

COMMITTEE
ON
GOVERNMENT ASSURANCES
(2001-2002)

THIRTEENTH LOK SABHA

FIFTH REPORT

(Request for Dropping of Assurances)

(Presented to Lok Sabha on 29.08.2001)



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

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**COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT ASSURANCES***
(2001-2002)

CHAIRMAN

Dr. S. Venugopal

MEMBERS

2. Shri E.Ahamed
3. Shri Haribhai Chaudhary
4. Shri Padam Sen Choudhry
5. Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi
6. Adv. Uttamrao Dhikale
7. Shri Brahma Nand Mandal
8. Shri Sudarsana E. M. Natchiappan
9. Shri Rupchand Pal
10. Dr. Prasanna Kumar Patasani
11. Shri Dharam Raj Singh Patel
12. Shri Sohan Potai
13. Shri Chandra Vijay Singh
14. Shri Manoj Sinha
15. Rajkumari Ratna Singh**

SECRETARIAT

- | | | | |
|----|--------------------|---|--------------------|
| 1. | Shri P.D.T. Achary | - | Joint Secretary |
| 2. | Shri A.K. Singh | - | Deputy Secretary |
| 3. | Ms. J.C. Namchy | - | Assistant Director |

* The Committee was nominated by the Speaker w.e.f. January 16, 2001 *vide* Para No.1569 of Lok Sabha Bulletin Part-II dated January 17, 2001

** Nominated to the Committee on February 20, 2001 by the Speaker as published *vide* Para No.1721 of Lok Sabha Bulletin Part-II dated February 20, 2001

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman of the Committee on Government Assurances having been authorised by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present this Report of the Committee on Government Assurances.

The Committee (2001-2002) was constituted on January 17, 2001.

The Committee (2001-2002) at their sitting held on February 07, 2000, March 14, 2000 and March 15, 2000 considered *inter-alia* Memoranda Nos. 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 16, & 18 containing requests received from the Ministries/Departments of the Government of India for dropping of pending assurances.

At their sitting held on August 27, 2001 Committee (2001-2002) considered and adopted the draft Fifth Report.

The Minutes of the aforesaid sittings of the Committee form part of this Report. (Appendix)

The conclusions/observations of the Committee are contained in this Report.

NEW DELHI;
August 28, 2001

Bhadrapada 6, 1923 (Saka)

DR. S. VENUGOPAL
Chairman
Committee on Government Assurances

CHAPTER I

(i) CHANGES IN POSTAL AND TELEGRAPHIC LAWS

1.1 On March 22, 1990, Shri D.M. Puttee Gowda, MP addressed the following USQ No.1777 to the Minister of Communications:-

“(a) whether the Government are considering basic changes in both the Postal and Telegraphic Laws to ensure privacy to citizens;

(b) if so, the details of the changes likely to be made in the existing Postal and Telegraphic Laws; and

(c) the time by which such changes would be made and to what extent the citizens will get better and secured Postal and Telegraphic Laws?”

1.2 In reply to the above question, the then Minister of Communications (Shri Arif Mohd. Khan) stated as follows:-

INDIAN POST OFFICE ACT

“(a) The Government is reviewing the Indian Post Office Act as well as the Indian Post Office (Amendment) Bill, 1986 returned by the President. Among other things the review would also cover the need to ensure Privacy to citizens.

(b) the matter is still under examination and the details are yet to be worked out.

(c) It is tentatively proposed to bring in the legislation in the Monsoon or Winter Session of Parliament. The need to improve the Postal Services will be kept in view while working out the details of the amendments;

INDIAN TELEGRAPH ACT

(a), (b) & (c): Provisions of the Indian Telegraph Act in this regard are being reviewed. The proposals, however, have not yet been finalised. Further action will be taken on the basis of the review.”

1.3 The reply to the question as at (b) under Indian Post Office Act and (a), (b) & (c) under the Indian Telegraph Act was treated as an assurance which was required to be

implemented by the Ministry of Communications within three months of the date of reply i.e. by June 21, 1990.

1.4 The Minister of State for Railways, Parliamentary Affairs, Planning and Programme Implementation vide his D.O. No.4(1)/99-Imp.-I dated March 1, 1999 had addressed a letter to the Chairman, Committee on Government Assurance for dropping of the assurance on the following grounds:-

“The Indian Post Office Act, 1898 is the statute governing the postal services in the country at present. The Government introduced a Bill to amend the Act in 1982. The Bill, however, lapsed as it was not taken up for discussion by the 7th Lok Sabha. In 1986, another Amendment Bill was introduced. It was passed by both the Houses of Parliament but did not receive the assent of the President. The Bill was returned by the President to the Rajya Sabha on January 7, 1990 for reconsideration by the Houses of Parliament.

The Government formed a Committee in April, 1992 to examine the Act in all its aspects and recommend necessary modifications. The recommendations of the Committee which were submitted to the Government in January, 1993 were examined by the Department in consultation with the concerned Ministries. A proposal for amendment to the Act was framed in 1994 for obtaining Cabinet approval but no further progress could be made in the matter for various reasons including changes in the policy perceptions during the intervening period.

The matter was recently examined afresh and keeping in view the technological developments and new policy perceptions, it was decided to set up a new Committee for examining the issue relating to the Indian Post Office Act. The Committee set up on 14.08.1998 has since completed its work. The recommendations of the Committee will be processed expeditiously to bring a bill for consideration of the Parliament and action will also be taken at the time for formally withdrawing the present bill.

As would be seen from the above, this assurance involves policy matters and has remained pending due to the change in policy perceptions. Therefore, it is proposed that the matter be taken up with the Committee on Government Assurances.”

1.5 The Committee considered the request of the Ministry of Communications at their sitting held on February 07, 2000. The Committee, however, decided to obtain latest

position with regard to action taken on recommendations made by the Committee on August 14, 1998.

1.6 The Committee note that a Bill to amend the Indian Post Office Act, 1898 which was initiated in 1982 is presently at drafting stage in the Legislative Department of the Ministry of Law. The Committee were informed about the various reasons including the new policy perception and technical developments resulting in inordinate delay in the amendment process.

1.7 The Committee are not convinced with the reasons advanced by the Ministry for their inability to complete the amendment process even after the lapses of nearly two decades. The Committee are constrained to find the lack of seriousness and inadequate background work on the part of the Ministry, as the Bill which was introduced in 1982, lapsed as it was not taken up for the discussion in 7th Lok Sabha and again in 1990 it was returned by the President after being passed by both the Houses, for reconsideration.

1.8 The Committee are not at all satisfied with the pace on which the amendment process is being carried out resulting in the assurance remaining unfulfilled for almost 11 years.

1.9 The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Ministry after adequate preparation should frame a time bound programme for expeditiously processing the report of the Committee set up in 1998 for examining the issues relating to Indian Post Office Act and necessary enactment in pursuance thereto.

(ii) IDENTITY CARDS

1.10 On July 29, 1997 S/Shri Chandrabhushan Singh and Prakash Vishwanath Paranjpe, MPs addressed the Starred Question No.93 to the Ministry of Home Affairs:-

“(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the newsitem captioned, “Home Ministry keen on National Identity Cards” appearing in ‘The Times of India’ dated June 29, 1999;

(b) if so, whether the Government plan to introduce identity cards system to check illegal infiltration;

(c) if so, the details of the scheme;

(d) the amount likely to be spent on this project;

(e) the time by which it is likely to be completed;

(f) whether the Government plan to introduce Identity Cards system (viz. Green Card for citizens and Red Card for foreigners) on a national basis to check illegal infiltration; and

(g) if so, the details thereof?

1.11 In reply to the above question, the then Minister of Home Affairs (Shri Indrajit Gupta) gave the following reply:-

“(a) to (g): This proposal is at conceptual stage and is being examined in depth.”

1.12 Reply to the question was treated as an assurance which was to be fulfilled within three months of the date of the reply i.e. by October 28, 1997.

1.13 The Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs vide their U.O. Note No.V/Home(1)SQ-93-LS/97 dated January 23, 1998 forwarded a request of Ministry of Home Affairs for dropping of assurance on the grounds indicated below:-

“.....that the proposal regarding introducing identity cards on a national basis is still at a conceptual stage and is being examined in depth.

It is, therefore, requested that Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs may please approach the Committee on Government Assurances in Lok Sabha to grant an extension of three months beyond January 28, 1998 for fulfilling the said assurance and also take up the matter for dropping the assurance in view of the above mentioned position.”

1.14 The Committee at their sitting held on March 14, 2000 did not agree to drop the assurance. The Committee were not convinced by the reasons advanced by Ministry of Home Affairs. Instead the Committee desired to hear from the Ministry of Home Affairs

about the efforts made during the period to finalise the proposal and to implement it on a national basis.

1.15 The Committee note that the Ministry of Home Affairs entrusted the task of preparation of a detailed feasibility study on National Identity Cards Systems to a professional consultancy firm and the Study Report is being examined in the Ministry. The Committee are not fully apprised about the findings as also the advice preferred by the Consultancy Firm. The Committee, however, feel that task of issuing identity cards to all citizens of the country is not an easy proposition. Already the country is burdened with multiple problems as many foreign nationals have entered our country illegally and it has become a serious issue which cannot be ignored. In such a situation, issuing identity cards to genuine citizens becomes difficult. The Committee, therefore, desire that the proposal for issue of identity cards to all citizens should be examined in depth and necessary steps taken at the earliest.

CHAPTER II

(i) PUBLISHING OF INDIA'S MAP BY US COMPANY

2.1 On May 09, 1994 Shri Chitta Basu, MP addressed the following Unstarred Question No.6707 to the Ministry of External Affairs:-

“(a) whether it is a fact that M/s P.C. Globe, and US company has published a map of India which does not include Jammu & Kashmir;

(b) if so, whether the matter was taken up with the US Administration; and

(c) if so, the outcome thereof?

2.2 In reply to the above question, the Minister of State of External Affairs (Shri Salman Khursheed) stated as follows:-

“(a) to (c) Information is being collected and answer will be laid on the Table of the House.”

2.3 Reply to the above question was treated as an assurance, which was required to be implemented by the Ministry of External Affairs within three months of the date of reply i.e. by August 08, 1994.

2.4 The Minister of State for Railways, Parliamentary Affairs, Planning and Programme Implementation vide his D.O.No.4(1)/99-Imp.I dated March 1, 1999 had addressed a letter to the Chairman, Committee on Government Assurances for dropping of the assurance on the grounds mentioned by the Ministry of External Affairs as under:-

“We are unable to locate M/s P.C. Globe, a US Computer Company who are said to have published the erroneous map. The then Foreign Secretary had written a letter on 23.06.1994 to Shri Chitta Basu, MP requesting for further details of the publication in which the erroneous map of India had appeared. On your advice, present Foreign Secretary, Shri Salman Haidar again wrote to Hon'ble Member of Parliament on 25th September, 1996 requesting for the details. We have had no response from the Hon'ble Member of Parliament so far.

Since, the relevant details are not forthcoming from the Hon'ble Member of Parliament despite two references from the Foreign Secretary, it is requested that the Assurance may; be dropped.”

2.5 The Committee considered the request of the Ministry of External Affairs as their Sitting held on February 7, 2000. The Committee acceded to the request of the Ministry to drop the assurance.

2.6 The Committee note that the assurance relating to the publication of erroneous map of India was required to be implemented by the Ministry of External Affairs by August, 1994. The Committee feel that the Ministry made very little efforts for implementation of the assurance and failed to contact the concerned Member of Parliament though sending two letters to him in 1994 and 1996 respectively.

2.7 The Committee are of the view that such assurances should not be kept pending for long where the Ministry fail to collect the requisite information and the matter should be brought before the Committee for consideration and dropping without any delay.

(ii) SUGAR STOCKISTS

2.8 On August 29, 1996, Shri Rajiv Pratap Rudy, MP addressed the following Unstarred Question No.3438 to the Minister of Food:-

“(a) whether the Government have imposed ban on the appointment of Sugar Stockists since 1993 at district level which supply sugar for the Public Distribution System;

(b) if so, the reasons and justification therefor;

(c) whether the number of sugar stockists in the country have been reducing;

(d) if so, the reasons and justification therefor; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to restore or substitute such stockists?”

2.9 In reply to the above question, the then Minister of Food (Shri Devendra Prasad Yadav) stated as follows:-

“(a) The Central Government have not imposed any ban on the appointment of wholesalers/retailers for the distribution of levy sugar.

(b) Does not arise.

(c), (d) & (e) Information is being collected from the State Governments/UTs.”

2.10 Reply to parts (c), (d) & (e) was treated as an assurance which was to be implemented by the Ministry of Food within a period of three months i.e. November 28, 1996.

2.11 The Minister of State of Railways, Parliamentary Affairs, Planning and Programme Implementation vide his D.O. letter No.4(1)/99-Imp.I dated March 1, 1999 had addressed a consolidated letter to the Chairman CGA for dropping of several assurances including the above on the grounds mentioned by the Ministry of Food:-

“The information was to be collected from the State Governments/UTs. The Assurance could not be fulfilled, as information was not received from the State of Bihar and Manipur. In the present context, the Assurance has lost its relevance, as Government of India has decided to do away with the practice of prescribing limit on number of wholesale dealers to be licensed by the State Government/UTs Administration and they have been requested to appoint adequate number of licensed dealers looking into their terrain, density of population, backward areas, area poorly served by the existing wholesale traders etc. In fact, in the present context no useful purpose will be served if we proceed further to fulfil the Assurance in view of our aforesaid decision. Accordingly, the above assurance, where Central Government has no role to play, need not be pursued and dropped as the situation has changed subsequent to raising the above question.”

2.12 The Committee considered the request of the Ministry of Food at their sitting held on February 07, 2000.

2.13 The Committee strongly deprecate the tendency of some of the Ministries to brazenly misuse the instrument of assurance to obviate discussion in the House thereby attempting to dilute the Parliamentary scrutiny of their functioning. In the instance case also a question raised on a topical issue at an opportune time was allowed to lose its relevance by inordinate delay in fulfillment due to changed circumstances and subsequent modifications in the policies of the Government.

2.14 The Committee expect that the Ministries would use the instrument of assurance only in very rare cases and would strive to implement the same within the minimum possible time. In the present case the Committee acceded to the request of the Ministry for dropping the assurance in view of changed circumstances.

(iii) HOSPITALS IN JOINT SECTOR

2.15 On December 20, 1995, S/Shri Mahesh Kanodia, Satya Deo Singh and Smt. Mahendra Kumari, MPs addressed the following Unstarred Question No.3677 to the Minister of Health and Family Welfare:-

“(a) whether the Government propose to open a hospital in Joint Sector for the development and expansion of health services in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which a final decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

2.16 The then Minister of Health and Family Welfare (Shri A.R. Antulay) gave following reply:-

“(a) to (c): The possibility of expanding the provision of health services through a number of measures including the establishment of hospitals through joint ventures is being explored.”

2.17 The above reply to the question was treated as an assurance was to be fulfilled within three months of the date of reply i.e. by March 6, 1996.

2.18 The Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs vide their U.O. F.No.XV/HFW(II)USQ-3677-LS/97 forwarded a request of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for dropping of the assurance on the grounds indicated below:-

“Since the proposal for Establishment of Hospitals in the Joint Sector for the development and expansion of health services in the country has been dropped in the IXth Plan and no provision has been made for this project, the assurance cannot be fulfilled. In view of this, it is requested to drop this assurance from obligation to fulfil it.”

2.19 The Committee note that the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare assured to expedite the possibilities of expanding the provision of health services through a number of measures including the establishments of hospitals in the joint sector. However, in the 9th Plan no provision was made for the project resulting in non-implementation of the assurance. The Committee feel that the Ministry should have more vigorously pursued this matter with the Planning Commission for such welfare projects concerning the health of millions of people. The Committee, nevertheless agreed to drop the assurance at their sitting held on March 14, 2000, as no useful purpose would have been served by keeping the assurance pending.

(iv) RAL POLIO VACCINE

2.20 On December 22, 1992, Shri R. Surender Reddy and Dr. D. Venkateshwara Rao, MPs addressed the following Unstarred Question No.4856 to the Minister of Health and Family Welfare:-

“(a) whether the Bihar Government had sent some samples of Oral Polio Vaccine to Union Government for analysis;

(b) if so, the outcome of the analysis report;

(c) the total estimated cost of these vaccines;

(d) whether any inquiry has been conducted in this regard;

(e) if so, the outcome thereof; and

(f) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to ensure that medicines supplied for immunization programme are properly maintained and not allowed to be outdated?

2.21 The then Minister of State in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (Shrimati

D.K. Tharadevi Siddhartha) stated as follows:-

“(a) to (d) As per the report received from the Testing Laboratory on September 8, 1992 the Government of Bihar had sent samples drawn from various districts to the Testing Laboratory on July, 23, 1992. Eight out of 82 samples were found to be unsatisfactory. The cost of the Oral Polio Vaccine, which failed in potency test and are lying unused is being estimated.

The State Government has constituted an Inquiry Committee. Its report is awaited.

In order to ensure that the vaccines supplied for Immunization Programme are properly maintained and do not lose their potency, the Central Government has emphasised to the State Government the need for monitoring the functioning of the cold chain and filling up of sanctioned posts for maintenance of the cold chain system in the State. Additional generator sets are being provided to 30 districts where electric supply is erratic.”

2.22 The above reply to the question was treated as assurance and was required to be implemented by the Ministry of the Health and Family Welfare by March 21, 1993 i.e. within three months from the date the assurance given by the Minister.

2.23 The Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs vide their U.O. Note No.V/HFW(23)USQ-4856-LS/92 dated 28.04.1998 have forwarded the request of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for dropping of the aforesaid assurance on the following grounds:-

“Department of Family Welfare have been reminding the State Government of Bihar since December, 1992 and a total 66 reminders have already been sent for submission of the requisite inquiry Report. A team had also visited the State for getting the submission of the Inquiry Report expedited. The requisite report has, so far, not been received from the State Government for fulfilment of the Assurance. As totals of 66 reminders sent month after month have not yielded the requisite Inquiry Report, the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs is requested to take up the matter with the Committee on Government Assurances for

dropping the said Assurance since the Assurance is 6 ½ years old and all the efforts have failed to get the inquiry completed and report obtained from Government of Bihar.”

2.24 The Committee considered the request of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare at their sitting held on March 14, 2000 and decided to drop the assurance in view of the fact that the Government of Bihar has shown indifferent approach in submitting the requisite information.

2.25 The Committee note that many a times Union Government are not able to collect information from State Governments and place it before the House. The Committee would like the Union Government to explore some possibility to find a solution to make the State Governments accountable ensuring the expeditious furnishing of information sought in regard to centrally sponsored projects and programmes.

(V) NUCLEAR REACTORS

2.26 On December 18, 1996, Shri Sanat Kumar Mandal, MP addressed the following Unstarred Question No.3932 to the Prime Minister:-

“(a) whether the Nuclear Power Corporation (NPC) has identified Atomerg as its Russian Partner for building two nuclear reactors;

(b) if so, the capacity of the two power plants and their locations;

(c) the terms of the agreement with Atomergy technical and commercial; and

(d) the capital outlay involved by each partner?

2.27 The then Minister of State in the Ministry of Planning and Programme Implementation & Science and Technology (Shri Yoginder K. Alagh) gave the following reply:-

“(a) and (b): Atomenergoexport (AEE) is the Russian firm identified by the Government of the Russian Federation for implementation of the

Russian assisted 2X1000 MWe nuclear power project proposed at Kudankulam in Tamil Nadu.

(c) & (d): The matter is under negotiation with the Russian Federation.”

2.28 Reply to (c) and (d) of the question was treated as an assurance and was required to be implemented by the Department of Atomic Energy by March 17, 1997 i.e. within three months of the date of assurance given by the Minister.

2.29 The Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs vide their U.O. Note No.III/Atomic Energy (1)USQ No.3932-LS/96 dated July 16, 1998 have forwarded a request of the Department of Atomic Energy for dropping of the aforesaid assurance on the following grounds:-

“.....the Department of Atomic Energy(DAE) submitted a proposal for the consideration of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) seeking approval for finalising and initialing a Supplementary Agreement to the Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) signed by the Government of India with the Government of erstwhile USSR in 1998 in respect of the Kudankulam Project. The Cabinet in its meeting held on March 22, 1997 approved the proposal. A delegation from the Indian Side headed by the CMD, NPCIL visited Russia during June 7-15, 1997 and another Indian delegation had visited Russia in January 1998 for finalising the supplement to the above mentioned IGA. A Russian delegation is expected to visit India soon to finalise certain outstanding issues connected with the Detailed Project Report (DPR contract). After all the pending issues are resolved the supplement to the IGA would be signed. Thereafter the contract for preparation of the Detailed Project Report (DPR) will be entered into. Detailed cost and other terms of the project will be known only after the DPR is finalised and accepted by the Government. Until that time the terms of the agreement (both technical and commercial) and the exact details of the capital outlay involved and the share of each partner may not be available and as such it may not be possible to fulfil the assurance till then.

In view of the position explained above, it is requested that the above assurance may kindly be dropped from the list of pending assurances.”

2.30 The Committee dropped the assurance at their sitting held on March 14, 2000 as the Committee felt that the entire process is time consuming and the detailed cost and other terms of project will be known only after DPR (Detailed Project Report) has been finalised and accepted by the Government. The Committee, however,

desire that Government should expedite the completion of formalities so that the nuclear power projects proposed to be set up could be taken up at the earliest.

(vi) SHEKHAWAT COMMITTEE REPORT ON CENTRE-STATE SHARING OF REVENUE

2.31 On July 03, 1998, Shri K.S. Rao, MP addressed the following Unstarred Question No.2863 to the Minister of Finance:-

- “(a) whether some time back the Prime Minister had appointed a High Level Committee under the Chairmanship of the Chief Minister of Rajasthan to sort out the matters relating to sharing of State-Centre revenue;**
- (b) if so, the composition of the Committee and its terms of reference;**
- (c) whether the Committee has since submitted its report;**
- (d) if so, the main recommendations thereof; and**
- (e) the reaction of the Government thereto?”**

1.14 In reply, the Minister of Finance (Shri Yashwant Sinha) stated as follows:-

“(a): Yes.

(b): Chairman: Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat, C.M. Rajasthan

**Members: Dr. Amaresh Bagchi
National Institute of Public Finance & Policy**

**Shri S.R. Hashim
Member Secretary, Planning Commission**

The Task Force will examine and recommend such measures as would enable the States to raise more resources including by additional or alternative means and also devolution of additional financial powers to the States of the Union.

(c), (d) & (e): The Committee has presented its first report to Government of India covering a few issues. Government is examining the recommendations in consultation with RBI.”

2.33 Parts (c), (d) & (e) of above reply to the question was treated as an assurance and was required to be implemented by the Ministry of Finance by October 2, 1998 i.e. within three months of the date of assurance given by the Minister.

2.34 The Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs vide their U.O. Note No.II/Fin.(48)USQ-2683-LS/98 dated February 18, 1999 have forwarded a request of the Ministry of Finance for dropping of the aforesaid assurances on the following grounds:-

“that the term of the Shekhawat Committee under the chairmanship of the former Chief Minister of Rajasthan was not extended beyond July 31, 1998. Even before the said date the Eleventh Finance Commission under the Chairmanship of Prof. A.M. Khusro, was constituted (on 03.07.98). The Eleventh Finance Commission has already started its work. It is a constitutional body. A copy of the notification constituting the Eleventh Finance Commission and stating its terms of reference is enclosed. The Eleventh Commission will be examining in greater depth and detail all the issues (and many others) which the Shekhawat Committee had considered for a while. In these circumstances, it is not considered necessary to revive the Shekhawat Committee (Special Task Force).

In view of the facts stated above, the Committee on Government Assurances may kindly consider deletion of the assurance given in respect of Unstarred Question No.2683 answered in the Lok Sabha on July 03, 1998, from the list of pending assurances.”

2.35 The Committee considered the above request at their sitting held on March 14, 2000. Having noted that the subject matter of sharing of State-Centre revenue was already included in the terms of reference of the Eleventh Finance Commission under the Chairmanship of Prof. A.M. Khusro, the Committee dropped the assurance.

(vii) REVIVAL OF HINDUSTAN PHOTO FILMS

2.36 On April 16, 1999 Shri V.K. Chinnasamy, MP addressed the following Unstarred Question No.3813 to the Minister of Industry:-

“(a) whether Hindustan Photo Films at Ootty in Tamil Nadu is under BIFR for revival;

(b) if so, the amount required for reviving this unit;

(c) whether the revival of this unit is likely to save foreign exchange by way of reduction in import of Photo Films; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

2.37 In reply to the above Question, the then Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry (Shri Sukhbir Singh Badal) stated as follows:-

“(a): Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d): BIFR is yet to finalise and circulate a draft rehabilitation scheme.”

2.38 Parts (b) to (d) of the reply was treated as an assurance and was required to be implemented by the Ministry of Industry by July 15, 1999 i.e. within three months from the date of assurance given by the Minister.

2.39 The Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs vide their U.O. Note No.IV/Industry(12)USQ No.3813-L.S./99 dated June 21, 1999 have forwarded a request of the Ministry of Industry for dropping of the aforesaid assurance on the following grounds:-

“That as stated in the reply to the question revival of Hindustan Photo Films at Ooty(HPF) is still under consideration of BIFR and BIFR has yet to finalise and circulate a draft rehabilitation scheme. This reply has been considered as an assurance by the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs whereas there was no intention on the part of this Department to give an Assurance. The factual position in respect of revival of HPF has been stated. Further, BIFR is a quasi judicial body and as such Government cannot give an Assurance on their behalf in such matters. It is, therefore, requested that the reply to the question under reference may not be taken as an Assurance on the part of this Department and the same may kindly be dropped.”

2.40 The Committee considered the request of the Ministry of Industry at their sitting held on March 15, 2000 and decided to drop the assurance. The Committee note that the revival for Hindustan Photo Films at Ooty was being examined by BIFR. The Committee would like the Government to apprise about the latest position of the case as BIFR is proposed to be scrapped by the Government.

(viii) LAND BUNGLING

2.41 On December 4, 1996 S/Shri Ram Sagar and Jang Bahadur Singh Patel, MPs addressed the following Unstarred Question No.1877 to the Prime Minister:-

“(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the newsitem captioned “Varanasi mein 200 crore Kay Bhumi Ghotala” appearing in the Daink Jagran dated November 14, 1996;

(b) if so, the facts thereof; and

(c) the action taken/proposed to be taken by the Government thereon?

2.42 In reply, the then Minister of State in the Ministry of Urban Affairs & Employment and Minister of State in the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs (Dr. U. Venkateswarlu) stated as follows:-

“(a): Yes, Sir.

(b) & (c): Land is a State Subject. According to the information furnished by the U.P. Awas Evam Vikas Parishad had notified its Tulsipur Grih Sthan Yojana Varansi for an area measuring about 439.69 acre, in year 1972.

Paper possession of 281.95 acre was handed over to the Avas Evam Vikas Parishad but the land owners did not allow the board to develop this land. According to the Distt. Magistrate’s report, the land which was recorded earlier in the board’s name was illegally mutated in the name of said Co-operative Societies & Colonisers. It is further reported that this is said to have been done in connivance with the staff of Sub-Registrar’s Office, Revenue Department, Development Authorities, Municipal Corporation, Urban Ceiling and local Tehsil.

The matter is under enquiry.”

2.43 Parts (b) & (c) of above reply to the question was treated as an assurance and was required to be implemented by the Ministry of Urban Affairs & Employment by March 3, 1997 i.e. within three months of the date of assurance given by the Minister.

2.44 A request *vide* D.O. No.4(1)99-Imp.I dated March 1, 1999 was received from the then Minister of State for Railways, Parliamentary Affairs, Planning & Programme

Implementation for dropping of the assurance being a State matter. The Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs vide their U.O. Note No.III/UD(3)USQ-1877-LS/96 dated 23.09.1999 had also forwarded the request of the Ministry of Urban Development for dropping of the aforesaid assurance on the following grounds:-

“that the matter was taken up with the Government of Uttar Pradesh for furnishing the requisite information. A number of letters including D.O. letters have been written to the Chief Secretary, Government of Uttar Pradesh but the complete information is still awaited from them. The Government of UP vide their letter dated July 29, 1999 has intimated the investigation report is yet to be received by them from the Vigilance Department and they would furnish the requisite information only after receipt of the same from Vigilance Department.

In this regard, it is observed that this question was raised in the Lok Sabha when the State of Uttar Pradesh was under President’s Rule. Further, it is also pertinent to mention that land is State subject. Since the State Legislative Assembly/Council is very much in existence, the elected representatives of the Uttar Pradesh can very well seek any information in this regard by raising further questions in the State Assembly/Council.

Since this assurance has been pending for about three years and despite our pursuing the matter with State Government for furnishing the information, the requisite information has not been furnished by the State Government. It is requested that the assurance may; please be dropped because of the time and efforts involved and particularly, in view of the fact that land is a State Subject and the issue was raised in the Lok Sabha when the State was under the President’s Rule.”

2.45 The Committee considered the request the Ministry at their sitting held on March 15, 2000 and dropped the assurance in view of the changes in the situation.

2.46 The Committee, however, note that the question was raised during the President’s Rule in the State of Uttar Pradesh, but the Ministry of Urban Development had failed to collect the requisite information from the State that period.

NEW DELHI;
August 28, 2001

Bhadrapada 6, 1923 (Saka)

DR. S. VENUGOPAL
Chairman
Committee on Government Assurances

**MINUTES
SECTOND SITTING**

MINUTES OF THE SECOND SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ASSURANCES HELD ON FEBRUARY 7, 2000 AT 1500 HOURS IN COMMITTEE ROOM 'C', PARLIAMENT HOUSE ANNEXE, NEW DELHI.

THE COMMITTEE MET ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2000 FROM 1500 HOURS TO 1600 HOURS

PRESENT

CHAIRMAN

Dr. S. Venugopal

MEMBERS

2. Shri E. Ahamed
3. Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi
4. Adv. Uttamrao Dhikale
5. Shri Brahma Nand Mandal
6. Shri Sudarsana E.M. Natchippan
7. Shri Rupchand Pal
8. Shri Sukhdeo Paswan
9. Shri Jitendra Prasad
10. Shri Maheshwar Singh

SECRETARIAT

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------|---|--------------------|
| 1. | Shri P.D.T. Achary | - | Joint Secretary |
| 2. | Shri K. Chakraborty | - | Deputy Secretary |
| 3. | Ms. J.C. Namchyö | - | Assistant Director |

At the outset, the Chairman apprised the Members of the enormous task ahead within a short time as more that 1200 assurances were pending. Members were informed that there were a large number of assurances which had outlived their significance due to efflux of time or there were assurances which involved policy matter and hence are yet to be implemented. The Members were also informed that the then Minister of State for Railways, Parliamentary Affairs, Planning and Programme Implementation had addressed

a letter to the Chairman on March 1, 1999 for dropping of more than 100 assurance and the Committee would like to consider them in batches at their sittings.

The Committee then considered the following Memoranda for dropping of assurances:-

Memorandum No.1 Request for dropping of assurance given on March 22, 1990 in reply to USQ No.1777 regarding Changes in Postal and Telegraphic Laws.

The Committee considered the aforesaid request for dropping of the assurance in pursuance of the request of the Ministry vide letter D.O. No.4(1)/99-Imp.-I dated March 1, 1999. The Committee noted that the assurance was given on March, 1990, but it was still pending. The Committee were informed by the Ministry through the aforesaid communication that a new Committee set up in August, 1998 for examining the issues relating to Indian Post Office Act, in the light of technological developments and new policy perceptions, had given its recommendations, which the Ministry was processing. The Committee were not in favour of dropping the assurance solely because it involved change in policy perceptions. Instead it was decided that the Ministry of Communications may be asked to provide the latest position in pursuance of the recommendations given by the new Committee.

Memorandum No.2 Request for dropping of assurance given on May 09, 1994 in reply to USQ No.6707 regarding Publishing of India's map by US Company.

In pursuance of the request received from Ministry of External Affairs for dropping of the aforesaid assurance, the Committee noted that the Ministry were unable to locate M/s. P.C. Globe, a US Company which has published a map of India excluding Jammu & Kashmir. The Foreign Secretary had also written to Shri Chitta Basu, M.P. for further details, but nothing has been heard so far.

Since the assurance could not be implemented in the absence of relevant details, the Committee acceded to the request of the Ministry to drop the assurances.

Memorandum No.3 Request for dropping of assurance given on December 14, 1994 in reply to USQ No.1140 regarding Voters Lists.

The Committee took up for consideration the above Memorandum for dropping of the assurance in pursuance of a request of Ministry of Law, Justice and Company Affairs:-

“The assurance is pending complete fulfilment for want of requisite information from the State of Assam. The same is still awaited despite several reminders at various levels, including two at the level of Ministry of Chief Minister.”

The Committee was not in favour of dropping the assurance on the ground that the State of Assam had not forwarded the requisite information.

The Committee desired to know from the Ministry of Law, Justice and Company Affairs about the details of follow up action along with the latest position to enable them to decide about the matter.

Memorandum No.4 Request for dropping of assurance given on March 15, 1995 in reply to USQ No.429 regarding Demands for Ex-servicemen.

The Committee considered the grounds advanced by the Ministry of Defence for dropping of the aforesaid assurance on the following grounds:

“The assurance relates to the recommendations of high level empowered Committee constituted to review the difficulties faced by the Armed Forces pensioners and the Committee constituted to consider demands of Ex-servicemen other than those relating to pensioners. The Assurance has been proposed for dropping after giving comprehensive details/implementation reports in respect of various issues raised in the matter to the Lok Sabha Secretariat. Since some of the recommendations made by the Committee are required to be examined and implemented by the State Governments & other Ministries/Departments, the implementation is likely to take more time.”

The Committee did not accede to the request of the Ministry to drop the assurance and were of the view that the representations of the Ministry may be summoned before the Committee to clarify the position.

Memorandum No.5 Request for dropping of assurance given on March 29, 1995 in reply to USQ No.2274 regarding Voters List in Maharashtra.

The Committee considered the above memorandum in pursuance of the request received from Ministry of Law, Justice and Company Affairs:

“The assurance is pending complete fulfilment for want of information from the State of West Bengal. The State of West Bengal has been reminded at the level of Minister.”

The Committee were not convinced by the reasons advanced by the Ministry in favour of dropping of the assurance and observed that issues relating to the preparation of Voters List, the deletion of the names of those who could not prove their citizenship, raised in Memo 3 and Memo 5 should be taken together after receiving the latest information from the Ministry concerned. The Committee may also visit the concerned States, if found necessary, to have first hand information about the problems encountered in dealing with such a sensitive subject.

Memorandum No.6 Request for dropping of assurance given on August 29, 1996 in reply to USQ No.3438 regarding Sugar Stockists.

The Committee took up for consideration the aforesaid request for dropping of the assurance as requested by the Ministry of Food on the following grounds:-

“The information was to be collected from the State Governments/UTs. The Assurance could not be fulfilled, as information was not received from the States of Bihar and Manipur. In the present context, the Assurance has lost its relevance, as Government of India has decided to do away with the practice of prescribing limit on number of wholesale dealers to be licensed by the State Governments/UTs Administration and they have been requested to appoint adequate number of licensed dealers looking into their terrain, density of population, backward traders etc. In fact, in the present context no useful purpose will be served if we proceed further to fulfil the assurance in view of our aforesaid decision. Accordingly the above assurance, where

Central Government has no role to play, need not to be pursued and dropped as the situation has changed subsequent to raising the above question.”

Nothing that the assurance has lost its relevance, in view of the decision by the Government to do away with the practice of prescribing limit on number of wholesaler dealers for licensing by the request of the Ministry of Food for dropping of the assurance.

The Committee thereafter considered the draft tour programme prepared by the Secretariat. The Committee decided to postpone the Study Tour to Bangalore and Hyderabad scheduled from 12 to 16 February will be busy.

The Committee then adjourned.

**MINUTES
THIRD SITTING**

MINUTES OF THE THIRD SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ASSURANCES HELD ON MARCH 14, 2000 AT 1500 HOURS IN COMMITTEE ROOM 'D', PARLIAMENT HOUSE ANNEXE, NEW DELHI.

THE COMMITTEE MET ON TUESDAY, MARCH 14, 2000 FROM 1500 HOURS TO 1600 HOURS

PRESENT

Dr. S. Venugopal - Chairman

MEMBERS

2. Shri Haribhai Chaudhary
3. Shri Padam Sen Choudhry
4. Adv. Uttamrao Dhikale
5. Shri Brahma Nand Mandal
6. Shri Sudarsana E.M. Natchippan
7. Shri Ravindra Kumar Pandey
8. Dr. Prasanna Kumar Patasani
9. Shri Manoj Sinha

SECRETARIAT

- 1 Shri K. Chakraborty - Deputy Secretary
- 2 Ms. J.C. Namchy - Assistant Director

The Committee at the outset welcomed the Members for attending the meeting and informed that in pursuance of the requests received from concerned Ministries for dropping of assurances, the Committee will meet on 14th and 15th March to consider some of the requests received so far and give their recommendations.

The Committee then considered the following Memorandum for dropping of assurances:-

Memorandum No.7

Request for dropping assurances given on December 20, 1995 in reply to USQ No.3677 regarding Hospitals in Joint Sector.

The Committee considered the above request for dropping of the assurance in pursuance of a request of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare forwarded by Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs vide their F.No.XV/HFW(II)USQ-3677-LS/97 dated 27.10.97.

The Committee were informed by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare that the aforesaid proposal has been dropped in the IXth Plan and no provision has been made for the project. In the absence of funds, the Ministry were not in a position to fulfil the assurances.

The Committee acceded to the request of the Ministry to drop the assurance. The Committee, however, were of the view that the establishment of Hospitals in the Joint Sector for development and expansion of health services should have received serious consideration by Planning Commission and financial constraints should not have been a damper to such welfare project concerning the health of millions of people.

Memorandum No.8 Request for dropping of assurance given on July 29, 1997 in reply to SQ No.93 regarding Identity Cards.

The Committee were not convinced by the reasons advanced by Ministry of Home Affairs through Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs vide their UO No.V/Home(1)SQ-93-LS/97 dated 23.01.1998 to drop the above assurance. It was not clear how a matter, after a lapse of three years, could be still at a conceptual stage and even after such a long span, the proposal for introducing identity cards on a national basis had not been examined in depth. The Committee decided to hear from the Ministry of Home Affairs about the efforts made during this period to finalise the proposal and to implement it on a national basis.

Memorandum No.9 Request for dropping of assurance given on March 28, 1990 in reply to USQ No.2419 regarding Misuse of Land by Bhartiya Kala Kendra.

The Committee considered the reasons advanced by the Ministry of Urban Development vide D.O. No.4(1)/(99)-Imp.-I of the then Minister of State for Railways, Parliamentary Affairs, Planning & Programme Implementation to drop the above assurance. The Committee noted that the assurance has been pending for the last ten years and the Government has not been able to implement it, mainly due to want of policy decisions. The Committee were not convinced by the reasons advanced and hence were not in favour of dropping the assurance. The Committee directed that the representatives of the Ministry of Urban Development and senior officers of Land and Development Office, (Deptt. Of Delhi) should be asked to appear before the Committee, to clarify the position.

Memorandum No.10 Request for dropping of an assurance given on December 22, 1992 in reply to USQ No.4856 regarding Oral Polio Vaccine.

The Committee considered the grounds advanced by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare forwarded by Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs vide their U.O. Note No.V/HFW(23)USQ-4856-LS/92 dated 28.04.98 for dropping of the aforesaid assurance. The Committee were informed that the Union Government had requested Bihar Government about the need for monitoring the functioning of cold chain etc. with a view to maintaining the oral polio vaccine properly. The Committee also noted in spite of 66 reminders sent to Bihar Government by the Ministry, followed by a team of expert, who had visited Bihar to expedite the furnishing of Inquiry Report by the State Government, nothing had been heard from Bihar. The Committee deplored the indifference shown by the State Government of Bihar to such an important matter. The Committee, however, acceded to the request of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare to drop the assurance.

Memorandum No.11 Request for dropping of assurance given on December 18, 1996 in reply to USQ No.3932 regarding Nuclear Reactors.

The Committee considered the aforesaid request for dropping of the assurance in pursuance of a request received from the Department of Atomic Energy forwarded by Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs vide their U.O. Note No.III/AtomicEnergy(1)USQ No.3932-LS/96 dated July 16, 1998. The Committee were informed by the Department of Atomic Energy as under:-

“A Russian delegation is expected to visit India soon to finalise certain outstanding issues connected with the Detailed Project Report (DPR Contract). After all the pending issues are resolved the supplement to the Inter Governmental Agreement (IGA) would be signed. Thereafter the contract for preparation of the Detailed Project Report (DPR) will be entered into. Detailed cost and other terms of the project will be known only after the DPR is finalised and accepted by the Government. Until that time the terms of the agreement (both technical and commercial) and the exact details of the capital outlay involved and the share of each partner may not be available and as such it may not be possible to fulfil the assurance till then.”

The Committee acceded to the request of the Department of Atomic Energy to drop the assurance as the entire process is time consuming and the detailed cost and other terms of Project will be known after DPR(Detailed Project Report) has been finalised and accepted by the Government.

Memorandum No.12 Request for dropping assurance given on July 3, 1998 in reply to USQ No.2683 regarding Sshekhawat Committee Report on Centre-State Sharing of Revenue.

The Committee took up for consideration of the aforesaid request for dropping of the assurance as request by the Ministry of Finance and forwarded by Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs vide their U.O. Note No.II/Fin.(48)USQ-2683-LS/98 dated February 18, 1999 on the following grounds:-

“that the term of the Shekhawat Committee under the Chairmanship of the former Chief Minister of Rajasthan was not extended beyond 31.07.1998. Even before the said date the Eleventh Finance Commission under the Chairmanship of Prof. A.M.Khusro, was constituted (on 03.07.1998). The Eleventh Finance Commission has already started its work. It is a constitutional body.

The Eleventh Finance Commission will be examining the greater depth and detail all the issues (and many others) which the Shekhawat Committee had

considered for a while. In this circumstances, it is not considered necessary to revive the Shekhawat Committee (Special Task Force).

Nothing that Eleventh Finance Commission will be examining all the aspects in depth which Shekhawat Committee had considered for a while, the Committee had considered for a while, the Committee acceded to the request of the Ministry for dropping of the assurance.

The Committee then adjourned to meet again on March 15, 2000 at 3 P.M. in P.H.A.

**MINUTES
FOURTH SITTING**

MINUTES OF THE FOURTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ASSURANCES HELD ON MARCH 15, 2000 AT 1500 HOURS IN COMMITTEE ROOM 'E', PARLIAMENT HOUSE ANNEXE, NEW DELHI.

THE COMMITTEE MET ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15, 2000 FROM 1500 HOURS TO 1600 HOURS.

PRESENT

Dr. S. Venugopal - Chairman

MEMBERS

2. Shri Haribhai Chaudhary
3. Shri Padam Sen Choudhry
4. Shri Ravindra Kumar Pandey
5. Dr. Prasanna Kumar Patasani
6. Shri Maheshwar Singh
7. Shri Manoj Sinha

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri P.D.T. Achary - Joint Secretary
2. Shri K. Chakraborty - Deputy Secretary
3. Ms. J.C. Namchy - Assistant Director

The Committee welcomed the Members at the outset and for the convenience of those who could not attend the meeting of the Committee on March 14, 2000 indicated a brief outline of the agenda considered on March 14, 2000 and the decisions arrived at. The Committee took up the following memoranda for dropping of the assurance in pursuance of the requests received from different Ministries:-

Memorandum No.13 Request for dropping of assurance given on July 13, 1998 in reply to USQ No.3861 regarding Elevating status of CIEFL, Shillong.

The Committee took up for consideration the above memorandum for dropping of the assurance in pursuance of the request received from the Ministry of Human Resource Development forwarded by Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs vide their U.O. No.II/HRD(53) USQ3861-LS/98 dated 06.04.1999 on the following grounds:-

“That this Ministry did not mean any assurance in the reply to the above Question given to the House. From our side, the reply was final. The Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages (CIEFL) is a deemed University receiving financial assistance from the UGC for its maintenance and not possible to dispose of this case within a set time-frame.”

The Committee were not convinced that the Ministry had not meant to give any assurance in reply to the question. It was abundantly clear from the reply given in the House on July 13, 1998 that a proposal for financial assistance for construction of a permanent campus at Shillong was already receiving the attention of the Government. The Committee were of the view that the latest position in this regard should be obtained from the Ministry. It was also decided that the matter may be taken up with the concerned Minister by Chairman through a D.O. letter. The Branch may also write to Chairman, UGC.

Memorandum No.14 Request for dropping of assurance given on July 24, 1998 in reply to USQ No.5593 regarding National Urban Cooperative Bank Limited.

The Committee then took up the above memorandum for consideration in pursuance of request received from the Ministry of Finance forwarded by Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs vide their U.O. Note No.II/Finance(106)USQ No.5593-LS/98 dated December 16, 1998.

The Committee noted that a case has been registered by R.B.I. with the Delhi Police on June 25, 1998 against National Urban Cooperative Bank Limited, Delhi under Section 420, 468, 471 of Indian Penal Code. The Committee did not see adequate and convincing reason to drop the assurance on the ground that the police investigation would

take a very long time. The Committee instead desired that the Ministry should apprise the Committee about the latest position with regard to the progress made in the investigation of the case.

Memorandum No.15 Request for dropping of assurance given on February 24, 1999 in reply to USQ No.289 regarding Fishery Harbours.

The Committee considered the request of the Ministry of Agriculture forwarded by Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs vide their U.O. Note No.IV/Agriculture(1)USQ No.289/99 dated June 17, 1999 for dropping the aforesaid assurance on the following grounds:-

“The Project proposals for Okha Fishing Harbour in Gujarat and the Minor Fishing Harbour at Sultanpur(Diamond Harbour) in West Bengal have to be considered after detailed examination on the various technical components of the proposals. The proposals have also to be placed before the Expenditure Finance Committee after obtaining comments on the techno-economic feasibility of the proposals from appraisal agencies such as Planning Commission, Plan Finance etc. If necessary additional investigations have also to be carried out before they are considered for sanctioning.

The Committee were not in favour of dropping the assurance and instead decided to visit Okha in Gujarat and Diamond Harbour in West Bengal to have first hand information about the problems faced in dealing with such important projects.

Memorandum No.16 Request for dropping of assurance given on April 16, 1999 in reply to USQ No.3813 regarding Revival of Hindustan Photo Films.

In pursuance of the request from Ministry of Industry forwarded by Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs vide their U.O. Note No.IV/Industry(12)USQ No.3813-LS/99 dated June 21, 1999 for dropping of the aforesaid assurance, the Committee has been informed that the entire revival question of Hindustan Photo Films (HPF) at Ooty is still under consideration of BIFR and BIFR is yet to finalise and circulate a draft rehabilitation scheme.

The Committee agreed to drop the assurance keeping in view the difficulties expressed in timely fulfilment of the assurance by the Ministry of Industry.

Memorandum No.17 Request for dropping of assurance given on August 26, 1998 in reply to USQ No.2791 regarding Sunderban as National River Path.

The Committee considered the above request for dropping of the assurance in pursuance of a request received from Ministry of Surface Transport forwarded by Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs vide their U.O. Note No.II/ST(s)USQ No.2791-LS/96 dated October 1, 1998 on the following grounds:-

“The Ministry of Surface Transport have informed that in October, 1996 they had sought environmental clearance from the Ministry of Environment & Forests in respect of Sunderban Project. In January , 1997, that Ministry advised IWAI to obtain clearance from the appropriate authorities of the Government of West Bengal. The Committee have also been informed that a survey was also carried out in December, 1997 for an alternative route for navigation/National Waterway which will go through the periphery of Tiger Reserve area instead of the existing International Steamer Route. The findings of that joint survey was communicated to the Chief Conservator of Forests, Chief Wildlife Warden, Government of West Bengal. To expedite the clearance of the Project, the Ministry of Surface Transport had also addressed a letter to the Chief Secretary, Government of West Bengal but the clearance of the project was still awaited. As the matter of environment clearance for declaration of the International Steamer Route in Surnderbans as a National Waterway has to be considered further by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, the Ministry of Surface Transport have apprehension about fulfilling the assurance in future.”

The Committee were not in favour of dropping the assurance and were of the view that a study tour of the places may be organized to have first hand information about the problems encountered in timely fulfilment of the assurance.

Memorandum No.18 Request for dropping of assurance given on December 4, 1996 in reply to USQ No.1877 regarding Land Bungling.

The Committee took up the above memorandum for consideration in pursuance of request received from Ministry of Urban Development forwarded by Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs vide their U.O. Note No.III/UD(3)USQ-1877-LS/96 dated 23.09.1999. The Ministry of Urban Development have informed that despite number of

letters written to Chief Secretary, Government of UP, complete information is still awaited. Moreover, the Ministry of Urban Development have mentioned that the assurance to the question was given when the state of Uttar Pradesh was under President's Rule and that the subject matter related to land which is a state subject.

Nothing that the assurance was given during President's rule that the UP has now an elected legislative assembly, the Committee acceded to the request of the Ministry to drop the assurance.

The Committee thereafter considered the draft tour programme by the Secretariat. It was agreed that the Committee may visit Chennai, Ponichery, Hyderabad, Tirupati and Bangalore in the fourth week of May, 2000. The programme was to be revised accordingly.

The Committee then adjourned.

MINUTES
ELEVENTH SITTING

Minutes of the Eleventh sitting of the Committee on Government Assurances held on August 27, 2001 in Committee Room 'E', Basement, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

The Committee met from 1600 hours to 1700 hours on Monday, August 27, 2001.

PRESENT

Shri Rupchand Pal - in the Chair

MEMBERS

2. Shri Haribhai Choudhary
3. Adv. Uttamrao Dhikale
4. Shri Sudarsana E.M. Natchiappan
5. Shri Dharam Raj Singh Patel
6. Shri Chandra Vijay Singh
7. Rajkumari Ratna Singh

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri A.K. Singh, Deputy Secretary
2. Ms. J.C. Namchy, Assistant Director

In the absence of the Chairman (Dr. S. Venugopal) Shri Rupchand Pal, MP conducted the Sitting of the Committee after his name was proposed and seconded by the Members of the Committee present.

2. The Committee considered draft 5th and 6th Reports and adopted the same after slight amendments.
3. The Committee authorised the Chairman to present the Reports on August 29, 2001.

The Committee then adjourned.