

LOK SABHA

Saturday, August, 24, 1968/*Bhadra 2*, 1890 (*Saka*)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

ORAL ANSWER TO QUESTION

SHORT NOTICE QUESTION

PARADEEP PORT

+

SNQ. 11. SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI:

SHRI RABI RAY:

SHRI YASHPAL SINGH:

Will the Minister of TRANSPORT AND SHIPPING be pleased to State:

(a) whether it is a fact that ships have been stopped to call at Paradeep Port from the 16th August, 1968 because of siltation;

(b) whether ships have been diverted to Calcutta Port; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND SHIPPING (DR. V. K. R. V. RAO): (a) and (b). The Paradeep Port Trust notified on the 14th August, 1968 that ships drawing upto 28' only can enter the port. One ship drawing more than 28' due on the 16th August, 1968 had, therefore, to be diverted to Madras. Ships with permissible draft upto 28' continue to call at the Port. A ship called at the Port on the 21st August, 1968 and sailed on the 22nd August, 1968. Two more ships are expected at the Port on the 25th and the 27th August, 1968.

(c) For lack of regular maintenance dredging by the Port's dredger and sand pump, delivery of which was considerably delayed, siltation occurred in the entrance channel. Various remedial steps have been taken or are under consideration.

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI : Because of lack of capital dredging for the last three years and because of silting, as the hon. Minister stated just now, the draft has been reduced from 42 feet to 28 feet. I would like to know whether the hon. Minister has now taken steps to increase the draft from 28 feet to 32 or 34 feet for the present. Even this will not solve the problem of Paradeep. Therefore, may I know whether the Government is going to implement immediately all the recommendations of the Sukrani Committee which was appointed by the Government of India recently and which investigated into the problem of siltation in Paradeep Port? They have suggested that capital dredging should be undertaken immediately, the draft should be increased to 42 feet, the turning circle has to be widened and the channel cleared for coming in of ships of 40,000 tonners and 60,000 tonners. I would like to know what specific steps have been taken to undertake capital dredging, besides maintenance dredging which is being undertaken.

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : The hon. Member has referred to the report of the committee appointed by my Ministry. This committee went to Paradeep and spent there about four days, and their report was received by us on the night of the 20th August. Immediately we are taking action on the various recommendations. As the hon. Member has pointed out, we are taking immediate steps to see that in the course of the next twenty or twenty-five days the draught gets increased to 32 feet. I agree with the hon. Member that unless capital dredging is undertaken the problem of Paradeep port will not be solved. In the first instance,....

SHRI RANGA : What dredging ?

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : Capital dredging. Maintenance dredging is

ordinary dredging to keep it all right from day to day. I am quite clear in my mind after reading the Sukrani Committee's report that capital dredging is required and for that purpose we have already had discussions with the people who are doing capital dredging at the Madras port. They have come here and we have had discussions with them. We have also had some discussions with the Japanese people who seem to be interested and they have to go to Paradeep port, look at the port and find out what precisely are the difficulties and what would be the cost and time taken and so on. As soon as we get detailed estimates from these people, we certainly intend to take it up with the Ministry of Finance, and we hope that there will be no difficulty in getting sanction for capital dredging for the Paradeep port, because it must have a draught of 42 feet, because it is one of our best natural harbours and we cannot allow that to become a second class port.

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI : While appreciating the anxiety shown by the hon. Minister, I would like to know from him whether he is aware that as long ago as February, 1968, an expert committee on behalf of the International Ports Organisation, at the instance of the Government of India, visited this port and they had also warned the Government about the fast deteriorating draught position of this port and we had also requested Government to take earlier steps so that this dislocation in the draught at the Paradeep port may not arise this year. May I know whether Government did take any steps between February and July or August for increasing the draught at the Paradeep port? May I also know whether Government have already had discussions with the Japanese and the Dutch firms for taking up capital dredging at the Paradeep port, and if so, whether by September this capital dredging will start?

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : The report of the committee set up by the International Ports and Harbours Association was received by us only early

in August. We ourselves took the initiative, and we wrote to the Paradeep port about the very grave situation which was being caused by the siltation which was taking place, and we appointed this committee on 2nd August to go and visit Paradeep and prepare a report. Regarding the subject of capital dredging, I have already made it clear that we are having preliminary discussions with the Dutch and the Japanese people. It is not something which can be done on the spur of the moment. For capital dredging we have got to invite tenders or negotiate. All the details have to be worked out. It will cost many lakhs of rupees, and we shall have to take the permission of the Ministry of Finance and so on. But I have already indicated to the hon. Member that as far as I am concerned, I have no doubt in my mind that without capital dredging on the scale suggested by the Sukrani Committee it will not be possible to restore Paradeep to the expectations which we had of it when we took it over as a major port.

श्री रवि राय : पहले तो हमारा भारत सरकार के खिलाफ आरोप है कि जिस तरह से जरूरी और महत्वपूर्ण-परादीप को समझ कर इस को बनाना चाहिए था यह लोग बना नहीं रहे हैं। ड्रैजिंग का जहां तक ताल्लुक है खुद मंत्री महोदय इस चीज को मानते हैं कि कैपिटल ड्रैजिंग के अलावा और किसी तरह से इसका सुधार नहीं हो सकता है। मंत्री महोदय खुद यह मानते हैं कि यह बड़ा महत्वपूर्ण पोर्ट है तो इस के बारे में सुक्रानी कमेटी की क्या सिफारिश हैं वह क्या सदन को बताएंगे? जैसा मैंने कहा एक तो सुक्रानी कमेटी की सिफारिश है और दूसरी कुछ अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय विशेषज्ञों की सिफारिश है। अब आप जानते हैं कि जब कोई काम न करना हो तो फिर कमेटी और कमिशन बैठा दो। क्या मंत्री महोदय सदन को यह आश्वासन देंगे कि इन दोनों कमेटियों की सिफारिशों को देखते हुए क्या वह कुछ ठोस निर्देश एक निश्चित अवधि के भीतर यह कैपिटल ड्रैजिंग करने के लिए देंगे। मंत्री महोदय

जानते ही हैं कि जापान के साथ जो आयरन ओर्स का काम चलता है वह खतरे में पड़ा हुआ है और इसलिए यह काम करना बहुत आवश्यक हो गया है तो क्या वह इस कैप्टल ड्रिजिंग को एक निश्चित अवधि के भीतर करा देने का आश्वासन सदन को देने को तैयार है ?

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : I think the hon. Member is perhaps not familiar completely with the history of the Paradeep port. There is no question of the Central Government not having completed the port. As the hon. Member is aware, the port was taken up in the first instance by the Orissa Government, and they designed it and it was more or less completed by them, and when they found themselves in difficulties, we came in and took over the port.

As regards the Sukrani Committee, I have already stated that we are taking action on it. Incidentally I may also add that among the recommendations was one relating to what should be done immediately, because capital dredging would take some time.

We have a dredger at Calcutta called the *Mohana*. It had come twice before for a period of two months or so for the purpose of dredging. Now, we have arranged with the Calcutta Port Trust Commissioners for the dredger *Mohana* to go back to Paradeep. My information is that it must have sailed from Calcutta yesterday. In the next two or three days or so we expect the dredger *Mohana* to be at Paradeep for the purpose of doing this work.

The Paradeep port's own maintenance dredger *Konarak* took quite a long time to be delivered. It was ordered in 1963. The idea was that the *Konarak* dredger would be ready by the time the port was declared as a major port and there would be no necessity for any special capital dredging. Unfortunately, the *Konarak* for which an order was placed with our own Garden Reach Workshop took more time for various reasons, one of them being that it was the first time that we were constructing in India

dredger of that capacity. The dredger was only received a few months back; it is in good working condition and it has been doing good work. It has now gone back to Calcutta for dry-docking. We have asked that the dredger should return within the next four or five days and we expect that by the first week of September, the *Konarak* also will start work at Paradeep. That is why I say that from the 28 feet to which the draught fell, we expect that before the end of September it will be possible to get the draught back again to 32 feet.

SHRI SRADHAKAR SUPAKAR : Since the process of silting cannot await the sanction of the Ministry of Finance which may be slower than the process of silting, may I know what short-term measures Government are taking apart from what has been stated by the hon. Minister? In view of the delay in the arrival of the dredgers, what other short-term measures are Government taking to see that it does not further deteriorate making it more difficult in the future ?

MR. SPEAKER : He has explained all that. He has said that the *Mohana* is going there, and another dredger is also going there.

SHRI SRADHAKAR SUPAKAR : But they are taking time.

MR. SPEAKER : Anyway, the earlier answer can be adjusted for his question also.

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : I have already indicated to the House what immediate measures we are taking and there is nothing else that we can do to remove the silt.

SHRI SURENDRANATH DWIVEDI : After all, this short notice question has been accepted by the hon. Minister. About 20 days back I had tabled a short notice question but that had been refused by the hon. Minister. I had also tabled a calling-attention-notice.

SHRI HEM BARUA : It is a very serious matter. When something is tabled by an Opposition Member it is

rejected, but when it is tabled by a Member of the ruling party it is accepted.

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Rabi Ray's name is also there. He is a Member of the Opposition.

SHRI SURENDRANATH DWIVEDI : When I had given notice of the short notice question that was rejected. First I had tabled a calling-attention-notice and that had been rejected and then I tabled a short notice question about 20 days back but that was not accepted by the hon. Minister. At the fag end of the session we find that this is being accepted. Whatever it is, in spite of the earnestness shown by the hon. Minister since he took charge there is no getting away from the fact that this Paradeep port has come to this situation at the present moment due to the neglect of the Government of India. There is no doubt about it, whatever the hon. Minister may say. Is it a penalty or punishment to the Orissa Government because they went ahead with the construction of the port before taking the sanction of the Government of India? Is that their attitude? The Government of India took over the port in March, 1966. In the experts' report what was recommended was this. Sir, you must also be aware of it because you were in charge of this as Minister for some time. It was stated that these three things were required for the development of Paradeep port before it was commissioned. This is what it says :

"The phasing charts indicate that before the Port was to be declared open to traffic, the major portion of the work of breakwater would have been completed, suction dredger procured and put in commission and the sand pump installed and commissioned. However, completion of these important parts of the works were not synchronized and got ready at the time of commissioning of the port in March 1966."

Consequently, this situation has arisen. Actually it is not a question of mere

siltation. Siltation is going on. There are reports to show that from Madras and Visakhapatnam they shall come. It will be difficult with the present arrangement to arrest them; it is not possible. The *Mohana* and *Konarak* are maintenance dredgers. *Mohana* worked only for two months and then went away. *Konarak* which is supposed to be a dredger attached to that very port, was India made and it was delivered two years after the scheduled date, in January 1968. It worked hardly for two months and then again it went for repairs. That is the position. As far as the committee is concerned, I understand that it has reported that some immediate steps should be taken before 1969 March; otherwise the port will be declared as closed. There are one or two very important things in this connection. I want to know specially when *Mohana* and *Konarak* would be put to work, by what date? My second point is about capital dredging. I hope they would press the Finance Minister to give them the necessary money to have a capital dredger for the port itself because it is only fair and proper when it is accepted as a national port; as the biggest port in India it is the only port which works without a dredger at all. What steps have been taken in that regard? They should immediately contact contractors in Madras or other persons who have done such type of work. Are tenders being invited from these contractors so that work may be taken up immediately and by March 1969 the port is enabled to accept ships of 60,000 and 30,000 tonnes or whatever it may be. At the present moment, the depth of the port has gone down to 28 ft. Actually we were getting 32,000 ton and 42,000 ton ships, Japanese ships but they are now diverted to other places because the port is not in a position to accept them. I want to know categorically whether the Finance Ministry is coming to the aid to get a dredger early and whether a contract will be given immediately to get this cleared.

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : The hon. Member has covered a lot of ground

in what was almost a speech. After what Acharya Kripalani said, I am quite willing to be educated by hon. Members opposite and so I was listening with great interest.

MR. SPEAKER : Not only Members of the Opposition, but this side also.

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : Yes, Sir, this side also, I stand corrected. The hon. Member complained that his question has not been accepted by me some twenty days ago. At that time we had just appointed this expert committee. I did not want to waste the time of the House to come and tell them simply that a Committee had been appointed. I thought that it would be better if I could get some information as to what was really wrong and what should be done and as soon as we know that we were going to do something, I thought that that would be the proper time to take up the valuable time of the House. That was the reason why that question was not accepted. It is not because the hon. Member who belongs to the Congress Party has now tabled the question, it has been accepted.

Regarding the other questions that have been raised, I think the very unfortunate series of events should not have happened. I agree with the hon. Member that when it was declared as a major port, we should have completed the work of break-water, we should also have got a dredger; we should have installed a sand pump.

In actual fact, the dredger came only a few months before ; I think in January, 1968, and the sand pump which was ordered from abroad came only in July, 1968. Not only that. It came in such a damaged condition that they had to get all the parts repaired and this was from a firm abroad.

श्री रवि राय: कौन जिम्मेदार है इसके लिए?

MR. SPEAKER : Who are responsible for it ?

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : Unfortunately, the responsibility is that of unexpected

delays in implementation. First of all, the designs had to be made. We found nobody else willing to make the tender ; nobody accepted the tender ; we wrote to all agents of foreign companies, but no tender was offered. We then advertised in foreign countries and no tender was offered. (Interruption) I want to give the House the fullest possible information. It is only one firm in Holland which was supposed to be able to do it. We had to negotiate with them and discuss it with them, etc., etc. They said they would be able to give it in 20 months, but in actual fact, they have taken many more months than 20 months. Well, if you ask, who can be responsible for this, all that I can say is that as far as the Central Ministry is concerned, I do not think they are responsible for it.

SHRI SURENDRANATH DWIVEDI : If they were not assured of this, how could they commission the port without the dredger ?

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : Well, I think the hon. Member could as well move an Adjournment Motion in regard to this port ! Anyway, the port has been commissioned but unfortunately the maintenance dredging which was to have taken place did not take place. The reason why capital dredging has now become necessary is...

श्री रवि राय: क्यों ?

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : The reason why capital dredging has now become necessary is this. If the sand pump had come in time like any other port, the work could have gone on. But hardly any maintenance dredging could take place, and we have had to take *ad hoc* measures to get this *Mohana* two or three times from Calcutta. I think the Yugoslav people who did the capital dredging were given two months' contract to do some more work on it. Now, the situation has arisen. I entirely agree that mere maintenance dredging will not solve the problem. I have already told the hon. Member that we are having discussions. He referred to the contractors in Madras. There is not one single Indian contractos

who could undertake capital dredging. It will have to be undertaken by a foreign concern. There, it is very difficult to get them. We are in negotiation with the foreign capital dredging firm in Madras. At the present moment capital dredging is going on in the outer harbour in Madras. We talked to the engineers and discussed it with them to find out if there is any possibility of taking some dredgers from Madras for a month or two in order to see that some limited work may be done. We found that the Japanese were interested. They are going to Paradeep. As soon as we get detailed estimates, we will most expeditiously process it with the Finance Ministry. I have no doubt, speaking for myself, that the Ministry of Finance is also equally interested, with the Ministry of Transport, in seeing that the Paradeep port is maintained.

SHRI SURENDRANATH DWIVEDI : Will all this process be completed before March, 1969 ?

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : I would not dare to commit myself to any such fixed date.

SHRI P. K. DEO : Sir, it is a matter of great concern that the deepest seaport in this country is getting silted up and the ships are being diverted to some other port and thereby shattering not only the economy of this country but of the Orissa State where already they have invested Rs. 16 crores odd at the initial stage for the construction of the Paradeep port which is not being reimbursed now even though the Government of India has taken over the Paradeep port. Not only that. In the absence of a Railway, the Government of Orissa has already spent Rs. 16 crores on the express highway. All this money has been sunk on the Paradeep port. The Estimates Committee of the Lok Sabha and the Public Accounts Committee of the Orissa Assembly had time and again warned about the bad workmanship of the Orissa Government at that stage, to which some reference was being made by Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao, namely, that there should have been dredging at the initial stage. Another

point for concern is that the Jawaharlal monument and the marble slab, with which you were also associated, has already been lost by sea erosion. Taking all these factors into consideration, the question is whether any time-limit has been fixed to complete the capital dredging; secondly, from which source the sand pump was purchased and for its bad working, on whose shoulders will the responsibility be squarely placed.

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : The sand pump was purchased from a firm in Holland called Messrs. Hensen & Co. We have already cabled to them and requested them to expeditiously repair or replace the damaged pieces of the equipment and it is reported that the Manufacturers have also agreed to do so. We expect the whole thing will be ready by some time in February or March 1969. Regarding the first question I would ask the hon. Member not to take such a pessimistic view. After all, it is for the first time that a ship was diverted only in August. Till the first of August there was no diversion. All these three ships have been diverted—one Liberty ship and the other two ore-carriers—to Madras and not to Haldia. Some people think that Haldia is going to do something to Paradeep. I want to assure them that there is no connection between Haldia and Paradeep. No port in India has been able to receive 60,000 tonners. Possibly there is none with 60,000 draft.

SHRI SURENDRANATH DWIVEDI : Paradeep can if you develop it.

SHRI SHIVAJIRAO S. DESHMUKH : There is Nheva-Sheva.

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : Shri Deshmukh thinks that the port has already come into existence. That way all along the coast we have enough depth to receive even 100,000 or 200,000. So no port is able to receive ships of that particular size. We were hoping that Paradeep would be the first port which would be able to receive ships of a larger tonnage than any other port. But, unfortunately, we have not been able to do that. What we should be interested in now is that all of us should see, and I would like to get the

Co-operation of my hon. friends opposite, that the port is developed as early as possible (*Interruption*).

SHRI M. B. RANA : In view of the fact that the recent floods in Gujarat were due to the non-dredging of the two important rivers—Narmada....

MR. SPEAKER : I would not allow that. This is about Paradeep.

SHRI HEM BARUA : Sir, a port in order to be complete with all its paraphernalia must have certain amenities like dredgers and all that. The Paradeep port does not have any. That shows how the Paradeep port is neglected. Paradeep port came into existence only after a lot of agitation from the State. The hon. Minister did not want Paradeep port. I know there is soil formation in the channel and the nose of the channel is being narrowed down to 250 feet from the original position of 600 feet. This cannot be improved by simple dredging. There should be some sand pumps also in order to maintain the channel as it is. Have you made any arrangements for that or do you propose to make any arrangements for the washing of the soil formed in the basin and channel ? Have you also arranged for the erection of a sand pump by at least 1969 ?

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : I thought I had answered that. A sand pump has already come but, unfortunately, it is damaged. It has got to be repaired. Definitely by March 1969 we hope to get all the spare parts and other things and see that the sand pump is installed. We are also thinking in terms of the Committee's recommendation to deepen the channel, clearing the backlog and also widening the channel.

SHRI SHIVAJIRAO S. DESHMUKH : Dr. Rao's long lecture or a sermon on dredging in reply to not a very short lecture by Surendranath Dwivedy highlighted one fact that not only our major, medium and minor ports require dredging but his own Ministry has accumulated a lot of mud on the issue of dredging and he himself has got to get a long broom to clean this mud.

Because, Konkan of all the areas in India....

MR. SPEAKER : He is also speaking about his State now.

SHRI SHIVAJI RAO S. DESHMUKH : No, Sir. In spite of the completion of all the civil works of the port, on the issue of a dredger the Maharashtra Government have requested for foreign exchange and the Minister knows that there is no local capacity. Then what stands in the way of allotment of foreign exchange ?

MR. SPEAKER : It is a separate question, not connected with Paradeep.

SHRI SRINIBAS MISRA : Will the hon. Minister just answer how much money he has kept for the development of the Paradeep port ?

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : I do not have the figure with me. I shall certainly give the information as soon as the Fourth Plan figures are finalized.

11.30 hrs.

RE: CALLING ATTENTION NOTICES AND ADJOURNMENT MOTIONS

श्री रवि राय (पुरी) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, मेरी विनती है कि आप को मालूम होगा कि कल और आज सबेरे पैरिस रेडियो से खबर दी गई है कि श्री डुबचेक की हत्या कर दी गई है। अभी तक किसी दूसरे रेडियो या अन्य स्रोत से इस खबर की पुष्टि नहीं हुई है। हम यह मान कर चलते हैं कि उनकी हत्या नहीं हुई है। लेकिन क्या आप प्रधान मंत्री को यह हिदायत देंगे कि वह इस बारे में इस हाउस को सूचना दें ?

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE (Kanpur) : Since we are going to sit only for one week I would request you to consider the Calling Attention Notices which are pending, which you have not rejected. For instance, there is one about the lock-out in newspapers. If that is taken up and we discuss it here, perhaps we can arrive at a formula to settle the dispute.

MR. SPEAKER : The next item on the agenda is the statement by Dr. Ram Subhag Singh about the business of the House.