought to our notice, necessary action will be taken.

SHRI RAIENDRA PRATAP SINHA: Two points emerge from the statement of the hon. Minister. One is there is paucity of funds. No. 2 is, whatever investment we have made on the embankments is practically going waste, if we do not keep them in proper repair. The question is we are investing large amounts of money on importing food. Can we not provide adequate funds and resources to the States, so that adequate flood protection measures are taken and that our food crop is not lost ? Now, what is the estimate of the Government of India in the Fourth Five Year Plan and will you be able to meet all the requirements of the Bihar State Government, so that no damage to the food crop is done ? No. 2 is, he has said that 2,000 miles of embankment have been built. Now, all this costs money and all this involves resources. It is no good building these embankments if we cannot keep them in proper repair. Now, I would like to have an assurance from the hon. Minister that adequate technical resources and financial resources will be made available, so that all our investments on build-

ing up these embankments do not go waste.

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED : As I have already explained, the problem before us is so gigantic that we cannot free the entire country from this trouble in a short period. We have to undertake programmes on a phased basis and I am sure if that work is done, after fifteen or twenty years a good deal of improvement will be made and this country will, to a great extent be free from the rigours of floods. So, within the next four or five years it is difficult to do it, though we want to do it. It is difficult to give the kind of assurance which the hon. Member wants, but I can assure the hon. Member that there is a general feeling that irrigation and flood control, in the Fourth Five Year Plan, should have priority and as far as possible and within our means some way will have to be found out, in order to undertake this work.

SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA : I just wanted to know from the hon. Minister whether, after a study of the behaviour of the turbulent rivers all over the country, any priorities have been fixed for controlling them, wherever these rivers are turbulent, because a lot of devastation takes place every year. During the last four or five years, as far as the rivers Bagmati and Kamla Balan are concerned, they cause devastation in the States of Bengal and Bihar and also in eastern U.P.

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: As the hon. Member is aware, priority has been fixed and it is due to that the work on the Kosi and Gandak projects was taken up in Bihar State. When the work on these two rivers is over, we shall have to consider other schemes.

NAGARJUNASAGAR PROJECT

9. Miss MARY NAIDU :†
SHRIMATI C. AMMANNA RAJA'.

Will the Minister of IRRIGATION AND POWER be pleased to state :

(a) whether his attention has been drawn to a report published in the Hindustan Times of the 29th August 1966, to the

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Miss Mary Naidu.

[Miss Mary Naidu.] effect that the Nagarjunasagar Project is facing a grave crisis owing to lack of funds;

(b) whether the progress of the work has slowed down in that project owing to paucity of funds; and

(c) what steps Government propose to take to ensure that the work in the project is carried out according to schedule ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF IRRIGATION AND POWER (DR. K. L. RAO) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Funds allotted this year are less than what is capable of being spent by the Project Authorities. However, work has not been slowed down so far,

(c) The request of the Andhra Pradesh Government for additional funds is under examination. Pending decision on that question, a sum of rupees one- crore has been released on 30th August 1966 to meet the immediate needs of the Project.

SHRIMATI C. AMMANNA RAJA : The Minister in answer to (b) says that the funds allotted have been less than they should be. How much is it less and what is the actual amount that would be needed to produce the maximum result ? Also at what stage of completion is the project at present and how much money is required for its completion ? After completion what is the amount of foodgrains that will be produced ?

DR. K. L. RAO : Regarding this project, actually the Working Group has fixed the amount of Rs. 18 crores. But due to the difficulty of adjusting it in the State plan only Rs. 8 crores have been given. With regard to the second question, the question of the dam, the work is nearly completed. On the canal work we have done work for irrigating about 6 lakh as against 20 lakh acres. If about another Rs. 40 crores are made available in the next two or three years, then the project can be completed in three years. I think the other question is what is the amount of foodgrains which can be produced. This is one of the very big, major projects in the country and it is possible to produce foodgrains on completing the project to the extent of 11 million tonnes.

SHRI AKBAR ALI KHAN : May I know from the hon. Minister whether, if the Rs. 20 crores are given, he does not think that we will be able to produce food which will reduce our responsibility of importing food, which is more than Rs. 300 crores, to a great extent ?

DR. K. L. RAO : Quite so.

SHRI AKBAR ALI KHAN : Then why not immediate measures are taken to see that the canal are completed ? Because the reservoir is completed now and completing of the canals will give the result, if expedited.

DR. K. L. RAO : It is quite true that it is in an advanced stage. It must receive greater attention. That is what the Planning Commission is trying to do. It is a question of resources adjustment and I hope greater preference will be given to complete the project so that food is produced early.

Miss MARY NAIDU : May I know what is the type of area that is irrigated by the Nagarjunasagar project ?

DR. K. L. RAO : The area that is commanded by the project contains some of the very bad scarcity areas like the Nal-gonda district of the erstwhile Hyderabad State, which is one of the very bad scarcity areas, and also the dry upland areas of Palnad of Guntur district.

Miss MARY NAIDU : Is it a fact that the cement factory in Macherla which used to supply cement to Nagarjunasagar has closed down and, if so, what steps have been taken to restart the factory, or have we made other arrangements to give cement to them from other factories ?

DR. K. L. RAO : It is true that the cement factory which used to supply cement to this project was located only twelve miles away. It will be probably economical to get supply from that factory. Unfortunately that factory has been closed down as a result of strike. We are requesting the State Government to take steps to ensure that this factory is reopened. Meanwhile we are supplying cement from the other factories nearby.

SHRI MULKA GOVINDA REDDY : Apart from providing adequate funds for

completing this Nagarjunasagar project, may I know whether the Government have taken a policy decision that all irrigation projects costing more than Rs. 10 crores will be undertaken by the Centre in view of the fact that most of the States are not in a position to execute those projects ?

DR. K. L. RAO : Yes, Sir. That is one of the points that is under serious consideration. We know that there are a large number of major irrigation projects in the country. I think the hon. Member is referring to the Upper Krishna project which, if it is financed according to the capacity of work, can be completed much earlier than if it is entrusted to the State. In fact that is one of the subjects on which we are engaged in serious consideration.

SHRI K. K. SHAH : Are the Government aware that reallocation is permitted and if there are schemes which are half completed, it is better to complete those schemes than to start new schemes, and for that purpose reallocations under subheads are permissible ?

DR. K. L. RAO : That is the policy of the Fourth Plan to complete the projects already undertaken.

SHRIMATI C. AMMANNA RAJA : The Minister in his reply has said that work has not been slowed down on Nagarjunasagar. But the papers say—and I want to know whether it is true—that Nagarjunasagar faces a crisis owing to lack of funds; thousands of workers are facing retrenchment; hundreds of them already been retrenched and the work has slowed at the dam site; even the engineering staff and administrative personnel are in an uncertain and gloomy mood. During the last two seasons the tempo of work' has been very poor, and Rs. 20 crores was spent annually hoping that the same amount would be allotted this year also. The State Government has provided only Rs. 8.2 crores in the annual budget and has requested the Centre for an additional grant of Rs. 12 crores. The Centre has not sanctioned this amount so far. Also I would like to know whether it is a fact that, instead of importing commodities from abroad, the deficit of 5 lakh tonnes in the whole country can be wiped out when this project is completed.

DR. K. L. RAO: The hon. Member is referring to the fact that the expenditure on the project so far has been Rs. 8 crores. The fund provided for this is 81 crores. Therefore, they are fearing that the project will be slowed down. But the fact is that the project has not been slowed down so far. The work is being done in the normal way. The extra assistance asked for by the State Government is under consideration. We will see that the project is financed so that in the national interest we may be able to produce as much food as possible. With regard to the other part of the question, the hon. Member has asked whether the rice deficit will be made up. The rice deficiency in the country in a normal year — not last year—is about 1 million tonnes. This can be made up no doubt by this project because it is an advanced stage, and similarly the other irrigation projects we have in the country, when they are completed, will naturally go to remove the food shortage in the country.

SHRI P. K. KUMARAN : It seems to me that the hon. Minister in his wisdom is contradicting himself. In answer to the first part he has said that last year less fund had been allotted. In answer to the second part he has said that work has not been slowed or retarded. May I know how we can reconcile these two statements?

MR. CHAIRMAN. Work has not slowed down so far. That is what he said.

SHRI P. K. KUMARAN : It means that by the time the answer goes down in the country the work will slow down. Now I want to know this. What is the total area of land expected to be irrigated by the Nagarjunasagar Project ? What is the total quantity of food that is likely to be produced with that ? What is its relation to the total requirement of rice in India keeping in view the overall necessity of removing food imports ? Does not the Government think that sufficient amount should be diverted for early completion of this important project ? That is the second part.

DR. K. L. RAO : I answered these questions earlier. The area under the command of the project is about 201 lakhs of acres. I also submitted the amount of food that we could produce was 11 million tonnes. The shortage of rice in this coun-

[Dr. K. L. Rao.] try is about *i* million tonnes a year. All these questions have been answered in the other supplementaries.

SHRI M. V. BHADRAM : Sir, . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN : I wish we could finish this. We have taken 40 minutes over three short notice questions. No, no. Papers to be laid on the Table.

SHRI M. V. BHADRAM : Sir, it is an important question.

Ma. CHAIRMAN: All questions are important. We spent 40 minutes on three short notice questions.

SHRI M. V. BHADRAM . Since there is no Question Hour . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN : Papers to be laid on the Table.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

NOTIFICATIONS UNDER THE ESSENTIAL

COMMODITIES ACT, 1955

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI M. SHAFI QURESHI) : Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy each of the following Notifications of the Ministry of Commerce, issued under section 2 of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 :—

- (i) Notification S.O. No. 2135, dated the 15th July, 1966. (ii) Notification S.O. No. 2381, dated the 8th August, 1966.
- (iii) Notification S.O. No. 2511, dated the 17th August, 1966.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT-7029/66 for (i) and No. LT-6996/66 for (ii) and (iii) respectively.]

MESSAGES FROM THE LOK SABHA

(1) THE PUNJAB STATE LEGISLATURE (DELEGATION OF POWERS) BILL, 1966.

(2) THE DELHI HIGH COURT BILL, 1966.

SECRETARY : Sir, I have to report to / the House the following messages received

from the Lok Sabha, signed by the Secretary of the Lok Sabha :—

(1) "In accordance with the provisions of Rule 96 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, I am directed to enclose herewith a copy of the Punjab State Legislature (Delegation of Powers) Bill, 1966, as passed by Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 1st September, 1966."

(2) "In accordance with the provisions of Rule 96 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, I am directed to enclose herewith a copy of the Delhi High Court Bill, 1966, as passed by Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 1st September, 1966."

Sir, I lay a copy of each of these Bills on the Table.

ENQUIRY RE DELAY IN ISSUING PASSPORTS

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL (Gujarat) : Sir, with your permission, I would like to raise a point about the Calling Attention Notice which I have given. It seems that the Minister of External Affairs is trying to prevent Members of Parliament from exercising their freedom and their right to go abroad and visit countries of their choice.

AN HON. MEMBER : Formosa.

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL: Of course, Formosa, maybe Israel. Why should not Members of Parliament enjoy that particular freedom ? When certain Ministers tried to prevent them, when the late Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri was the Prime Minister, I appealed to him and pointed out that We had not yet become a Communist and regimented State. He at once issued orders that permission should be given and we did go.

SHRI A. D. MANI (Madhya Pradesh) : Who are prevented ?

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL: Five senior Members of Parliament are sought to be prevented. The Minister of External Affairs is dilly-dallying for the last one