

to Starred Question No. 334 on the 22nd November, 1962 regarding insecticides and state:

(a) when Government are likely to promote legislation in this regard; and

(b) the reasons for delay, if any?

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Health (Dr. D. S. Raju):

(a) & (b). A draft of the Bill has been prepared and is under examination in consultation with other Ministries. The Bill involves a number of legal and technical aspects which have to be carefully examined. It is hoped to introduce a Bill in the second half of this year.

Shri P. R. Chakraverti: Has the Government examined the point that was raised in the last session, namely, that these insecticides are used as intoxicants by the drink addicts?

The Minister of Health (Dr. Sushila Nayar): We are not aware of insecticides being used by drink addicts. They are rather poisonous and the intoxication is likely to take the man beyond the world if they do it.

Shri P. R. Chakraverti: Has the Government examined the causes which led to the mixing up of insecticides with food-stuffs and if so what are the findings?

Mr. Speaker: That is a different thing altogether.

Dr. D. S. Raju: The hon. Member is perhaps referring to food poisoning by insecticides in Bengal and Assam last year. Two independent committees went into the question and found that contamination was supposed to have occurred while in storage and transit.

Dr. K. L. Rao: May I know whether the Government is proposing to set up a central institute to specify the quality and the standards of the pesticides and also the amount of toxin residues that could be safely consumed by men and animals?

Mr. Speaker: The question was about legislation in respect of insecticides. Shri Sham Lal Saraf,

Shri Sham Lal Saraf: In view of the fact that the Government propose to introduce a Bill on this subject in this House, as has been said just now, may I know what steps have been taken at the moment in order to keep the foodstuffs and other such commodities safe from being contaminated in the States all over the country?

Dr. Sushila Nayar: As my hon. colleague has said, there was a commission of enquiry after the first incident of contamination of foodstuffs by follidol in 1958 in Kerala, and as a result of the findings of that enquiry commission there were certain short-term precautions that were recommended by them which have been communicated to the State Governments, and most of them have implemented them. The long-term recommendations relate to this comprehensive legislation to control the production, storage, distribution, transport, etc., of these insecticides, and that legislation as has been said, is under examination.

Floods in Brahmaputra

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*391. { Shri Surendra Pal Singh:
Shri N. R. Laskar:

Will the Minister of Irrigation and Power be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Government of Assam have undertaken a very ambitious and expensive scheme of changing the flow of the Brahmaputra river in order to save Dibrugarh town, and the adjoining areas, from the havocs of floods each year, and that they have approached the Centre for financial help for this project; and

(b) if so, whether the Centre has decided to give help to the Assam Government for this project?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Irrigation and Power (Shri S. A. Mehdi): (a) There is no scheme to change the flow of the river Brahmaputra but flood protection works, such as, construction of stone and timber spurs, revetments, etc. were carried out to save Dibrugarh town. After inspecting the effects of the floods of 1962 a Central team of experts recommended further repair works.

(b) Does not arise.

Shri Surendra Pal Singh: Is it a fact that during the first Plan period some special embankments and weirs etc., were constructed with Central aid to protect Dibrugarh town at a cost of Rs. 2 crores and all that construction work has been completely washed away or damaged beyond repairs, by the subsequent floods?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Irrigation and Power (Shri Alagesan): During the first plan period a sum of Rs. 245 lakhs was spent on flood protection works. Half of this was given as grant and half as loan by the Central Government. It is not correct to say that all these works have been washed away. They have really served their purpose and protected the town.

Shri Surendra Pal Singh: May I know what has been the total damage by floods in the Brahmaputra valley during the past decade, and how much money has been spent on flood control schemes in that region over the same period?

Shri Alagesan: I am not able to give an estimate of the damage. I do not have the figures just now, but as I said, in the second Plan period an amount of Rs. 245 lakhs was spent, and now, both the Assam Government and the Central Government are at this question. The Central Government has been continually examining this and trying to be very sympathetic. Additional funds

to the extent of Rs. 102 lakhs for the current year and Rs. 150 lakhs for the next year have been allotted.

Shri Hem Barua: May I know if it is not a fact that the high-power commission on floods had recommended the dredging of the Brahmaputra river as a measure against recurring floods as also as a measure in order to facilitate navigation and, if so, may I know whether the Government have taken any steps or are proposing to take any steps in that direction?

Shri Alagesan: I do not think that the committee which the hon. Member refers to, has made such a recommendation.

Shri Hem Barua: It has. I have read that.

Shri Alagesan: But we have received representations from the Government of Assam that the method of dredging as a flood protection measure should be tried. It was examined by the CWPC and the cost of dredging a river like Brahmaputra comes to a very enormous size. We are accustomed to dredge ports like Calcutta, etc., but the dredging of the whole river over hundreds of miles of length will cost us enormously, and there are limitations on undertaking such a thing.

Shri P. C. Borooah: In view of the fact that the devastation by floods has of late become an annual feature of Assam, and the successful control is beyond the capacity of the State Government, may I know whether the Government of Assam has stressed on the Central Government to take up the Brahmaputra river, with its 42 tributaries, in a master plan and consider the matter from the Central Government side?

Shri Alagesan: The Assam Government has made various representations. They have been urging that a master plan should be prepared. Recently they have prepared a pro-

gramme of various works costing about Rs. 648 lakhs and special funds have been allotted, though not to the full extent, to a great extent to meet the needs of Assam and they are going ahead with the proposal.

Shri Sham Lal Saraf: May I know if an integrated plan of flood protection and flood works has been prepared for the Brahmaputra Valley and, if so, what are the salient features?

Shri Alagesan: It is under preparation. Both the State engineers and the CWFC are at it and they are evolving an integrated plan. Many parts of it are also being put into effect.

Shri R. N. Barua: Recently the Minister of Defence and Economic Coordination, Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari, visited Assam and met the Chief Minister. Was he aware of the fact that due to the constant floods of Brahmaputra, it is no longer possible for Assam exchequer to meet the needs of Assam to control the floods? Has he submitted any report about the flood position in Assam and about the multi-purpose scheme for the Brahmaputra?

Shri Alagesan: The Minister of Economic and Defence Coordination visited Assam and he has submitted a report, in which flood control also figures. Apart from that, we are going ahead with these works.

Shri Heda: May I know whether the Government have taken note of the fact that after the earthquakes a few years back, the bed of the Brahmaputra has risen by about 10 feet and, if so, how this gigantic problem is going to be tackled?

Shri Alagesan: The earthquake has had a very bad effect and it has increased the erosion of the river Brahmaputra. As a result of it, all these works are being done.

Shri Hem Barua: The Minister said that the cost involved in dredging

would be enormous. May I know whether there is a big gap between this amount and the moneys so far spent in order to implement measures for flood protection and all that? If so, what is the gap?

Shri Alagesan: I have not followed the question.

Mr. Speaker: The Minister said that dredging of the river would involve enormous sums. He wants to know whether the money spent so far in other measures is as much as that.

Shri Alagesan: There is no comparison.

Dr. K. L. Rao: May I know whether the Government has investigated any scheme to take vigilant steps to prevent the Brahmaputra from outflanking the works at Dibrugarh?

Shri Alagesan: The works that are already existing are serving their purpose. Some proposals have been made to strengthen those works further. Also, the question of downstream work to be undertaken to prevent the river from erosion is also under consideration.

Shri Hem Barua: The floods are so devastating because it is *Brahmaputra* and not *putri*.

Mr. Speaker: It will not change, whether it is *putra* or *putri*.

Shri Hem Barua: *Putra* is more virile than *putri*.

Bank Advances against Pledge of Warehouse Receipts

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*392. { Shri P. R. Chakraverti:
Shri Rameshwar Tantia:

Will the Minister of Finance be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Reserve Bank has issued orders restricting bank advances against the pledge of warehouse receipts covering paddy and rice; and