

MR. SPEAKER: You cannot read out.

SHRI LAKSHMI NARAIN MANI TRIPATHI: Thousands of tribal people earned their livelihood from the bed of the river Geruvaferi but picking of pebbles has been banned now on the plea that the plying of trucks in this area creates disturbance in the animal habitat. Since it has been banned by the Ministry of Environment, may I know whether the Government propose to withdraw it.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, anything concerning the sanctuary is the responsibility of the state. If my Ministry has stopped it in this area after taking some interest in it, I will definitely look into the matter and find out any possible solution.

SHRI LAKSHMI NARAIN MANI TRIPATHI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Forest Division of Uttar Pradesh had sent the file for his approval. I am sorry to say that since the personal interest of an officer from his Ministry was not served, he put a ban on it taking the plea that it disturbed the habitat and rejected the plea of the state and returned the file. Will the hon. Minister be pleased to look into this matter?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Member for giving me this information. I would look into the matter, and if he has any further information in the matter, he may pass it on to me and I will certainly look into it.

SHRI LAKSHMI NARAIN MANI TRIPATHI: Thank you.

SHRI MADAN LAL KHURANA: Because you are "Kamal" (Lotus).

SHRI KAMAL NATH: It is your election symbol.

SHRI MADAN LAL KHURANA: That is why I am saying this.

[English]

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE: His voice has been polluted.

Clearance of Subarnarekha and Tehri Dam Projects

*287. **SHRI SUDHIR GIRI:** Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government have cleared the Subarnarekha and Tehri Dam Projects from forest and environmental angles;

(b) if not, the reasons for delay; and

(c) the steps taken to clear these projects expeditiously?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) to (c) The Tehri Dam Project has been accorded clearance from environmental and forestry angles subject to compliance with stipulated conditions and safeguards. The Subarnarekha Project was, however, approved only from environmental angle in June, 1984 but the proposal for diversion of forest land stands rejected for non-furnishing of requisite details by the State Government.

SHRI SUDHIR GIRI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it has been pointed out by some Seismological experts of India and outside that the Tehri Project is risky from the angle of the possibility of earthquake occurrence in the area. The Earthquake Engineers and Seismic experts are of different views in regard to the volume of energy release due to the possibility of Earthquake.

In view of this position, may I know from the hon. Minister the following:

(a) whether the Ministry has got any estimate done by its En-

vironmental experts as regards the possible magnitude of the earthquake to occur;

- (b) what are the conditions stipulated for fulfilment by the Project authorities while implementing this Project; and
- (c) what are the safeguards provided in the Project for the rehabilitation of the families to be affected on the implementation of the Project?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Sir, the hon. Member has asked several questions in one question. But I will endeavour to answer them as briefly as possible.

The question regarding earthquake in the region of the Tehri Dam is a matter of grave concern. Undoubtedly, this has been brought up many times ever since this Dam was conceived of several years ago. This has been going on from 1972. The Tehri Dam was accorded clearance in July 1990. This clearance was subject to certain conditions. These conditions—a large number of them—were implementable *pari passu* to the construction of the Dam. They have to go along with the work as it proceeds.

With regard to the earthquake aspect of it, it is a matter of grave apprehension. The Ministry of Environment had pointed out that the earthquake factor should be considered in the designing aspect of the Dam at 8.5 on the Richter Scale.

However, the original design of the Dam could withstand 7.2 on the richter scale. The difference between 7.2 and 8.5 is 300 times *per se* and is equal to 10,000 Atom Bombs of the Hiroshima type. Now, these pre-conditions which we have specified for the clearance, we are monitoring them; and we have drawn the attention of the Tehri Dam Authority to its progress. There are still some clarifications which they have to give with regard to certain areas. The matter lies with them. But I share the great

concern of the hon. Member because any fault in the Dam will not only affect that area but will also affect Delhi.

SHRI SUDHIR GIRI: The Subarnrekha Project is very important in view of the fact that the implementation of the Project would convert lakhs of acres of non-irrigated lands into irrigated ones. Lakhs of farmers of the area would be benefited. In view of this, may I know from the hon. Minister when was the proposal for diversion of forest lands rejected; what is the quantum of the forest lands to be affected for the implementation of the Project; whether the State Government have furnished reasons for the delay in sending the requisite details; and what are the requisite details called for?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: This is a multi-purpose Project between Orissa and Bihar. There are certain details which were required to be given both by Orissa and Bihar. While Orissa submitted all the details in compliance with the Forest Act, the Bihar Government did not do so. So, the Bihar portion of the forest approval was rejected. It is not that it has been rejected in entirety; only the Bihar portion has been rejected. The last reference was made to the State Government was on 24-9-1990; they were again reminded. It is the Ministry which has got to give the approval; and the Ministry was reminding them to send the details which were required to enable the Ministry to give clearance. They were again reminded on 27-12-1990 and 10-7-91. But, unfortunately, since no reply has been received, this proposal has been rejected for non-furnishing of the details.

[Translation]

SHRI ARVIND NETAM: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is obligatory in case of big projects to seek clearance of the Ministry of Environment and Forests since the two major aspects involved in any big project are—rehabilitation and forests. Generally we

see that all the conditions are agreed to in case of all the big projects but in reality there is no compliance in regard to rehabilitation and forests. Therefore I would like the minister to shed some more light on this aspect...*(Interruptions)*.

MR. SPEAKER: It does not concern the Ministry of Environment.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Mr. Speaker, Sir, first of all I would like to thank the hon. Minister for honestly placing certain facts concerning this project in this House. I would expect from him that he would firmly implement what he has stated here because we know that some forces are involved with this project who are least concerned with the country. They have totally neglected the factors that pose danger to the country, particularly to this area and have proceeded with the work and agents of these forces are there in this Ministry as well as in this Government. Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has said something about earthquakes also. Is it not a fact that the top most experts from the U.S.S.R. have said that the Tehri Project, as it stands to-day, will lead to losses on being commissioned, especially when it lies in an earth-quake prone area and it is very difficult to estimate the losses. Crores of people will be killed and places like Devaprayag, Rishikesh and Haridwar submerged and there will be total destruction. Is it not a fact that in spite of it the Ministry of Environment and Forests and especially the Secretaries Committee of the union Government have gone ahead with the project overlooking the recommendations against it? I would like to know from the hon. Minister the amount of money spent on this project, the amount of money allocated for this project this year and the amount in 1972 when the project was started. The project got a conditional clearance in 1990. Will the hon. Minister be bold enough to take a firm decision to wind up the project right now?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we don't lack boldness. This project has been under discussion for years together both inside the country as well as outside. Various experts have examined it. Nearly Rs. 450 crore have been spent uptill now. Hon. member has said some thing about certain forces and about Secretaries. I do not want to speak anything about that. But it is a fact that in November 1920, a very famous American Professor, Brune came here. He had, of course, said in a statement that such a project would have never been sanctioned in U.S.A. As far as the opinion of other countries in this matter is concerned, we have no knowledge not even that of U.S.S.R. There have been Various queries and various committees have held separate meetings. It was approved in July, 1990 although the project should not have been cleared according to an enquiry by a committee of the Ministry of Environment. I am saying in very clear terms. In spite of that it was cleared in July, 1990 subject to certain conditions. We are seeing to it that the conditions are fulfilled. The most specific condition relates to Disaster Management Plan. As I have said with regard to the design of the dam, can the dam withstand the tremor of the magnitude of 8.5 on the Richter Scale? So far as the disaster management plan is concerned, it has not been given to us. If there is an apprehension of any danger, either to Rishikesh, Haridwar or any other place, I assure that it would be fully reviewed again, and we would not hesitate to withdraw the clearance already given to it.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my question has not been replied. I had asked the amount provided for this project in the current budget? Because, if the Minister believes that whatever he has admitted is true, the work should be suspended forthwith. The provision of rupees 1.5 crore for this project should be withdrawn. Because we would not tolerate yearly spending of Rs. 50 crore, Rs. 100 crore and

Rs. 150 crore if Rishikesh and Haridwar are to be submerged. This is my express opinion. Corruption is also involved in it. There are some contractors who were once officers of the Irrigation Department; they have amassed huge wealth, but the work has not been started yet.

(Interruptions)

SHRI KAMAL NATH: I beg your pardon. I have no information about the budget allocation during the current year. But I would give this information to him. I may inform him that this project has not been given approval by the P.I.B.

[English]

SHRI BHUWAN CHANDRA KHANDURI: Sir, as I belong to this area, my view should be taken a little more seriously.

Sir, the Minister has said that this project has been cleared subject to certain conditions.

MR. SPEAKER: You have to put forth your view in the shape of a question.

SHRI BHUWAN CHANDRA KHANDURI: Please give me some time as you are giving some time to others. I am an affected party.

MR. SPEAKER: I am helping you to put a question.

SHRI BHUWAN CHANDRA KHANDURI: Sir, the Minister has said that the dam has to be designed for 8.5m on the Richter scale. In addition to this, there is another aspect of design, that is, peak ground acceleration (PGA) which changes from 0.25 g to more than 1 g. Now, if these two have been taken in design consideration, I do not think that this dam can be constructed. Therefore, any expenditure on this dam would be infructuous. Will the hon. Minister say that the work of the project is being stopped till such time the ground conditions or the design conditions are met and finalised?

Otherwise, you will keep on spending additional money and giving it as a reason for not stopping the project later on.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Sir, I will certainly give greater emphasis to what the hon. Member from that area is saying.

If any shortcomings are found on the technical aspect as he is saying that there is an impossibility, then certainly the dam cannot go ahead without my approval. In case of any technical impossibility, of technical anomaly, we shall certainly take steps to stop further construction.

SHRI BHUWAN CHANDRA KHANDURI: I want to know the expenditure that is being proposed for this current year.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Rabi Ray.

[Translation]

SHRI RABI RAY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is very clear from the hon. Minister's reply that Tehri Dam Authority cannot be trusted. There are apprehensions that even Delhi, the capital of the country, is not safe. Is there any other alternative but to abandon this project?

[English]

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Sir, as I said, a large amount of money, almost Rs. 450 crores, has already been spent. But that shall not...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RABI RAY: Is the Tehri Dam Authority dependable? *(Interruptions)*

SHRI KAMAL NATH: I share the anxiety of the hon. Members here...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI RABI RAY: Can we depend on Tehri Dam Authority? Apprehensions have been expressed in this regard.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Dependable and independent are separate issues ...*(Interruptions)* In reply to the earlier question, I had said that we had put certain conditions and we are closely monitoring the position. We draw their attention whenever we feel that the conditions are not being fulfilled. If need be, we will not hesitate in withdrawing the approval to EPF even though Rs. four hundred and fifty crores have already been spent on the project.

[English]

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE: Sir, this question is not still answered well. Is it true that we have up to now failed to find out the answer to the technical problems that have arisen? Is it true or not? If it is not true, then, how much additional cost does it involve and what would be the time necessary to make corrections? If it is true that we have not found an answer then, why allocate more funds from year to year and also in this year's Budget? These are the questions which he has to answer. In addition to losing Rs. 400 crores of rupees, why lose additional crores of rupees every year? That is the question he has to answer.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: I wish I was also the Energy Minister, then, I would have answered this question. The funds to this project are allocated by the Ministry of Energy. I, unfortunately, have no role to play in allocation of these funds. My Ministry is concerned with the environmental approval for this project and the fact that Rs. 450 crores have been spent; the fact that PIB clearance has not yet been given; the fact that the forest and environmental clearance were given subject to certain major conditions which are yet to be complied with, has already been stated by me.

MR. SPEAKER: The question asked was whether you can have a different kind of design, what is the amount required and when you can do it?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: I do not know whether technically what we

have decided can be done. It is for the Tehri Dam Project Authorities to recommend.

MR. SPEAKER: Are you in a position to say something on that?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: I am not in a position to reply to this.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: How can the Minister say this when the Government is making funds available? How are you leaving it in the hands of that small bunch of people, when every expert from American to Russian, who investigated the whole thing have opined against that? It is public money of the country and ultimately it relates to the fate of the country.

[Translation]

KUMARI UMA BHARATI: Mr. Speaker Sir have you called me to reply or to ask a question...

MR. SPEAKER: Ask your question.

KUMARI UMA BHARATI: Sir, I want to ask a question about another project. As I have got your permission I have every right to ask it. There are some districts of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, known as Bundelkhand region. It is the most backward area in the country. The Chhattarpur district in that region is the poorest of all because there are not even minor irrigation projects in the area. River Ken which flows from Bundelkhand district to Chhattarpur...

MR. SPEAKER: This is not related to the main question. If the hon. Minister wants to reply...

KUMARI UMA BHARATI: If the hon. Minister has some information about it he may reply because I had sought permission from you. If he has information about the Ken Project, he may reply. A big dam was to be constructed there in 1980-85. We have been told that the project was shelved for some reasons. I would like to know whether the Ken Project was

given approval by the Forest and Environment Deptt. and if so, why it was shelved later and if not what were the reasons therefor?

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: This is an unconnected question. If you want to reply to it, you can reply.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Although it is not related to this question, I will request the hon. Member through you Sir, to get the facts from the State Government. If it is pending with us, she can bring it to my notice.

SHRI CHANDULAL CHANDRAKAR: Since I had visited this Dam and I have studied various aspects of it, may I know from the Minister whether he will have a proper assessment as to how much losses or profit will be there, after the completion of the Dam? If he makes a proper and technical assessment, I know, the losses will be more than the profit. A proper assessment should be made and this should be told to the public because there will be a lot of hue and cry. So he must tell the House as to what are the losses or gains after having a proper study.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: My Ministry is not concerned with profit or loss. As I said, unfortunately, I cannot answer on behalf of the Energy Minister and Water Resources Minister. This question should be directed to them.

SHRI RAM KAPSE: The Minister replied in affirmative that environmental clearance had already been given. When so many revelations have come forth in the supplementaries pertaining to earthquake, forest clearance and all that and again when a committee headed by the Environment Minister had already gone into the details, in that case, the permission should not have been granted. So is the Government thinking of reviewing the whole matter?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: We are not reviewing anything as such. We are monitoring the conditions which were

laid out in the clearance and as soon as we find that these conditions are not being met or are not satisfactorily met or are not possible to be met, certainly we shall take steps...

SHRI RAM KAPSE: Disaster management plan has not been prepared. Forest clearance is not there. You are not satisfied about the environment clearance. Why do you not go into details again though you have studied it so much?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: I share the hon. Member's concern. As I said, some of the conditions were *pari passu* to go along with the construction and with the progress of the project. We are very deeply concerned about some of them not happening satisfactorily. We have taken up with the project authorities. We are seeking an explanation from them. If the explanation is not found to be satisfactory I assure the hon. Member and through you the House that we shall take steps to rescind the approval which we have given to them.

[Translation]

SHRI SURAJ MANDAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has stated that portion of the Subarnarekha Project the involving diversion of forest land has been rejected by the Central Government. I would like to know the forest area affected by the Subarnarekha Project which is a multipurpose project.

MR. SPEAKER: This question has already been replied to.

(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI INDER JIT: Several pertinent questions have been asked in regard to the Tehri Dam. The feeling in the House seems to be very clear that no further money should be wasted. But the hon. Minister has just said that this question pertains to the Ministry of Energy. Since we are working on the system of collective responsibility, would the Minister of Environment and Forest take the issue to the Cabinet and then come back

to this House and inform us about the decision of the Cabinet in the matter?

MR. SPEAKER: That is left to the Minister to take the matter to the Cabinet or not.

[*Translation*]

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Mr. Speaker, Sir, please allow a discussion on this subject in the House.

MR. SPEAKER: I can allow half-an-hour discussion on it. I have already allowed half-an-hour. I can give another half-an-hour later.

SHRI CHANDRA JEET YADAV: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the reply of the hon. Minister is full of contradictions. He has admitted that neither his Ministry nor PIB had granted clearance to the Project. He also admits that if there is an earthquake or an eruption it can prove dangerous to Delhi also. On the other hand he says that Rs. 4-5 crores have already been spent on the project. I dare say, that even if Rs. 4500 crore had been spent on it we should have abandoned it in case it was a source of danger to Delhi. Keeping in view the imminent danger to Delhi in case of an earthquake around the project site, and the opinion of foreign experts, would the hon. Minister take initiative and review the entire project in consultation with other concerned ministries?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: It is true that PIB had not granted clearance. But the hon. Member was not correct when he said that the Centre also did not grant clearance. Our clearance was conditional. We had set up a Committee and after getting the report of the Committee we gave clearance. I would like to quote a few lines of the clearance report in the House.

[*English*]

“Taking into consideration the geological and seismic study, the risk and hazard, ecological and social impacts accompanying the project, the cost and benefits expected, and after a careful examination of the information and data available, the

Committee has come to the unanimous conclusion that the Tehri Dam Project, as proposed, should not be taken up.”

SHRI CHANDRA JEET YADAV: This is what we are saying.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: I am sharing that. Now, Sir, despite this Committee's conclusion, approval was given. I have informed the House accordingly. So, in the light of the anxiety expressed and in the light of the new inputs available since the time the clearance was granted, we shall have another look at it.

[*Translation*]

SHRI KRISHAN DUTT (Sultanpuri): Just now the hon. Minister stated that the Department was not to blame for the report. I would like to know as to who was responsible for giving a wrong report and whether any action will be initiated against them?

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: You need not explain it, Mr. Minister.

[*Translation*]

Non-Payment of PF Share by Textile Mills, M.P.

*288. SHRI SATYNARAYAN JATIYA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) the names of textiles mills in Madhya Pradesh which have not deposited the share of management in the provident fund and since when this amount has not been deposited by each mill and the amount due from each mill separately; and

(b) the action taken so far against each management for not depositing its share?

[*English*]

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI PABAN SINGH GHATOWAR): (a) and (b) A Statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.