

this is a bad thing. They feel the pinch but then they are the people who have religious sentiments behind them and they feel that this system has acquired religious sanctity and that it has got to be observed even if it means their ruin. In any case, it will be the best thing if this Bill could be withdrawn but if the Government insists that it should not be withdrawn, then I would prefer it to be passed in the present form in which it has come to us for the simple reason that Government would have the satisfaction that it has taken a step forward in regard to social legislation. The provisions of the Bill and particularly the explanations to clause 2 practically nullify the effect which it is hoped that this Bill will have. In the circumstances, I feel that the most satisfactory arrangement would be for Government to withdraw this Bill because it is not going to help us in any way and it will constitute a laughing stock; if Government does not want to withdraw this measure, then it may be passed because Government will then have the satisfaction, as I said earlier, of having taken a step forward and this will be the case with others also who want to take shelter behind this measure.

I cannot support the Bill but then the Bill has to be passed and it may be passed in the present form without accepting any of the amendments which have been given notice of because the amendments are worse than the disease itself.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The house stands adjourned till 2 P.M.

The House then adjourned for lunch at three minutes past one of the clock.

The House reassembled after lunch at two of the clock. MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

MESSAGE FROM THE LOK SABHA

THE INDIAN STATISTICAL INSTITUTE BILL, 1959

SECRETARY: Sir, I have to report to the House the following message received from the Lok Sabha, signed by the Secretary of the Lok Sabha:

"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 Indian Statistical Institute Bill, 1959 as passed by Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 14th December, 1959."

Sir, I lay the Bill on the Table.

THE DOWRY PROHIBITION BILL, 1959—continued.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I have got still about 15 names before me and we have hardly 45 minutes. So, Members will please take 5 minutes each.

SHRIMATI SAVITRY DEVI NIGAM (Uttar Pradesh): In five minutes what can be said?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Everything that has to be said on the Bill has been said.

DR. SHRIMATI SEETA PARMANAND: It is a social measure and

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I am calling the hon. Minister to reply at 2.45 P.M.

SHRI B. D. KHOBARAGADE (Bombay): The Chairman has said that the discussion might continue up to 3 o'clock.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We will take up the amendments tomorrow but the discussion will close.

there since the Government had decided to remove 35,000 out of the 45,000 families to Dandakaranya. We were told that by May this year, that is last May, 35,000 would be removed to Dandakaranya. Announcements were made and publicity was given to that. What happened? By May 1959, only 211 families were removed and very few acres of land were reclaimed. It is there—last time I said it and I repeat it here. That was the performance. That is the difference between promise and performance, mind you. On the basis of that target, 35,000 camp refugees were told: "Go to Dandakaranya or be ready to face starvation in Bengal because we shall give you only six months' dole and you have to fend for yourselves. We shall not be responsible." We pointed out to the Prime Minister in our letter and to others:

"It would not be possible, the project cannot go on like that and they will not be able to do it and when Mr. Mehr Chand Khanna is in charge, he would not be able to manage a tea shop, a big tea shop."

I said it. Nobody listened to it. We were accused of coming in the way of resettlement and all that. But that was the performance. Then what happened? They started sending those people, those 211 families in November/December. When the West Bengal Government was drawing up its lists of people to send, suddenly an order came to stop that and Mr. Khanna said that from 25 camps, nobody should be sent. Then he suddenly said that only refugee families with four persons should be sent. When people who had applied previously for going to the Andamans and others, before the scheme was in the offing, applied for going to Dandakaranya, he said that they should not be taken. The Bengal Government was in confusion. I am not an apologist of the West Bengal Government, as the hon. House knows. I do not speak for the Bengal Government. Then those miserable fellows were absolutely in confusion. They said: 'What are we to do? We are getting

directions and the Minister gives directions of this kind, one direction upsetting the other." There was confusion and the result was this that some of the directions were sent seven days before people were to be sent. That was his performance and confusion arose as you know and only 200 families or so went. Then he started cutting the doles of those who would not go. He was not mindful of what was happening in Dandakaranya but started cutting down the doles of the people who would not go. Then a policy of discharge took place in the camps of "undesirables or people" who were not according to him legitimate refugees. In West Bengal it is called Mr. Mehr Chand Khanna's policy of discharge and death because he was looking forward to the depletion of the camp population by a policy of discharge through screening on the one hand and death on the other, because conditions were abominable and due to the infernal conditions, people died. He proceeded along these lines. Then coercion took place. A crisis developed in Dandakaranya. I need not go into it as to how the crisis developed because last time I said it. Nothing was done. Here is the 'Statesman' writing about Mr. Fletcher and the secret note to which reference was made by the hon. Minister in his statement. Mr. Fletcher said:

"The tempo dropped sharply after May 6 and everything came to a standstill. The note says that the plan to find room for more displaced persons before July had to be abandoned. Valuable time had been lost and the project is now passing through a difficult period. Only Herculean effort on the part of all concerned can see it through."

This is what he said. Then other things are said and I need not go into them. Mr. Khanna's reaction to that statement, when he was met by the

"Statesman' correspondent, was this: "Mr. Khanna declined to comment on the departmental deficiencies with the remark: 'I do not bother about minor details unless they

[Shri Bhupesh Gupta.] clash with or obstruct the working of the Ministry's broad policies. If some officers are unhappy with the

DDA they are free to quit it and if they fail to work in line with the policies they will be made to quit."

The death warrant of Mr. Fletcher was signed at that press meeting. I am reading from the 'Statesman' of 29th October 1959. There was a plan, there was a design unfolding itself as though in a drama, leading to that kind of episode which has taken place. What happened? Here we must come to the real thing. Mr. Khanna played this set of officers against another. I do not hold any brief for Mr. Fletcher. That was his technique. He usurped the authority. Firstly, he tried the Calcutta office of the D.D.A. to be transformed into an appendage of the Ministry here, then made them divided—the technique of divide and rule—and then the technique was transplanted into the Dandakaranya Project. When the refugees are wanting succour and relief, they are thrown to the mercies of cruel intrigues there. That was the position. What happened then? He said that they would not do team work. What were you doing? Gradually, powers were taken. It is nothing new with Mr. Khanna. He came in 1954 and took over, flattered the Chief Minister of West Bengal and promised that whatever difficulties arose between the Centre and the West Bengal Government, he would solve. He gave all assurances and good things were said about him. Then he did not do it. Then a whispering campaign was started against the local Rehabilitation Ministry. That is how the game of divide and rule was played. There was utter confusion between the Central Ministry and the State Ministry, confusion between the Central Rehabilitation Ministry and the Dandakaranya Project, which is entirely Parliament's responsibility. This is the position into which the project has been landed. Mr. Khanna wants to get away by saying that the officers are at fault and he is trying to set matters right. Then what has happened to the auto-

nomous idea? The autonomy of the project has been robbed because everything was based on autonomy and you see, changes have been made now which practically divest this body of all powers. Mr. Khanna, step by step and stealthily, has taken away the powers and plucked whatever autonomy was there. And in a position like that, when it came to an investigation, he sent his Secretary to investigate. Who would believe such a thing in a situation like that? That is why I say not only Mr. Fletcher has gone from this project, but the autonomy of the body, the autonomy which it was supposed to enjoy, has also gone and its very wide powers of policy-making, execution and so on, have all gone and it has been shorn of all its powers and made into a pitiful appendage of the hon. Home Minister and he thinks that it is a great performance. It is a sorry tale.

SHRI MEHR CHAND KHANNA: Not the Home Ministry, but the Rehabilitation Ministry.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Yes, of the Rehabilitation Minister who has rehabilitated himself very well. Therefore, people in West Bengal say that Mr. Khanna is developing a vested interest. Mind you, when the project was under discussion, many things were said. Then they saw him negotiating with the Madhya Pradesh Government and others for land to settle refugees there and everywhere and he was sending some refugees to Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and so on. And so the people became doubtful and said, "Why, all of us were told that we would be settled in a great Bengali community in Dandakaranya? But now we find he is trying to negotiate a land deal with these people. Is it in order to send us outside Dandakaranya into different States?" So, this is how he behaves.

These are the statements I have, I am not quoting any more. I have brought a list of them, because I may be challenged and so I have all these files and papers here. I have kept every single thing because I know

कारण हैं। सबसे बड़ा कारण यह है कि इसमें व्हेस्टेज इंटरैस्ट के लोग हैं जो दो प्रकार के हैं। एक वे हैं जिन्होंने तरह तरह से रोड़ा अटकाया है, जिन्हें शरणार्थियों से प्रेम नहीं है बल्कि व्यक्तिगत स्वार्थों से प्रेम है। उन्हें इस बात की चिन्ता नहीं है कि पब्लिक एक्सचेजर का कितना रुपया बरबाद हो रहा है, इस गरीब देश का पचपन छप्पन करोड़ रुपया बर्बाद हो रहा है, क्योंकि उन शरणार्थियों का राशन ठेकेदार खा गये हैं, उनको इस बात की कोई चिन्ता नहीं है चाहे करोड़ों रुपया इनकी जेब में चला जाय न उन्हें इस बात की चिन्ता है कि बेचारे रिफ्यूजीज इतना कष्ट पा रहे हैं, उनका कितना अनिश्चित जीवन है। उनको केवल एक चिन्ता है : उनका अपना व्यक्तिगत स्वार्थ बना रहे, अपनी पार्टी की लीडरशिप बनी रहे और पार्टी को मजबूती मिलती रहे। श्रीमन्, इतनी प्रेरणा से कलकत्ता में फूड एजिटेशन हुआ। इसी स्वार्थ को लेकर ट्राम्वे का स्ट्राइक हुआ। हुआ वही कि जनता को भड़का कर उसका एक्सप्लोइटेशन किया। श्रीमन्, जो इन अभाग्य शरणार्थियों को मजबूरियों से बेजा फायदा उठाकर दंडकारण्य स्कॉम के बारे में तमाम अफवाहें उड़ाई जा रही हैं उन सब के पीछे यही केवल एक स्वार्थ है कि उन लोगों से वोट हासिल किये जायें, उनकी मजबूरियों से बेजा फायदा उठाकर, अपनी पार्टी का स्वार्थ पूरा किया जाय।

श्रीमन्, एक दूसरी तरह के लोग भी हैं जो इस दंडकारण्य स्कॉम का विरोध कर रहे हैं। ये वह लोग हैं जिनकी रोजी चलती है, जो कि हजारों लाखों रुपया टेंट के किराये से ही पाते हैं। वे यह चाहते हैं कि जब तक वे रिफ्यूजी बने रहेंगे उनकी रोजी भी बनी रहेगी। इस प्रकार दो स्वार्थों के बीच में इन अभाग्य शरणार्थियों के जीवन में खिलवाड़ हो रहा है और इसलिए वे सभी कोसे जा रहे हैं जो इस स्कॉम को सफल बनाने में सहायक होते हैं। वे भी आलोचना के पात्र हो जाते हैं। अफसोस की बात है कि इतने

अखबारों की कटिंग पढ़कर भूपेश गुप्ता ने अपना समय नष्ट किया। उनका इन्फिल्ट्रेशन हर बाक आफ लाइफ में है। मैं श्रीमन्, सदन के सामने आपके जरिये माननीय मंत्री महोदय को बताना चाहती हूं कि जिस प्रकार का प्रचार लगातार, कांस्टेंटली, हुआ है उससे हम जैसे लोग जिनका कोई स्वार्थ नहीं है और सुचेता जी जैसे लोग, प्रभावित हो गये कि कहीं इनका प्रचार दस या बीस प्रति शत भी तो सही नहीं है...

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Sir, does it mean infiltration into the A.I.C.C.?

श्रीमती सावित्री निगम : इसलिये मैं बताना चाहती हूं कि हम और सुचेता जी जैसे लोग जब प्रभावित होकर चिन्ता में पड़ सकते हैं तो उन अखबार वालों का गलतफहमी में पड़कर एडीटोरियल लिख जाना कोई आश्चर्य की बात नहीं है। इसलिये श्रीमन्, इस सदन के सदस्यों से मेरा एक अनुरोध है कि न तो वे इन प्रचारों की ओर देखें, न वे इस प्रकार की गलत तरीके की जो गलतफहमियां वे फैला रहे हैं, उनकी तरफ देखें। उनको देखना चाहिये उन दुखी और मुसीबतजदा भाइयों की ओर जो कि अनिश्चित जीवन से घोर कष्ट पा रहे हैं और उन्हें देखना चाहिये उस कलंक की ओर जो कि आज पब्लिक एक्सचेजर के ऊपर लगा हुआ है, हमारे खजाने पर लगा हुआ है, जिससे करोड़ों रुपया बहा जा रहा है। यदि वह रुपया शरणार्थियों की भलाई में काम आता तो मुझे कोई एतराज नहीं होता; चाहे वे जीवनपर्यन्त कैम्पों में रख जाते फिर भी मैं उसका विरोधी नहीं करती। लेकिन उसमें से थोड़ा अंश ही शरणार्थियों को मिलता है, बाकी उन तमाम लोगों को मिलता है जो आर्गेनाइजर्स हैं, ठेकेदार हैं, टेंट वाले हैं।

श्रीमन्, खेद का विषय है कि इस सदन में उन अधिकारियों की भी आलोचना की गई, उन अधिकारियों का भी नाम लिया गया,

[श्रीमती सावित्री निगम]

जिन्हें कि हम इस डेमोक्रेसी का अंगरक्षक मानते हैं, हम उनका बहुत सम्मान करते हैं। उनके बारे में सदन में चर्चा किया जाना मैं उचित नहीं समझती। लेकिन, श्रीमन्, जब उनकी चर्चा की गई है तो मुझे यह कहना ही पड़ेगा और मैं माननीय रिहैबिलिटेशन मिनिस्टर के सामने चार सवाल इस विषय में रखना चाहती हूँ। यह जो फ्लेचर साहब का मामला उठाया गया उसके सम्बन्ध में मैं यह पूछना चाहती हूँ कि क्या यह बात सच है कि फ्लेचर महोदय के स्वभाव के कारण उनकी शिकायत बंगाल के चीफ मिनिस्टर महोदय ने भी की? उनके स्वभाव में हमें नेचर से डील न कर सकने की जो कमजोरी है, क्या उसके कारण उनकी शिकायत मध्य प्रदेश के मुख्य मंत्री ने भी की? क्या श्रीमन्, यह भी सच है कि अगस्त के महीने में यह निश्चय कर लिया गया था कि उनको अलग कर दिया जाय? लेकिन फिर भी उनके साथ ढीलढाल और सहानुभूति बरती गई और उनको अलग नहीं किया गया और उसी का नतीजा अब तक भुगतना पड़ रहा है और उन्होंने तमाम बवंडर खड़ा कर दिया है। श्रीमन्, चौथी बात मैं यह भी पूछना चाहती हूँ कि उन्हें उस समय क्यों नहीं अलग किया गया? जब एक बार उन्हें अलग करने का निश्चय किया गया था तो उसी समय उन्हें अलग क्यों नहीं किया गया। श्रीमन्, वैसे तो एक व्यक्ति का महत्व बहुत है लेकिन उससे कहीं अधिक महत्व लाखों शरणार्थियों के जीवन का प्रश्न रखता है और उतना ही बड़ा उस प्रोजेक्ट का है जिसके द्वारा शरणार्थियों को पुनर्वासित किया जाने वाला है। जब हमने लोकतंत्रीय व्यवस्था को माना है तब क्या हमको यह भी स्वीकार नहीं करना पड़ेगा कि कोई भी अधिकारी चाहे वह कितना ही योग्य हो, उसकी सफलता की सबसे बड़ी कसीटी यह है कि वह कितने लोगों को अपने साथ लेकर चल सकता है, कितने लोगों का

को अपरेशन सीक कर सकता है? मैं यह नहीं कहना चाहती हूँ कि फ्लेचर महोदय में कोई योग्यता की कमी थी, मैं यह भी नहीं कहना चाहती कि मेरी उनसे कोई शिकायत है। उनकी शिकायत करने का मेरा कतई इरादा नहीं है। लेकिन चूंकि वे बेचारे लोगों से अपनी डीलिंग में सफल नहीं हो सके और वे लोगों को अपने साथ लेकर उन का सहयोग नहीं प्राप्त कर सके, इसलिये अगर इस योजना को सफल बनाने के लिये उनको अलग करने की जरूरत आ पड़ी थी तो मैं यह सोचती हूँ कि वह सर्वथा उचित था और कोई समझदार या ईमानदार आदमी इस बात से इंकार नहीं कर सकता।

श्रीमन्, अब मैं एक मिनट में अपनी एक बात कह कर समाप्त कर देना चाहती हूँ। मैं भी माननीय रिहैबिलिटेशन मंत्री महोदय से एक बिनय करना चाहती हूँ। वह यह है कि सचमुच जो प्रगति इस दंडकारण्य स्कीम को पूरा करने में आनी चाहिये और जिस तेजी से, जिस स्पीड के साथ, वहां का काम होना चाहिये था वह नहीं हुआ है। कारण मैं भी समझती हूँ। लेकिन अब भविष्य में, मैं उनसे प्रार्थना करती हूँ, जितनी जल्दी हो सके वे इस काम को पूरा कराने के लिये पूरी तीर से सतर्कता बरतें और डघर उधर जो तमाम श्रुत प्रचार हो रहा है उसको भी दूर करने के लिये वे अपना स्टेटमेंट दें ताकि बेचारे शरणार्थी जो आज चिन्ता में पड़े हुए हैं उनकी भी चिन्ता दूर हो, और साथ ही साथ, यह जो स्कीम है जल्दी से जल्दी पूरी हो।

DR. A. N. BOSE (West Bengal): Mr. Vice-Chairman, the hon. Minister has circulated a statement on the position of the Dandakaranya Project with suggestive but mystifying references to some quarrels among the senior officers. We are completely in the dark as to the reasons behind these disputes as to whether they arise out of personal rancour or out

of temperamental differences or out of differences in administrative policy or over priorities. Moreover, Sir, we have not the statements and letters of the officers concerned before us nor have we got the report of the Secretary who enquired into the matter. Sir, we are not at all concerned or even interested in the personal bickerings of the officers or between the officers and the Minister himself. What the House is interested in is the actual progress achieved in the Project of Dandakaranya, and in this matter, Sir, I am sorry to observe that hardly anything is given in this statement. In April, 1958, Sir, a note was circulated on the Dandakaranya scheme in which some targets were fixed for the next three years. For the year 1958, the target for reclamation was 25,000 acres and the target for resettlement was 2,760 families. According to the statement, Sir, I find that instead of 2,760 families, 1,100 persons have been moved not in one year but in twenty-one months. And among these 1,100 persons moved we do not know how many are still in camps and how many have been actually resettled. Even assuming that all of them have been resettled, it comes to about 10 per cent of the target achieved in 21 months instead of one year. As regards the area reclaimed, we have nothing, in the statement except that large areas of land have been secured. In the note which we received only this morning, the figure comes to 1,500 acres at Umarkote and 2,000 acres at Pharasgaon, i.e. 3,500 acres in all. Against a target of 25,000 acres it would appear that only 14 per cent of the target has been achieved in the course of 21 months, not one year. A sum of Rs. 10 crores was earmarked to be spent in three years for the completion of the project but we have nothing here to show the amount that has actually been spent. About the rest of the achievement, we have it in paragraph 14. The achievement made in 21 months goes thus "a plan has been formulated, a survey is undertaken, staff assembled, reclamation machinery purchased and good progress made" in

the programme of malaria eradication. We are told that for immediate purposes short-term plans of development of certain areas have been taken in hand. After 21 months short-term plans are taken in hand, not to speak of long-term plans at all. We are told further that reclamation operations in the Madhya Pradesh zone will start *next* month. Actually reclamation operations were started in Madhya Pradesh long ago as stated in the other note which came this morning. Work started in Pharasgaon in the reserve forest areas of Bastar but the work was interrupted by the Madhya Pradesh Government because they did not like forests to be destroyed for reclamation. Pharasgaon was abandoned and work was started at Umarkote in Orissa and there the construction of a forest road was interrupted because the Orissa Forest Department's permission had not been obtained. It seems clear therefore that plans for reclamation are formulated and displaced persons are packed off to these areas even before the release of land from the respective Governments is secured. It is natural therefore that in view of this bungling, in view of this lack of foresight, lack of planning, progress has been delayed and there has been discontent among the refugees and there have been demonstrations.

Refugees, Sir, it is admitted on all hands, are not averse to work. They are ready to do hard work; only the work must be suitable for their aptitudes, for their capacities and for their physical strength. Farmers want land to be cultivated, artisans want tools to produce things but by a curious feat of imagination the authorities selected farmers for removal to Dandakaranya not for the purpose of cultivating land but for loading and unloading. They were persuaded to come to Dandakaranya with promises of land and home dangled before their eyes. Land and home were slow in coming and even now most of them have not got them. Moreover these are men who have been physically wrecked by years of

[Dr. A. N. Bose.] camp life, by years of living on doles, men who have been earning Re. 1 and 50 nP every day per family for their maintenance. It can well be imagined what kind of hard work is possible for them.

Last year in April during the discussion on the Appropriation Bill I spoke on the Dandakaranya project, cautioned the Ministry against certain steps. I urged that the removal of displaced persons should be only after the work of reclamation is started, that reclamation should start in compact areas and not dispersed in widely separated areas where lines of communication are lacking and are difficult to build up. I also warned that displaced persons should be removed outside Bengal only after it has been ascertained that the States where they are being sent are willing to receive them and are willing to allot land for reclamation. Thirdly, I said that land should be sought in Bengal—every acre of unreclaimed land in Bengal should be sought out and availed of—before the displaced persons are sent outside. Lastly I asked them not to close the Department post-haste before some suitable arrangement had been made for the resettlement of these displaced persons. Unfortunately the hon. Minister was irritated at my comments and characterised my remarks as irresponsible. My hon. friend, Mr. Bhupesh Gupta has profusely quoted from papers. It is common knowledge that not only the Leftist parties and papers have come out with drastic criticism of the Dandakaranya scheme and its implementation. I hope the hon. Minister will not characterise the *Statesman* as a Leftist paper or a paper inspired by Leftist parties. The correspondent of that paper paid several visits to Dandakaranya during June and July last and made some reports in the paper which the hon. Minister may well go through and the criticisms contained therein are far more severe than those I have been making here now. It seems however that good

sense and wisdom are now dawning ...

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Where?

DR. A. N. BOSE: In the Ministerial quarters.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: It is darkness absolutely.

DR. A. N. BOSE: Sir, in July last it was reported that there was a conference in Kashmir of the Rehabilitation Ministers where it was decided that stress should be laid on the resettlement of as many camp refugees as possible in Bengal through bania-nama schemes. It was also reported that a decision was taken at the meeting that the Dandakaranya scheme had not progressed satisfactorily and that States outside West Bengal had pleaded inability to take in any more displaced persons. It is against such a contingency that we had warned. We had asked them to first ascertain whether land was available and whether the States were willing to accept the refugees, then start reclamation work and after the land is ready to take and settle the refugees. I hope even at this late hour the hon. Minister will take heed of these comments and make necessary amends.

SHRI B. D. KHOBARAGADE (Bombay) : Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I have carefully gone through the statement that was made by the hon. Minister in this House. The statement rather narrates the story of a most shocking, sad and scandalous episode that took place in the Dandakaranya project and that has shocked the whole country.

[MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair.]

I must state at the outset that I do not hold any brief for any officer concerned. I am not interested in the welfare of any officer. I am not interested whether any officer is retained in the Dandakaranya Authority or whether any officer is removed from the Authority. I am only interested in the successful implementation of the scheme, the scheme which

was formulated for the rehabilitation of 35,000 displaced persons, the scheme which was formulated for the social and economic development and advancement of the local tribal people. But unfortunately because of the sorry and sad state of affairs in the Rehabilitation Ministry we have not been able to achieve this purpose. My friend, Dr. Bose, has just informed the House about the targets that were set by the Dandakaranya Authority about one or two years back. Twenty-five thousand acres of land were to be reclaimed. What is the situation today? Only about 3,500 acres of land have been reclaimed. What about the removal of displaced persons from the Sealdah station to the Dandakaranya Project? It was claimed last year that about 25,000 families would be removed to the Dandakaranya Project by the end of July, 1959. What is the position today? As was told by Dr. Bose, only 1100 families have been removed to the Dandakaranya Project.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Not even 1,100.

SHRI B. D. KHOBARAGADE: It seems that—400 families and 300 families as mentioned in the note that was circulated this morning—only 700 families have been removed to the Dandakaranya Project. Instead of 25,000 families, only 700 families have been rehabilitated by the Dandakaranya Authority. So that is the way in which the whole scheme is being implemented. I am not concerned about the personal bickerings, personal rivalries or the differences of opinion as to how the scheme is to be implemented or executed. I only want that the scheme should be implemented as early as possible and the displaced persons should be rehabilitated in Dandakaranya.

If we take into consideration the whole episode, who is to be blamed? Unfortunately, the hon. Minister has not placed on the Table of the House

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the note which was sent by Mr. Fletcher, and the note or rejoinder, which, according to the statement of the Minister, was sent by the two Members of the Authority. In the absence of these two important documents, it is rather difficult to say who is at fault, who is to be blamed. Apart from that, I am not concerned about the officials' attitude.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: They are preserved for the hon. Minister.

SHRI B. D. KHOBARAGADE: I say that the whole responsibility and even blame for this sad and shocking episode must be shouldered by the Central Rehabilitation Ministry. If we go through the Resolution which established this Authority, we will find that the Authority was not an autonomous Authority. It was subject to the control of the Central Rehabilitation Ministry. The Government Resolution clearly lays down that "The Authority will function in accordance with such directions as it may, from time to time, receive from the Government. The Ministry of Rehabilitation will be administratively in charge of the Authority." Therefore, so far as the question of laying down the policy is concerned, the Ministry is responsible. The Authority is responsible only for following the directions issued from the Ministry and to execute the policy laid down by the Ministry.

What is the position? Who is responsible then for this episode? If there were personal bickerings going on, there was personal rivalry, it was the duty and responsibility of the hon. Minister to resolve those differences. But what is the actual position? When this matter was brought to the notice of the hon. Minister, he did not take any steps. The first mistake that was made by the Rehabilitation Ministry was that the Ministry gave very wide and enormous powers to the Authority. No such enormous powers should have been given to the Authority. Powers were given to give contracts worth Rs. 40

[Shri B. D. Khobaragade.] lakhs to any individual. Powers were given to the Authority to appoint any individual as an officer under the Authority who could draw a salary up to Rs. 1,500 per month. Here even if we have to appoint a Class II officer, drawing a salary of Rs. 250 per month, he has to appear before the Union Public Service Commission. Such wide powers were given to the Authority. That was the first mistake done.

Secondly, no proper functions of the Authority were described. According to the Resolution what was the authority of the Dandakaranya Authority? What were the powers of the Chief Administrative Officer? What were the powers of the Members of the Authority? Nothing was mentioned. Apart from that, when in last July or August it was brought to the notice of the Rehabilitation Minister that there were such differences, may be differences of policy or may be because of personal bickerings, what action did he take? No action was taken at all. It is said that there were two or three matters of difference. The first was regarding the construction of the Raipur-Vishakha-patnam road which would run through Dandakaranya. The second difference of opinion was about the specification of buildings. And the third was about the programme for checking soil-erosion. So, if there was difference, how could this policy be executed? It was for the Minister to have got expert advice and to have advised the Authority. This is the Government policy. This is what the Government have decided and this must be executed by the Authority. And if any official, whether it is Mr. Fletcher, whether it is Mr. Bandopadhyaya or Major Sandhu, whoever it is, comes in the way of executing the policy laid down by the Government, he should be taken to task. But did the hon. Minister take that step in July or August? No. In August, Mr. Fletcher was called to Delhi. A note was sent to him from the Ministry saying that the Ministry did not want

to have his services retained in the Authority and that he would be sent back to Punjab. But it is surprising that the Chairman of the Authority suggested that he should be retained in the Authority. Well, if he was creating any trouble, any disturbance in the Authority, if he was creating any obstacles in the execution and proper implementation of the scheme, he should have been removed then and there. But no action was taken against him. No action was taken against any of the officers.

If we see the events in their proper perspective, it will be found that the whole trouble started when Mr. Bandopadhyaya and Major Sandhu joined the Authority in May. Before that there was no trouble at all.

Secondly, the House will note that Major Sandhu and Mr. Bandopadhyaya released a telegram to the Press. Unless and until they had stealthily published that telegram which they had sent to the Chief Minister of West Bengal, how could it have appeared in the Press? So, from all the circumstances, one thing is certain that those people *i.e.* Major Sandhu and Bandopadhyaya are to be blamed, and particularly the Central Rehabilitation Minister is to be blamed.

I am only concerned with one thing and that is that the scheme should be properly implemented and the displaced persons should be rehabilitated at the earliest. For that purpose I suggest that a public enquiry or a judicial enquiry should be held immediately, to enquire into the reasons for this episode to find out who is to be blamed and in future what steps should be taken by the Government to implement this scheme properly, speedily and successfully, so that the displaced persons can be rehabilitated as early as possible.

Thank you.

SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR BASU
(West Bengal): Mr. Deputy Chair-
man, I welcome this debate on the

statement issued by the hon. Minister, because the situation required scrutiny by Parliament, and this debate will also give an opportunity to the hon. Minister to clarify the position, particularly in view of the various newspaper reports and comments which have been placed before this House. It is worthwhile recalling certain basic facts with regard to the subject matter of this debate. Now, relief and rehabilitation of d's-placed persons from East Bengal has been a tremendous undertaking on the part of the Government of India. Having had firsthand knowledge and experience of the condition of East Bengal refugees in Pakistan, I am well aware of the misery and suffering through which they had to pass before they sought a new haven and sanctuary in India. Sustained and continued efforts have been made for their rehabilitation, and money and energy have not been spared to bring to them succour and relief under circumstances which are of a most difficult and unpredictable nature. 4 P.M.

Now, Sir, as a last resort it was decided to open up the vast area of Dandakaranya with the immediate object of rehabilitation of the East Bengal refugees and their removal from camps in West Bengal, along with the two-fold objective of local tribal welfare and the long-term scheme of developing an immense area in the very heart of the Indian sub-continent. In pursuit of these objectives, active and elaborate measures were adopted. The first important steps taken was to set up the Dandakaranya Development Authority. It was an administrative act without any statutory sanction. In order to achieve quick decisions and quicker results, tremendous powers were vested in the Authority, both financial and administrative. Sanctioning of projects costing up to Rs. 40 lakhs, creating of posts carrying salaries up to Rs. 2,000, and making of appointments with salaries up to Rs. 1,500—these are vast powers in all conscience, commensurate per-

haps with the vastness of the Dandakaranya area itself and probably unprecedented in the history of any non-statutory undertaking in this country.

Now, with such tremendous powers concentrated in the Development Authority, it is not unnatural to expect some scramble for exclusive exercise of such powers by individual members of the Authority charged with executive functions. The constitution of the Authority with highly placed officials seasoned in the public service of India was perfect and unexceptionable. The association of the States participating in the Dandakaranya scheme through their respective Chief Secretaries was also commendable. But what is regrettable is that the Chief Administrator, who was an I.C.S. officer, instead of acting as a co-ordinating and reconciling authority, wanted his decisions to be final even when he differed on technical matters from his two highly efficient technical colleagues, the Member for Engineering and the Member for Agriculture.

Sir, in a new enterprise of such magnitude, when primeval nature had to be harnessed and converted into inhabited towns and villages within the minimum time, when camp conditions in West Bengal demanded their speedy termination by the removal of the inmates to habitable and self-sufficient areas, these quarrels and bickerings in the distant forest far away from the headquarters of the Ministry were, in my opinion, a national calamity, particularly when large-scale preliminary steps had already been taken to give the scheme a good start in the shape of plans, surveys, public health measures, etc. As soon, however, as these undesirable trends were brought to the surface, the Minister of Rehabilitation took quick and vigorous steps to put the organisation on its feet after necessary enquiries had been made by representatives of the Ministry. There was drastic reduction in the powers enjoyed by the Authority. Sanctions of schemes were brought

[Shri Santosh Kumar Basu.] down from the limit of Rs. 40 lakhs to Rs. 10 lakhs. The constitution of the Authority has also been changed. The resignation of the Chief Administrator has been accepted, and a senior officer of the Ministry has been appointed the Chief Administrator. And to clarify his position and power *visa-vis* the other members, he has been appointed the Deputy Chairman of the Authority. The two technical Members, whose stand seemed to be quite unexceptionable that their decisions should not be subject to the overriding powers of a non-technical Chief Administrator, have agreed to remain and continue to serve what may undoubtedly be regarded as a patriotic and historic endeavour.

Now, Sir, the Minister of Rehabilitation should, in my opinion, be given full credit for acting in a crisis with determination and wisdom. I am not unmindful of the newspaper comments in West Bengal which should be given due consideration and due weight. At the same time there are certain indisputable facts which stand out and must be acknowledged in this controversy.

The progress so far made in the development of the area in spite of innumerable difficulties has been summarised in a very comprehensive note which has been circulated by the Ministry. Reclamation and development of land, conservation of soil, irrigation, resettlement of displaced families on land and their engagement in operational activities according to their aptitude, also settlement of landless tribals on newly reclaimed land, medical and public health measures with the establishment of a health centre and an organisation for malaria control, opening up of primary schools, arrangements for engaging displaced persons in skilled jobs and constructional works, opening of a number of work centres with the employment of five hundred displaced persons, these have already been undertaken and have materialised.

Now, the stage has been set for a speedy and progressive push forward for the tremendous and fascinating drama of turning a prehistoric and mythological territory into a highly developed and modernised region of this great country.

Now, Sir, in this new and somewhat altered context may I put forward a suggestion for the consideration of the hon. Minister? In view of all that has happened in the working of the Authority in the remote fastnesses of the Dandakaranya, he may consider the necessity of setting up a small advisory committee of non-official and official members, who may advise the Authority on such matters of policy as may be referred to them . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You finish your speech. I have to call another speaker.

SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I will just finish in two minutes, Sir. I suppose it is a rather new and useful suggestion. I was saying, as may be referred to them from time to time by the Ministry or the Development Authority at regular intervals. They are to meet in the Dandakaranya area at least once in three months and may also meet at such other places as the Ministry may consider necessary. The main purpose of setting up such a body will be to associate responsible public opinion with the progress of the scheme without in any way interfering in its day-to-day working or execution and to represent to the outside public the results achieved from time to time. The Chief Ministers of the three States of Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal which are immediately concerned with the project may preside at alternate meetings of the committee, and the Houses of Parliament and the three State Legislatures may each have two or three representatives as members. In other words, this Committee may function more or

less as an Informal Consultative Committee of the different Ministries except that it will have more frequent and regular meetings coming in direct contact with the progress of the work on the spot, and will advise on major policy matters as may be found necessary. The Union Minister of Rehabilitation may not be on the Committee as he will have to take final decisions on its recommendations at a later stage.

May I end my observation with a final word of appeal to the displaced persons now in West Bengal and to all parties and leaders who have been working for their benefit and well-being during all these years? Now that this mighty effort in Dandakaranya is going to be pushed forward in an integrated and effective manner to secure the permanent rehabilitation and settlement of our unfortunate brethren from East Bengal, can we not in all earnestness and sincerity explain to them the vast opportunities that are opening up for them, opportunities to start a new life with hitherto untapped resources, free from fear and competition, and to create conditions of peace and plenty to which they were accustomed before they left their homes in old-time East Bengal?

SHRI ABHIMANYU RATH (Orissa): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I come from the Dandakaranya area and I belong to Jagdalpur where they have the, headquarters. And moreover, I have visited all the spots where the work is in progress. I know better about the things that are going on there. Sir, the previous speakers have commented on what they have seen in the papers, but I am a practical man. I have visited every area and can give a true history and picture of all the things, how this scheme is going on there.

Sir, just before this scheme was implemented in the area, there came to Jagdalpur one Mr. Bose, a group leader of the displaced persons and

he joined Mr. Banerjee who is a reporter to a few Bengali publications at Calcutta. They started a local weekly paper, called the *Dandakaranya Samachar*, with Mr. Banerjee as its editor. This paper forecasts and creates situations since then. This publication is in the hands of an individual whose antecedents are doubtful and who is guided only by the motive of consolidating the position of his own community. We would perhaps all agree that a press put into a wrong gear carries a threat to righteousness, peace and democracy. There are strong rumours, and it is learnt that Shri Bando-padhyaya, Member (Engineering) of the D.D.A., is directly or indirectly arranging finance secretly for the running of this paper.

SHRI MEHR CHAND KHANNA: May I ask the hon. Member a question?

SHRI ABHIMANYU RATH: By all means.

SHRI MEHR CHAND KHANNA: I understood him to say that this *Dandakaranya Samachar* has been in existence from the very beginning, since about a year or so, but Mr. Bandopadhyaya has been there only for the last six months.

SHRI ABHIMANYU RATH: When I met him in Jagdalpur at the Circuit House, I requested him to stay for an hour and come along with me so that I could take him to the spot where this man was. But he said, "नहीं रहेंगे । चले जायेंगे ।"

करेंगे, जो बचेगा तुम्हारा रहेगा, ये बंगाली नहीं रहेंगे । चले जायेंगे ।"

Is this not true, Sir?

SHRI MEHR CHAND KHANNA-What?

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: A very interesting revelation,

SHRI ABHIMANYU RATH: That day I met him at the Circuit House.

[Shri Abhimanyu Rath.]
He put his chair by the side of my

chair मैंने कहा : खन्ना साहब नमस्कार । आप रहेंगे या चलेंगे ? खन्ना साहब बोले : "हमको समय नहीं है, हमें इधर उधर जाना है । जो कुछ आपको चाहिये पूछना उसके लिये दिल्ली आ जाओ । सब कॉरिस्पांडेंस दिखायेंगे । तुम कोआपरेट करो । यहां पर ये बंगाली नहीं रहेंगे । जो बचेगा तुम्हारा होगा ।"

These are the words which he said.

SHRI MEHR CHAND KHANNA: I am sorry that I have to contradict a Member of Parliament on the floor of the House. Mr. Rath sent a telegram to the Prime Minister, if I mistake not, just about the time when this trouble was going on in Dandakaranya, and in that telegram he had mentioned that the tribal situation was very acute. I am speaking from memory, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You can explain later. Let him proceed.

SHRI ABHIMANYU RATH: I cannot understand, Sir . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You please carry on with your speech.

SHRI ABHIMANYU RATH: Sir, it will be proper to apprise the House of the antecedents of the editor of this *Dandakaranya Samachar*.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We are not concerned with the *Dandakaranya Samachar*. Please come to the scheme. Your time is limited.

SHRI ABHIMANYU RATH: Of course, Sir, he is the man who started all these troubles.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please go on with your comments on the scheme.

SHRI ABHIMANYU RATH: That is all right. If you want a true picture

I and the facts, I will also place them here. The trouble with the D.D.A. . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You come to your comments.

SHRI ABHIMANYU RATH: My comments are these, and I may be permitted to place these few facts before you.

In spite of initial difficulties and problems, the Chief Administrator who established his headquarters in Dandakaranya in December, 1958, got things going, and work on all fronts was making good progress until Shri Bandopadhyaya, Member-Chief Engineer, joined the project in early May, 1959.

As soon as Shri Bandopadhyaya joined, he stopped important work* such as basha quarters for project staff at Jagdalpur, Koraput and other places in the area, accommodation (residential and non-residential) for mobile medical units, publicity and welfare units, reclamation units, health centres, warehouses for consumer goods, tools, plants, buildings materials, etc. etc.

He also began to alter approved plans without authority, discourage local contractors so that all works could ultimately be entrusted to group leaders from West Bengal who make irregular appointments, encourage indiscipline and corrupt practices, undermine the Chief Administrator's authority, intimidate junior officers and generally upset the project's progress. In these disruptive activities he found in Member (Agriculture) who had joined the project at the same time, an ally.

Both members have employed men, of their choice in utter disregard of rules and procedures and even their domestic servants were being paid by the project as chaprasis.

I can challenge the Minister, if he comes, I will get the evidence.

Various tactics were employed to drive out local and even D. P. contractors by not making payment or by inordinately delaying it, by not executing agreements, by delays in taking measurements, preparation of bills, etc. etc. A deliberate attempt was made by Shri Bandopadhyaya to stop the deputation of engineers and other personnel from the States of Orissa and Madhya Pradesh, so that men of his choice could be brought from West Bengal. He wanted 57 Assistant Engineers of his choice, 50 of them being from Bengal, to be appointed against 23 vacancies. The Chief Administrator opposed this and the proposals were not approved by the D.D.A. Over a hundred class III and class IV officers have been brought by him from West Bengal. A proper enquiry will prove a scandalous state of affairs and nepotism on a large scale.

Then, Sir, group leaders of doubtful antecedents have been brought to Dandakaranya. Some of them are not even D.Ps.

In this connection, I have already given some Information to the C.I.D. people and it is under investigation. A man who was studying at Cuttack and who was a student in the Engineering College, became a displaced person in Koraput and he was put in the Jagdalpur camp.

The activities of these men have become quite a scandal in the area. Local interests are being flouted and corrupt practices are being indulged in by these group leaders. All works are being entrusted to them. Verification of the antecedents of these people has been entrusted to the Collector of Baster. Out of nearly 280 men brought, only ten to twelve figure in the list supplied by Shri Bandopadhyaya. These group leaders will soon become the curse of the project; they will be responsible for corruption, black-marketing, malpractices, work of inferior quality and many other ills. Local contractors

and interests will suffer on account of these people.

Sir, this is important. False muster rolls are being prepared, tribal men and women are being underpaid and, in some cases, not paid at all.

DR. W. S. BARLINGAY (Bombay):
What?

SHRI ABHIMANYU RATH: Wages.

There is misuse of project vehicles. This is a scandal. Jeeps with officers have been sent on three occasions from Koraput to Vishakapatnam, 290 miles to and fro, just to purchase railway tickets and make reservations for Member (Engineering). Sanctioned works have not been completed nor undertaken while unauthorised works for the benefit of construction department have been undertaken and completed in record time.

Valuable materials like cement and C.G.I. sheets are finding their way into black market, being openly misused by officers of the Engineering Department and lying all over the area without proper arrangements for storage, safe custody, etc.

Member (Engineering) is responsible for the introduction of provincialism and this will seriously harm the project.

The schedule of rates proposed by Member (Engineering) will not only be a drain on the project funds and provide ideal conditions for corruption but it will also have an adverse effect on the local development schemes. Member (Engineering) is now proposing estimates which are double and treble the estimates sanctioned.

Perhaps the most important of all these things is that the project vehicles are indiscriminately used by Member (Engineering) and officers of his department for visiting the club, travelling between office and residence and going to cinemas and towns

[Shri Abhimanyu Rath.] outside the area on flimsy excuses but in reality for recreation, etc. These vehicles are also being used to bring fuel wood for officers from distant places.

The Chief Administrator, who believes in discipline, hard work, integrity and respect for rules and procedure, is naturally opposed to all these things. These are the real facts.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please finish it. I must call the Minister to reply.

SHRI ABHIMANYU RATH: Sir, I will take only one more minute. Local people, particularly tribals, whose interests the Chief Administrator was always zealous to protect and promote, are unhappy. The land allotment policy is such that the adivasis will be put to perpetual subservience. Many of them will be dislodged from their homes. They are asked to go to D.P. colonies where in subjection to outside people they are bound to lose their racial and cultural identity. Owing to a very strong individuality and a sensitive temperament, they may come into open clash with these D.Ps. Sir, I belong to the soil of Dandakaranya area and I have tried to possess intimate knowledge of the emotional requirements of the tribals there.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You send it to the Minister. He would look into it.

SHRI ABHIMANYU RATH: Sir, unless tribal interests are properly safeguarded, there will be, I suppose, some trouble between the displaced persons and tribals as they are easily inflammable. Therefore, Sir, their interests should be safeguarded.

SHRI MEHR CHAND KHANNA: Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, the motion before the House is:

"That the Statement regarding the Dandakaranya Project, laid on

the Table of the Rajya Sabha on the 27th November, 1959, be taken into consideration."

Sir, while moving the motion, my friend, Shri Bhupesh Gupta, has not only been kind enough to cast aspersions on me but has even attributed motives. I do not want to waste my time in proving my bona fides. I am, therefore, talking generally about the work that had been done in the matter of rehabilitation of displaced persons either from West Pakistan or from East Pakistan during the five years that I have been in charge of this Ministry. I would like to confine my remarks, as far as possible, to the statement that I made in the House the other day and also to some of the observations that have been made by hon. Members.

Sir, I would like to divide my statement into three parts: the first part would relate to the quarrels and the unfortunate situation that arose on account of the bickerings between three principal officers of the Administration—I mean the Chief Administrator, the Member (Engineering) and the Member (Agriculture); the second part would relate to the implementation of the scheme; and the third refers to the decision that the Government had taken with a view to seeing that the scheme was fully and expeditiously implemented.

Sir, when I made that statement in the House, I scrupulously avoided names, because I felt that according to the unwritten convention of this House, and of the other House, if a man was not in a position to defend himself, I should avoid either taking his name or saying things which he was not in a position to rebut. But unfortunately, Sir, my statement had been misconstrued and a number of interpretations put upon it. I hope you will forgive me, Sir, if I try and fill up some of the gaps today.

Sir, one thing has to be remembered that this Authority was created— as referred to by the hon. Member

from Chanda—on the 12th of September, 1958, by me, that is, it was created about 14 or 15 months ago. That Authority was to derive its authority from the Ministry of Rehabilitation, and one hon. Member has read the relevant portion of the Government resolution, which says: —

"The Authority will function in accordance with such directions as it may, from time to time, receive from the Central Government. The Ministry of Rehabilitation will be administratively in charge of the Authority."

If any power was to be derived by the Authority, it had to derive it from me. It was naturally up to me whether I gave it powers to sanction schemes up to Rs. 40 lakhs, recruit officers carrying a pay of Rs. 1,500 or to ignore some procedural formalities or not. So, Sir, the question of either taking over the authority or taking powers from the Authority either openly, clandestinely or surreptitiously does not arise. I can understand another Ministry being administratively in charge of a project and my trying to take charge of it, but when I create an Authority and that Authority derives all its powers from me—and so I am the parent body and no subordinate authority can replace a parent body and can take over that power which has been given to it by the parent body—I cannot understand it. That is one point that I wish to make clear. Secondly, I would also like to make it clear that whether it was the Chief Administrator, whether it was the Member (Engineering)—and his name is Shri Bandopadhyaya—or whether it was the Member (Agriculture)—and his name is Major Sandhu ...

SHRI B. B. SHARMA (Uttar Pradesh):
Who was at Nainital?

SHRI MEHR CHAND KHANNA: Yes, Sir, he was at Nainital,—I selected every one of them myself. For Mr. Fletcher, I went to the Chief Minister of Punjab, Sardar Pratap

Singh Kairon, for Mr. Bandopadhyaya I went to the Chief Minister of West Bengal, Dr. B. C. Roy, and for Major Sandhu, who had done remarkable work in the Nainital Terai Reclamation Scheme, I pleaded with the Home Minister, Pantji, to persuade the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh to release Major Sandhu. Sir, Mr. Fletcher joined the post much earlier and these two officers joined about May this year. I want a distinction to be drawn between the period when Mr. Fletcher joined and the period that these two officers joined, whether you reckon the period from the time when Mr. Fletcher joined my Ministry and he was charged to prepare a scheme, to go to the site, and to hold discussions with the State Government or you reckon the period which is the relevant period, i.e., 12th September, 1958. The distinction that I wish to draw is that Sandhu and Bando were born in May 1959, but Mr. Fletcher was there for the last two years, or, at least as far as the Authority is concerned, right from the 12th of September, 1958. Sir, it will not be fair on my part to tell the House today—I hold that Mr. Fletcher is a very honest and conscientious officer, he has worked very hard, he has slaved for the scheme. I am prepared to admit and concede all that—but, Sir, I am sorry to say that he was not in a position or rather, he has failed to carry his colleagues with him, and has also failed to secure the co-operation of the three State Governments with which this Project is very intimately connected, that is Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and West Bengal.

Sir, Mrs. Savitry Nigam asked me three or four pointed and pertinent questions. I am not prepared to tell the House what the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh either told me or the Prime Minister of India, nor am I going to tell the House what Dr. Roy or, for the matter of that, the Rehabilitation Minister of Orissa conveyed to me in regard to the unfortunate and strained relations be-

[Shri Mehr Chand Khanna] tween my chief executive and the officers of these three State Governments.

Sir, the Member from Chanda, I am sorry, he is not in the House, who put me a very pointed and pertinent question, and the question was this, "that when you got to know that things were bad, that things were not taking shape, things were going wrong—you came to know about it as early as June and July—why had you been sleeping all this time? Why did you not take any action?" Well, Sir, my main trouble has been that for these three officers I went to the highest authority in the three State Governments. I brought about this team together with the object of the implementation of this scheme. But when I came to know, Sir, that soon after the two members joined things were taking rather an ugly shape, I made a very honest attempt to see that this team worked and none of them left us, because in their particular spheres everyone of them was doing a commendable job. I sent for all of them to Calcutta and talked to them. I asked my Deputy to go to Dandakaranya, not once, not twice but three times and he went there, Sir, towards the end of July, after our meeting in Calcutta, when an assurance was given to me by all the three members: "Let bygones be bygones. We assure you that we will work as a team and nothing will happen which might impede the progress of the scheme." My Deputy went to Dandakaranya a few days after that assurance was given to me. He comes back and reports to me that things are as bad as before, if not worse. I felt very perturbed about it. I then, Sir, passed orders, and the orders were passed in the first week of August, 1959, telling Mr. Fletcher that I had decided to replace his services at the disposal of the Punjab Government. As I said, I did that in the beginning of August, 1959. Mr. Fletcher came to Delhi and saw the Chairman of the Authority, whom you know. He is from Madras, a very

I senior I.C.S. officer, who even had officiated as the Governor of Madras. He is my Chairman as well as the Planning Adviser to the Planning Commission. I am talking of Shri S. V. Ramamurti whom Mr. Fletcher saw. He also saw my Secretary; he saw me and my Deputy, and he pleaded with us and so with the Chairman that "I" should be given another chance in the interests of the Project Sir, if I wanted to slaughter Mr. Fletcher, as Mr. Bhupesh Gupta had remarked, orders had been issued, and may I tell you, Sir, when I mentioned this to my senior colleagues at a Cabinet meeting, I was told that I was making a mistake and was told: "If this officer of yours cannot have the co-operation of the State Governments with whom he was working, if he cannot have the co-operation of his own officers to work as a team and cannot have the full confidence of the Ministry under which he was working, well, have this experiment, if you like, for a month or two, but it is not going to succeed." But, Sir, I did not heed the advice given to me by my senior colleagues. If any mistake I have committed, this one mistake I committed in the month of August, that having passed orders—also against the advice of my senior colleagues—I did not have those orders carried out and the services of Mr. Fletcher replaced at the disposal of the State Government. During that period and during the last two or three months I have been called names, I have been called anti-Bengali. It has been stated that I should even leave Bengal; there is no room for me there. It is stated that Shri Bandopadhyaya, who is a Bengali and who was given to me by Dr. B. C. Roy, is anti-Bengali, but Mr. Fletcher, who comes from Punjab, is a friend of the Bengalis, and he should be kept there. Sir, Shri Bhupesh Gupta tells me that the Congressites do not want me in Bengal, that I have lost their confidence. May I humbly tell him, Sir, that on the 5th of December, 1959, he and his party members moved a motion of no-confidence in the Bengal Assembly criticising me

and the Dandakaranya scheme and the motion was defeated by a majority of 117 to 44? Have I the confidence of the people of Bengal, or has he the confidence of the people of Bengal?

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: It is not «o, Sir. Here . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You have got the right of reply. Let him go on in his own way.

SHRI MEHR CHAND KHANNA: He wants me to resign. I have no intention of obliging him. Let me also tell him that I shall resign the day when the last man in the refugee camp in West Bengal has been rehabilitated and this problem is solved; I have no intention of sticking to this scheme of Dandakaranya for ever, "but as long as the scheme is related to the rehabilitation of displaced persons from East Pakistan, I shall see that this scheme is implemented, and is implemented fully, so that the unfortunate people who are there in the camps in West Bengal are properly rehabilitated. Sir, my record of five years has been challenged. May I tell you, Sir, and through you humbly the House, that when I went to West Bengal, in my first two years, 6,00,000 persons came from East Pakistan? If I was not a friend of the Bengalis, I could have closed the doors of the camps but, Sir, out of those 6,00,000, over 50 per cent, were taken in the camps. The camp population, which was at that time only 30,000 or 40,000, went up to 3,50,000, and up to today the Government of India has spent over Rs. 55 crores on relief alone of these unfortunate people who are living in camps. Sir, if I wanted to close the camps, I would have done so years ago. If it was my intention that my unfortunate brethren should starve, I could have thrown them out. Sir, no country could accept this position when it continued for a period of twelve years —Mr. Bhupesh Gupta and his Party persuading them to go on filling the camps and I should go on feeding

them. But I have done it. Now, Sir, we have taken certain decisions and they are these. These camps shall be closed. Not that I am going to starve people and throw anybody out of the camps. During the last 2½ years—I make bold to say—after that heavy influx from East Pakistan, out of the three lakh persons, today more than 50 per cent, have been taken out of the camps. One hundred and fifty thousand persons have been rehabilitated. The number of camps in West Bengal has been brought down from 148 to 91. There is not a single camp in Tripura today; at one time, I think there were about 30 to 40 thousand people in the Tripura Camps. The camp in Orissa has been closed. Out of the 30,000 population in the Bettiah Camp in Bihar, which at one time was the stronghold of my friend opposite and where they tried to create trouble for me at the time of the elections, there are only about five or six thousand persons now. Sir, let me tell the House something about *Jugantar* which has been quoted three, four or five times. Will it enlighten the House if I were to tell them that about a month ago, a news item appeared in *Jugantar* that I was being removed and Shri Asoke Sen was taking over—he is not here. In another news item of the same newspaper *Jugantar*, it was given that Shri Asoke Sen was planning to resign from the Rehabilitation Committee of the Cabinet. Another news item appeared only three or four days ago in which it was stated that one of my former colleagues, Mr. Ajit Prasad Jain, had made some undesirable references about me. This is the letter that Shri Ajit Prasad Jain wrote to me on the 10th instant. It reads:

"An M.P. colleague from West Bengal translated an article from *Jugantar* to me in which it is mentioned that I repeatedly warned the West Bengal Government on telephone that you were a bad and unreliable person, that otherwise too I consider you to be an undesirable

[Shri Mehr Chand Khanna.] person and had expressed that view. This is all wrong and has been concocted by someone opposed to you. I never rang the West Bengal Government about you, and I have had no talk with any newspaperman about you."

Should I place any faith in all that is written in this paper? Am I to swerve from my duty for only this thing that some of these people write a few things about me? I am not going to swerve from my right path.

Sir, my time is very short. Let me say two or three things in the end. One is this that I know perfectly well that Shri Bhupesh Gupta and his Party—and it is no secret—have lost ground not only in the rest of India, but in West Bengal also. There was a time that they could organise processions, they could hold meetings and food agitations that "P. C. Sen should go". He is still there. They said, "Tram fares should not be increased" but tram fares have been increased. Now, nothing else has been left for them to agitate against. In season and out of season he is trying to rake up refugee agitation in West Bengal. Let me tell him that this time the refugee agitation is not going to succeed and my reason is this.

Sir, we have told all the camp-dwellers in West Bengal; they have been given certain options. They have been told, "If you do not want to come to Dandakaranya, I am not going to force anybody. If you want the *Bainanama* scheme, there it is. You are welcome. Any scheme that you have got in mind, send it to me. I shall sanction it and you will have the first option to rehabilitate yourself in West Bengal. You can take a plot from us. You can take a loan from us. You can take a *Bainanama* loan from us. You can go and rehabilitate yourself on land. This option is yours, and this option is open to you for a period of ninety days. But after this option expires, you are not going to exercise it". These camps are

not going to be kept open to allow them to become the hunting ground for some of my friends opposite so that they can exploit them to suit their needs. I am not interested in the politics of West Bengal. If they want me to leave Bengal, certainly I have no answer.

Sir, I may be an "adventure" in the sense that I became refugee for the cause of my motherland. Everything that I possessed in worldly life I sacrificed. I had heard of Gurudev's land; I had heard of Netaji's land; I had heard of the land of Aurobindo Ghosh, but never had I realised that the sons of that land will come and tell me, "You vacate Bengal". Sir, as far as their bona fides are concerned, they are not interested in Bengal; they are more interested in China and other foreign lands than in their own motherland. Sir, I am not going to oblige him or his Party. As long as I have the confidence of my Party, as long as I have the confidence of the Congress Party in West Bengal Legislature, of the Congress Party in West Bengal, I am not going to oblige him. And may I tell you something more that in every single decision, either in relation to Dandakaranya or in relation to Bandopadhyaya or in relation to the removal or non-removal of any other officer that I have taken, I have taken the full concurrence of Dr. B. C. Roy? And today, Sir, Dr. B. C. Roy represents West Bengal. Dr. Roy is the Chief Minister of West Bengal. He has got the majority party behind him.

Only one thing I have to say in the end. Mr. Bandopadhyaya may have his shortcomings or weaknesses; I do not say that he has none. But Dr. Roy has assured me of his bona fides, of his integrity, of his ability. Am I to go by Dr. Roy or the friend opposite who spoke?

Sir, Shri Rath pretends to be the friend of the refugees, but he sends a telegram to the Prime Minister and also comes and tells me that these Bengalis whom I have brought been

are going to create trouble and there is going to be trouble among the tribals also. Let me sum up. Firstly, this Project shall be implemented. Secondly, the priorities that we have laid down, i.e. the rehabilitation of the displaced persons from East Pakistan and the advancement of the interest of the tribals shall be adhered to. And thirdly, the question of taking of a Punjabi, or an Andhra or a Madras does not arise. As long as there are displaced persons in camps in West Bengal and they are not rehabilitated, there can be no question of any other person being taken to Dandakaranya for purposes of rehabilitation. This is the categorical announcement that I want to make.

Today funny things are said in the press, namely, that though I come from Peshawar, I am a friend of the Punjabis, that whenever a non-Punjabi approaches me for anything, I say "no" to him. All my officers in my Ministry are Punjabis. My Secretary has been dubbed as a Punjabi. My new Administrator, Mr. Johnson, has become a Punjabi. Sir, I wish to assure the House that the project shall be implemented. There might have been little shortcomings in the project. They are bound to happen in any big project. Eighty thousand sq. miles and they are measuring it in terms of months. The area of the project is equal to the whole of East Pakistan plus West Bengal. It has remained untapped for thousands of years. There are no roads, no communications, etc. and I am being condemned, for what? Because I have not, within one year, done wonders there, and they want that there should be a judicial enquiry. Judicial enquiry into what? I do not understand about the judicial enquiry.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I have no objection to the hon. Minister's continuing but you must give me time.

SHRI MEHR CHAND KHANNA: Enquiry into what, I would humbly ask! Am I responsible to this House or not? On the one hand I am told

that I should not interfere in the working of the authority, that it is an autonomous authority, that it was given vast powers, etc. On the other hand a friend of mine, Mr. Rath, tells me that somebody went in a jeep, somebody went in a car, somebody is given contracts, etc. Am I the Chief Executive there? I am not the Chief Executive of that project. If anything has happened, it has happened during the time when some officers were in charge of the project. I only wish to submit that my friend, Shri Bhupesh Gupta, has unnecessarily cast aspersions on me by calling me an adventurer . . .

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I quoted the papers.

SHRI MEHR CHAND KHANNA: I say nothing. He may refer to any paper but what my feeling about Mr. Gupta to-day is that he is a traitor.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: 'Traitor' is an unparliamentary word. Please withdraw it.

SHRI MEHR CHAND KHANNA: I beg to withdraw the word.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Very good. But if I had said it, what would have happened in this House?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: All right, please reply.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: He had taken some time. This is the Minister and you have heard him. I am replying. When he called me a traitor, you did not . . .

SHRI MEHR CHAND KHANNA: He said that it was unparliamentary and I withdrew it.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: To call him a traitor is to do honour to a traitor. Therefore I will not call him a traitor . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You also must withdraw . . .

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I have not called him a traitor. The point is this. I raised certain points and he

[Shri Bhopesht Gupta..] starts off by calling me names. Call me whatever you like but I "Have found interesting things. When we are called names, what happens? Well, Sir, that, I believe, is his way. Shri Khanna should have replied to the points that I had made. He should have furnished us replies as to how the quarrel came about and what he did. He has done nothing of the kind. He has said that I have attributed motives to him. Personally I have not done it, - as an individual, to him. As a Minister, yes, I did say that he follows a double policy. In West Bengal he was telling the Bengalis: 'Here is Dandakaranya for you' and he was going to Orissa and telling Mr. Rath that the Bengalis will go away from there.

SHRI MEHR CHAND KHANNA: I never said that. I repudiate it.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: You were negotiating with Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, etc. for land for sending the refugees. There is a big confusion. I wanted an answer for that. No answer he gave. What is wrong in that allegation? I have documentary proof that you are proceeding in this manner. Double talk he has developed. One thing in Bengal, another in Orissa, yet another in Madhya Pradesh—he is a past master in this thing and he played this game to his heart's content, but to the eternal suffering and misfortune of the refugee men and women.

Then he said that authority was created. Yes. He said that it was deriving power under him, I am not denying that but I say that "it was an autonomous body that was created and we have some conceptions of the autonomy. My charge was that having taken advantage of your authoritative position, you were encroaching upon the field of autonomy, interfering with the officers and started playing Mr. Sandhu, Mr. Bando-padhyaya and Mr. Sethi against Mr. Fletcher and sometimes maybe, Mr.

Fletcher against them. I am not interested in these officers and I am not holding any brief for anyone but that game went on. Quarrels were started and they were inspired by the Rehabilitation Minister. Has he denied it? They were going on for six months. What sort of Minister are you, Mr. Khanna, when your men in the top go on quarrelling and fighting with each other and you secretly take a decision that one officer should be replaced some time back but do not do such thing? You have not mentioned even that point. What are you doing? Therefore you are encroaching upon its authority, undermining the autonomous character of it and trying to turn the officials into your vassals, into your order-bearers and not as functionaries of autonomous bodies. That is my complaint, to which you have given no answer. I am not weeping here for Mr. Fletcher nor am I suggesting the Bengali-Punjabi thing at all. You should be in Bengal, why not? The only thing is that you should not be in the Rehabilitation Ministry in the Union Capital. That is my complaint against you. I would like you to meet you in the streets of Calcutta as a private citizen, if you like, and I will shake hands with you. Never would I like you to hold that office of responsibility with which is bound the fate of so many millions of refugees. You have failed.

Then you said that you selected your officers. Yes, you do select your officers but even in the matter of selection, there was a design. You choose your officers in such a way that they play your game of power politics . . .

, SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Can the hon. Member directly address the Minister in this fashion as he has been doing?

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Anyway, I address you. Sir. It is an obvious point, Mr. Santosh Babu, and it is in the kindergarten Parliament that we raise such points of orders.

SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Your idea of this Parliament we know very well. Look up your own article in your 'New Age' magazine.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I know that what you have said in this House you cannot say in Calcutta. (*Interruptions.*)

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please address the Chair.

DR. W. S. BARLING AY: He only said that you should address the Chair.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Some home-town feeling you must have, Mr. Basu. I am only addressing the Chair. Mr. Barlingay, you are so attractive.

Therefore I say that you did not direct the officers properly. On the contrary . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please do not say 'you'. You are not having a personal conversation.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: You are quite right, Sir. Through you might I tell him that he—third person—did not play fair with the officers. Then he said that he had consultations with the Prime Minister. That is the tragedy. The Prime Minister is above these petty things, this pettiness. But sometimes he makes a wrong choice and what is more, after having made a wrong choice, he allows them to get on and then endorses these things. That is why he is endorsing this. After they had usurped the authority of the Dandakaranya Project body, he is endorsing it. The West Bengal people are sorry and they want the Prime Minister to personally look into it instead of relying on Mr. Khanna's notings.

As far as Bengal's Chief Minister is concerned, I do not wish to say anything because what passes between them, even Gods would not know. But I may tell you this. Mind you, in the last Session, the Minister said that in August he passed the orders.

He had trouble with Mr. Fletcher. On September 1, he spoke in this House. Not an inkling of that was given in his speech. Why? Why was it kept secret from us? Could he not have told us that he had some difficulties in arranging this thing or how the officers were not doing properly? He told us nothing of the kind. Well, he kept us in the dark. Would I be wrong if I accuse you why you had not taken the Parliament into your confidence when you had decided to pass orders against Mr. Fletcher and to replace Mr. Fletcher's services at the disposal of the Punjab Government? Am I wrong to raise this thing? Hon. Members may say whether they would be unjustified in expecting it. He said not a word. I have the proceedings before me. Then he raised the question of Resolution and other things. He said that there was a Resolution in the Bengal Assembly. I thought he might say something about them. I asked our friends in West Bengal Assembly to send the Business Paper. There is no Resolution against his Ministry. Here is a Resolution which makes some criticism of Dandakaranya . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: What is the Resolution?

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Then I have to read it.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You can read the Resolution.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: It will take 10 minutes. If you will give me ten minutes, I will read it.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No but within the time allotted.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Then I will not read.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Is it about Dandakaranya?

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: That is a general Resolution. Dandakaranya may be mentioned.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Connected with Dandakaranya?

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Various other things. There is mention of Dandakaranya but others also. It is not confidential. Just as we pass a Resolution that something should be gone into, it said that it should be gone into and it was considered and . . .

SHRI MEHR CHAND KHANNA: May I pass it on to you? It is in the *Statesman*.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: No, I have the original. I have the Assembly Papers from the West Bengal Assembly. I asked Mr. Jyoti Basu to send it. Therefore let us go into it. You might read the *Statesman* but I read the Assembly papers signed by the Secretary. Here is the Assembly Note Paper. Here is Mr. A. R. Mukerji, Secretary of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly, Calcutta.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let me see what it is.

5 P.M.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: It is the official List of Business. The text of the Resolution is there. It is the second Resolution. You are very interested and you should be. I knew that. I am facing some difficulties here. Anyway, I do not say that there are no people in the Congress who want you, That is not my -case. But here the Congress papers have said this and there is a feeling in the Congress Party itself that you have failed and they think that you should go. That is why you had to go twice to attend their P.C.C. meetings. You are not a member of the Working Committee or of the A.I.C.C. How many times have you gone to West Bengal to address their meetings there and to have the news published in the newspapers as if you tried to convince them and the public? When he says things everybody knows.

(Interruptions.)

Mr. Basu will have to find out for himself.

SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I will do everything for you, if you will only address the Chair.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Then moat unfortunately, Sir, he has made allegations. We are not interested in keeping the camps. Why should we? We told the Prime Minister that the camps should go. We precisely told him that those people should be resettled in West Bengal first and then outside and that nobody should be sent forcibly. That was the first thing. The second point was that at the same time you should make proper arrangements for these people and our criticism is that you are not making these arrangements and you see from your performance that our warnings have proved to be true, not because anything that the Prime Minister had done but by what was done by the gracious hon. Minister there who now calls me names.

Please do not introduce the Bengali-Punjabi or Bengali-Oriya question. I do not stand for any provincialism. As far as my Party is concerned, as you know, it is not for any provincialism. My quarrel with Mr. Khanna is not because he is a non-Bengali, not at all. My quarrel is not because he is a Peshawari. I like Peshawaris. My quarrel with him is that his policy has proved to be wrong. My quarrel with him is that he says one thing and does another thing. The point now is that these charges have been made and they need to be proved or disproved. Into the L.I.C. question there was an enquiry and there was proof enough and an hon. Minister went out according to constitutional responsibility, it was said. Charges have been made here also. I do not go into their merits, but charges and counter-charges have piled up. So many things have been written in the newspapers. So, let there be a judicial enquiry into the question. Here the hon. Minister is personally involved in it. That is the position