

Desert Development Board

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- *181. { Dr. L. M. Singhvi:
Shri Onkar Lal Berwa:
Shri Rama Chandra Ulaka:
Shri Dhuleshwar Meena:

Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to refer to the reply given to Starred Question No. 92 on the 2nd June 1964, and state:

(a) whether the details about the functions, powers and the operational programme of the proposed Desert Development Board have since been finalized;

(b) if so, the main particulars thereof; and

(c) what would be the scope and magnitude of the activities of this new body and to what extent and in what manner the States would be collaborating in the task of desert development?

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (Shri Shahnawaz Khan): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

Dr. L. M. Singhvi: It does appear that, in spite of the commitment which the former Minister of Food and Agriculture gave to this House that they have accepted the proposal to set up this Desert Development Board, the reason why it has not been set up is indifference and buckpassing. Therefore I would like to know when this proposal was actually initiated, when the working group reported to the Government and why it has taken so long to finalise the functions and powers of the proposed Board which has been accepted in principle by the Government.

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri C. Subramaniam): It is in the final stages. The specific proposals with regard to the posts to be created and their grades of salaries and all those things have already

been made. Therefore, I hope that it may be possible to finalise it as soon as we get the clearance from Finance Ministry.

Dr. L. M. Singhvi: Would the hon. Minister indicate the capital outlay for the various schemes under this proposal and the time by which this proposal will actually come into existence?

Shri C. Subramaniam: It is a question of first taking up some pilot schemes and on the basis of those pilot schemes, of evolving a more comprehensive scheme. It is expected that during the Third Plan period we would be spending about Rs. 12.5 lakhs, and about Rs. 10.12 crores by the end of the Fourth Five Year Plan.

श्री यशपाल सिंह : क्या मंत्री महोदय बता सकते हैं कि जिसलमेर के इलाके में जिन प्रफसरान के लगाये हुए पेड़ों में से एक भी हरा नहीं हुआ है और सी फीसदी सूख गये हैं, उन के खिलाफ क्या एक्शन लिया गया है ?

Shri C. Subramaniam: I do not have information with regard to this matter.

श्री यु० सि० चौधरी : राजस्थान के झलावा देश के दूसरे भागों में भीर कौन-कौन से इलाके हैं खास तौर से पंजाब के, जहाँ डेजर्ट डिवेलेपमेंट बोर्ड काम करेगा, जिन को यह बोर्ड अपने हाथ में लेगा ?

अध्यक्ष महोदय : वह सब स्टेटमेंट में लिखा हुआ है ।

श्री तन सिंह : यह जो रेगिस्तान रोकने का बोर्ड बनाया जा रहा है, इन की योजना कमिशन से क्या सम्बन्ध रहेगा और क्या यह डिवेलेपमेंट बोर्ड स्वयं रेगिस्तान रोकने के लिये अपनी धलन से मास्टर प्लान बनायेगा ?

Shri C. Subramaniam: The board will hereafter take up pilot projects and work them, and on the basis of those pilot projects have a comprehensive plan to tackle this issue.

Mr. Speaker: What would be the relationship with the Planning Commission?

Shri C. Subramaniam: Naturally, the Planning Commission will have to give sanction to the scheme as such, but in actual working it will have nothing to do with the Planning Commission.

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur: We have already got an arid zone research institute. Do I take it that they have done no pilot work by now? May I also know what is expected to be done with this pittance of about Rs. 12 lakhs?

Shri C. Subramaniam: Rs. 12.5 lakhs would be the amount to be spent during the Third Plan, but the anticipated expenditure during the Fourth Plan period is Rs. 0.12 crores. It is a question of taking up specific projects and working them and on the basis of that experience of evolving a more comprehensive scheme.

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur: My question was different. We have already got the Arid Zone Research Institute, and they have already done some work. May I know whether there is no scheme which can be taken up in the light of that work?

Shri C. Subramaniam: No, we have to take up some pilot projects before we formulate a more comprehensive plan.

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur: That means that we have nothing useful on hand.

Shri D. J. Naik: May I know whether any pilot projects are proposed

to be taken up in the desert area near Kutch, extending over an area of 10,000 square miles?

Shri C. Subramaniam: I have already stated that we are going to take up some pilot projects, on the basis of which we have to evolve a more comprehensive programme later on.

Shri Sham Lal Saraf: May I know whether by now the magnitude of this work has been realised, and if so, in what way Government propose to take up this enormous work in hand?

Shri C. Subramaniam: It is because the importance of this has been realised that this proposal has been put forward, and it is in the final stages of processing.

Shri Joachim Alva: Before they embark on the pilot schemes, may I know whether the officers have taken the trouble of finding out what other countries have done, especially friendly countries like the U.A.R. where Eucalyptus trees and other greeneries have been planted in the Sahara?

Shri C. Subramaniam: I am sure the experience of other countries will also be taken into consideration in evolving a programme?

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath: May I know whether Government are aware of the remarkable progress made in this direction during the last fifteen or sixteen years by one of the West Asian countries, namely Israel, which has made the desert bloom, so to say, and if so, whether Government have thought of obtaining any assistance or co-operation in this matter from that country?

Shri C. Subramaniam: Once this board is formed, they will take assistance from wherever it is available.