

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI MANUBHAI SHAH): (a) to (c) Government have constantly under their consideration measures to improve the production of the cotton textile mills. The suggestion that working hours should be increased is one of the suggestions made in this context. The reaction of the labour organisations has not been obtained, and no decision has been taken so far in respect of this suggestion.

12 Noon

CALLING ATTENTION TO A
MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC
IMPORTANCE

SITUATION ARISING OUT OF POLLUTION
OF DRINKING WATER IN DELHI

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri I. K. Gujral.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL (Delhi): Sir, I call the attention of the Minister of Health to the following matters of urgent public importance and I request that she may make a statement thereon—the serious situation arising out of pollution of drinking water in Delhi.

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH (DR. SUSHILA NAYAR): Sir, consequent on heavy rains in Delhi and surrounding areas of Punjab during the present monsoon season, there was heavy flooding of the low-lying areas and villages upstream of Wazirabad pumping station. A breach of Drain No. 8 Diversion occurred on 3rd/4th September, and this accentuated the position. A large quantity of water from this Drain started draining into the river Jumuna passing over fields along the Badli dumping ground. Tests of several samples of water have been continuously taken from the 4th September, 1964 onwards at various points, namely, Drain No. 8, low-lying areas between Drain No. 8 and Burari Nala, north of Badli dumping ground at Wazirabad and Okhla pumping station and the results thereof show

that the quality of the raw water in so far as the chloride contents are concerned, started deteriorating from the 5th September, 1964 onwards when at Wazirabad pumping station it was 22 parts per million, rising up to 32 p.p.m. on 7th September 1964. The latest report on 8th September 1964 shows the chloride content as 31.6 p.p.m. At Okhla the chloride content has been varying, starting from 26.4 p.p.m. on 4th September 1964 falling to 20 p.p.m. on 5th September 1964 and again rising to 36 p.p.m. on 6th September 1964. The latest test report on 8th September 1964 shows that it was 27 p.p.m. The test results give an indication of increase in pollution due to organic matter.

In order to meet the situation, the dose of pre-chlorination, as well as post-chlorination, has been stepped up. Although there have been no adverse bacteriological reports either from the water works laboratory or the municipal health laboratory, the matter of rising chloride content was brought to the notice of the Municipal Medical Officer of Health on 6th September 1964, who, in turn, brought it to the notice of the Director-General of Health Services and, on his advice, it was considered desirable to inform the public to boil the water before drinking as an additional measure of safety. This announcement was made through the All India Radio and the Press.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: The hon. Minister has just said the pollution was first noticed on the 5th, but consultations were going on on the 5th and 6th, two days, and then the announcement was made. Now, having made the announcement to the public, did the Government or the civic body take steps to see: (i) as to why the announcement was not made on the 5th and (ii) having advised the people to drink boiled water, did they take steps to see that the water was boiled in public restaurants and other such places where drinking water is given?

SRI BIREN ROY (West Bengal):
And also in Parliament House.

DR. SUSHILA NAYAR: Sir, so far as Parliament is concerned, I talked to the Secretaries and they immediately started boiling the water after Parliament met on the 7th. As the hon. Member says, news of this water pollution was received on the 6th by us and immediately on the 6th the announcement was made. Further, the announcement having been made that water should be boiled as a double measure of safety, I am not in a position to say whether any of these restaurants, etc. have heeded the advice or not. Generally speaking, they should heed it in their own interests.

SRI I. K. GUJRAL: Although the chloride content is very high and the matter is very serious, the hon. Minister has preferred to leave it to the goodwill of the restaurants to boil the water or not and the fact remains that they do not boil it. Anyhow, today, on the 10th, that is, five days after the situation started, the Delhi Milk Scheme, which is directly under the Government, has notified to the public to boil milk also because there is a danger of pollution in that as well. In view of the fact that the Medical Officer of Health of the New Delhi Municipality has recently made a statement that before the pollution, 30 per cent. of the population of this town suffered from stomach diseases caused by drinking water, that it was due to pollution which is now being attended to and the subsoil water which is being commonly drunk and that the sewer joints are not tight, is the Minister aware of her responsibility that the matter is assuming very serious proportions and, if so, what steps are being taken to meet the situation as a whole?

DR. SUSHILA NAYAR: Well, Sir, the Ministry functions through the local administration and the local administration in this particular case is the Delhi Municipal Corporation,

which has a competent public health engineering division. They are doing everything possible. Our own public health engineers are also helping them in every possible way. Further Sir, I can only say this that I do not think any scientific data has been collected to indicate that there is an increase of gastro-intestinal diseases due to water pollution. I have not seen the statement attributed to the Medical Officer of Health of the Delhi Municipal Corporation. If he has made that statement it is only from a general impression. The point is that all that is humanly possible to do at this stage has been done and is being done.

SRI I. K. GUJRAL: Sir, my last question. Unfortunately, the ill-administered town has always to face natural calamities. The Health Minister has said that if it rains more, the services fail. If it does not rain, the services fail. Has the Government taken any steps to see that the problem of civic services, water and electricity and water particularly, is attended to in a more scientific fashion? And have they formulated a long-term plan to see that incinerators for the disposal of garbage are installed, that sewer joints are more tight and that this situation does not get repeated as often as it does?

DR. SUSHILA NAYAR: The hon. Member was a very responsible office-bearer in a local body himself till quite recently. It is the supervision at the local level which is important. To the extent that he was able to supervise and ensure that the sewer joints were tightened and various other measures were taken, to that extent we can except it from others also. But so far as this Ministry is concerned, I may assure this House that we have set up a planning division and we have advised the Corporation also to do so. We have sanctioned them a planning division. They are searching for competent staff and they have advertised for more engineers and

[Dr. Sushila Nayar.]
other staff. Long-term plans have been made. Some are under preparation.

SHRI FARIDUL HAQ ANSARI (Uttar Pradesh): May I know whether the pollution of the water was to the same extent as in 1955 which caused considerable epidemic in Delhi?

DR. SUSHILA NAYAR: Well, Sir, I am not in a position to say because there is no means of comparison. In 1955 or 1957, whatever the year was, the water that entered the actual pumping stations had faecal matter and organic pollution coming down the Najafgarh Nala, and to prevent that a barrage was set up. Now, Sir, the situation is bad because flood water is coming over the Badli dumps and entering Yamuna above the water works. Efforts are being made to draw the water from the centre of the stream where the pollution is less, and a new barrage of some kind is also being contemplated. But all these things cannot come up in a moment. It will take a little time to complete these things. So, in the meantime, to make assurance doubly sure, the public is requested to boil the water.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Members probably hope that next year this thing would not happen.

DR. SUSHILA NAYAR: I share that hope with the hon. Members.

SHRI P. K. KUMARAN (Andhra Pradesh): It is said that a notification has been issued that milk also should be boiled. Is it because polluted water is added to the milk? If so, will the Government take steps to see that at least pure milk is supplied?

MR. CHAIRMAN: You cannot let water alone if you want to have the milk pure.

SHRI P. L. KUREEL URUF TALIB (Uttar Pradesh): I understand that the public were informed through the Press and the All India Radio. Does the duty of the Health Officer or the Health Department finish there? Were any effective steps taken to see that people did not take polluted water? What effective steps were taken, whether the big establishments, colleges, universities, hospitals, hotels and other places were informed or notified that there was pollution in water, because even the Members of Parliament, 50 per cent. of the Members of Parliament, did not know that there was pollution in the water?

MR. CHAIRMAN. It is not a very good reflection on us.

DR. SUSHILA NAYAR: I am not aware of any other method of notifying the school authorities and the Members of Parliament than the methods that were adopted by the Government—announcement on the Radio and announcement through the Press.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION AND MEMORANDUM OF HINDUSTAN STEELWORKS CONSTRUCTION LIMITED, CALCUTTA

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI P. C. SETHI): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy each on the following papers:—

- (i) Articles of Association of Hindustan Steel works Construction Limited, Calcutta.
- (ii) Memorandum of Association of Hindustan Steelworks Construction Limited, Calcutta.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT-3074/64 for (i) and (ii).]