

[Prof. Saifuddin Soz]

increase the country's national income. This is the bright side of the picture. There is a dark side too which has escaped notice of the Government and the people at large.

The Nationalised Banks do not seem to be accountable to anybody. If there is corruption in this sector, it goes unchecked as the Government does not exercise direct control over it. There have been complaints against banks way of advancing loans, but the system has not been remedied. The Chairmen of the Banks are not accessible to common people.

I would therefore strongly plead for bringing the nationalised banking sector within the purview of the Parliamentary Committee on Public Undertakings, in addition to other controls that the Government may consider necessary.

[*Translation*]

(viii) Demand for a train between Gwalior and Mathura Junction

SHRI KAMMODILAL JATAV (Morena): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, a shuttle train, should be introduced between Gwalior and Mathura. Mathura, Brindaban, Dauji Govardhan, etc. are the places of pilgrimage. Gwalior is the old capital of Madhya Pradesh. Passengers going from Gwalior to Mathura experience so many difficulties because express trains are running on this section and they do not stop at these places. The poor people remain deprived of the facility to visit these places. Therefore, I request the hon. Railway Minister to introduce shuttle trains between Gwalior and Mathura twice a day to enable the poor people to visit these places of pilgrimage.

14.46 hrs.

DISCUSSION RE: DROUGHT SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY—Contd.

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now, we will go to next item, i.e. further discussion on the statement made by the Minister of Agriculture in the House on the 30th July, 1987 regarding drought situation in the country.

I request all the Members to cooperate with me because already we have exhausted the time of 2 hours which is allotted. But still I am having a list of 50 Members who are yet to speak.

(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Please listen to me. Then you can speak. Listen to me.

SHRI RAM SINGH YADAV (Alwar): What is the next important item before Parliament?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: There are so many items

SHRI RAM SINGH YADAV: This is the most important item.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: If you feel, you can discuss this item only throughout the session!

(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: That is why, I am telling, listen to me. All Members are feeling that they want to participate in the discussion.

(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Mr. Yadav, please take your seat. I can understand your feeling. All the Members are interested to participate in the discussion.

SHRI RAM SINGH YADAV: The House is to decide about it.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: That is why, I want to discuss it with you.

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI (Deogarh): This is a great calamity. All should be accommodated. On Bofors, we wasted one week. Drought discussion is the most important one. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI RAM SINGH YADAV: We should get ample opportunity to participate.

(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: You are wasting the time of the House. Please take your seat.

SHRI RAM SINGH YADAV: This is a calamity.

[*Translation*]

SHRI HARISH RAWAT (Almora): We will go on discussing it till it does not rain. Every Member should get an opportunity to express his views.

[*English*]

SHRI RAM SINGH YADAV: This is the most important subject.

[*Translation*]

SHRI HARISH RAWAT: We are ready to sit till mid-night.

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER. I have never told that this is not important. I am always telling it is important. I am expressing that thing. But at the same time...

(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: What is this? Listen to me. In order to accommodate all the Members, I am requesting each Member only to take 10 minutes to express his points. That is the request, I am making

So, don't take more than 10 minutes. If you take more than 10 minutes, whatever you will speak after the 10th minute would not go on record. That is all I wanted to say.

Mr. Ramachandra Reddy, only 5 minutes for you.

Already you have taken 23 minutes. Try to wind up.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: (Rajapur): Drought is a greater calamity than the Government even!

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL VYAS (Bhilwara): Why are you giving half-an-hour for him?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: His Party time, he is taking. He is taking his Party time. Afterwards, I cannot allow other Members because he is taking his Party time.

SHRI K. RAMACHANDRA REDDY (Hindupur): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, yesterday I was arguing about the importance of minor irrigation projects. (*Interruptions*).

I would like to submit that funds that have been allotted for the various tanks annually are very very meagre. Minor irrigation is very very important for those States where the rainfall is very very meagre. When the rainfall is very very meagre, every drop of water has to be saved. Only by saving every drop of water, those areas can be saved. In order to save every drop of water, it is very incumbent upon the Central Government to allot sufficient funds for completion of check-dams, and percolation tanks and breached tanks should be repaired. All these things should be taken up on a large scale so that every drop of water that falls does not run away and is preserved and stored underground. In order to improve the effect of percolation, the Government has to take all the steps. In many States, a number of tanks are there. Some of them are breached and some silted. As far as the breached tank is concerned, every tank must be repaired by closing the breach. As far as the silted

[Shri K. Ramachandra Reddy]

tanks are concerned, the silt has to be removed and the tank has to be deepened 2 to 3 feet below sluice level so that there is dead-storage of water in times of drought. It will be useful as drinking water for cattle and animals and when drought is not there, that is also useful for cultivation. That is as far as the effects of drought are concerned.

In Andhra Pradesh this year out of the 23 districts, 18 are reeling under the weight of severe drought. This is not only happening during this year. Even in 1982, 1983 and in 1984 about 20 districts were affected and every year about 10 to 20 districts are being affected by drought. This Year because of the severe drought the prospects of kharif crop are very bleak. You cannot expect to get kharif crop.

Last year (1986-87), 83.4 lakh tonnes of foodgrains were expected but the yield was 59.4 lakh tonnes.

This year the target is 88.5 lakh tonnes but this may not reach even 40 lakh tonnes.

This means the situation in the State of Andhra Pradesh is very very bad because the State is actually experiencing continuous drought for the last five years.

In Rayalaseema which is supposed to be the groundnut bowl of Andhra Pradesh for oilseeds, agriculturists have not been able to sow groundnut crop so far.

Last year, it was 14 lakh tonnes of groundnut production expected. But ultimate turn out was 9.7 lakh tonnes.

This year, the expected production is 14.5 lakh tonnes of groundnut and I do not know how much groundnut we will get. This is likely to be reduced by 60%

The State of Andhra Pradesh is suffering like this. The Central Government should come forward and help the State Government of Andhra Pradesh in a big way.

I request the Agriculture Minister to tour the drought-affected areas in Rayalaseema, specially in Anantapur district. The hon Minister will be able to see the situation for himself. A drive down in the Rayalaseema district will show dried up irrigation wells, denuded forests, despondent people, parched lands, barren hillocks, famished people and thirsty cattle which will portray a dismal picture of the landscape. This is a very very common phenomenon. People are not even in a position to shout and agitate that "This is our fate. Please come and help. We are suffering so much." So, when you go to these areas the very first preference to be given is to drinking water not only for people but for cattle also. At least human beings are able to get water from 2 or 3 miles. What about the fate of the cattle? Drinking water has to be supplied not only to human beings but also to cattle.

The Centre must come in a big way to help the States where the drought has been continuous phenomenon. I request the Central Government to devise ways and means of improving irrigation.

A number of on-going projects are there. Some projects are not able to be completed because of lack of funds, some projects are held up because of some objections raised by the Central Water Commission or the Central Environmental Commission. As far as this problem is concerned, the Centre must come forward and clear all such projects and see that they are completed within the shortest possible time.

The next thing that I would like to suggest is establishment of industries. In case of drought when agriculture is not able to provide any sustenance to the drought-affected people, it is only the industries that could take away some of the burdens of the agriculturists. So, if industries are located in such drought-affected areas, then, in times of drought, people will have some means of livelihood. Therefore establishment of industrial area is very very important.

Another point I would like to make is regarding improvement of underground water. Here, I would like to suggest that in areas where irrigation is very very meagre—in some places it is 10 per cent or even below—every effort must be taken to see that every drop of water is made use of.

Sir, vegetation is very very important. But, there is one peculiar thing. Forests are being denuded. In some places where hills are there, vegetation is very meagre. In this connection, I would like to suggest that in such areas, a special drive has to be made and a special fund has to be allotted for afforestation. Unless you are able to improve the green-cover in these areas, the rainfall will go on reducing. That is why, I request the Government to allot sufficient funds for this purpose. Further, where irrigation facilities are meagre, people mainly depend upon irrigation-wells. To draw out water from irrigation wells, oil-pumpsets are necessary, where electricity is not available and now oil has become very costly. So, I would suggest that every well has to be provided with electric pumpsets. I would request the Department of Agriculture to impress upon the Energy Ministers also to see that electricity connection is provided to each and every well.

Regarding marketing of agricultural produce, I would like to say that if the agriculturists have to bring their produce to the market, some special facilities like transport and good roads have to be increased. Further, education facility should also be increased in such areas.

Sir, I am happy to learn that a Cabinet Sub-Committee has been formed to look into the matter of drought. I would request the Cabinet Sub-Committee—through the Minister of Agriculture and through you, Sir,—that this Committee must provide special funds for these areas which have been chronically suffering from drought for the past five or 10 years and chalk out plans for the development of these areas. Please do not merely say that we are giving so much funds for NREP, IRDP and DPAP

programmes. These funds are being given in the normal circumstances. Where there is severe drought, I would request the Govt. to allot special funds and to take special steps to see that the people are saved from the vagaries of famine, drought etc. Also, some kind of livelihood has to be provided to such people. Therefore, I would request the hon. Minister to take special steps and see that famine is eradicated from this country.

[Translation]

SHRI VIRDHI CHANDER JAIN (Barmer): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, today most of the parts of our country are facing drought and among them Rajasthan is a worst affected area. Apart from Rajasthan, the area of Sourashtra in Gujarat, Western Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Punjab are also affected by drought. Out of 416 districts, 280 districts are affected by this natural calamity. Out of 35 meteorological zones, 23 zones are suffering from drought. From this you can very well imagine the acuteness of this calamity. There has been very meagre rainfall this year in all these areas. Our country is facing unprecedented crisis and we need to meet this national calamity on war-footing. We passed through the horror of war in 1965 and in 1971 and faced them very bravely but now we will have to fight the present natural calamity more vigorously, only then we shall be able to tackle the situation of this severe drought.

15.00 hrs.

MR. N. VENKATA RATNAM *in the Chair*

The kharif crop in Rajasthan has been completely destroyed and Rajasthan has been experiencing drought for the 4th successive year as a result of which all the ponds and wells have gone dry and water level has gone down. It is a challenge before us and we have to fight this situation more vigorously.

[Shri Virdhi Chander Jain]

Our Meteorological Department has miserably failed in its forecasts and now the moot point is whether the Meteorological Department should be continued to function or not. Had our Meteorological Department given advance intimation to our farmers about their hard work would not have gone waste. Our Meteorological department has miserably failed which we did not expect in this present science age. Whereas the Meteorological departments of Canada and U.S.A. get advance information. Therefore, if we want to continue this department, we will have to make it very active so that we can get information in advance.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is an unprecedented drought of this century. The area of Rajasthan from where I come, is experiencing severe drought. The cattle like cows, sheep etc. are dying. There the cattle have migrated to other states like U.P. etc. Every effort is being made to save the cattle. Such is the situation prevailing there.

The steps taken by the Government to fight such a severe drought in Rajasthan are not effective or commendable. Before 30th June, 14 lakh labourers were employed there but after that the strength has been reduced to four lakhs whereas under such severe drought condition, more employment opportunities should have been provided to the people. Our Government has been demanding 3½ lakh metric tonnes of wheat but our Central Government depends on the bureaucracy and so long as bureaucracy does not give its consent, Government cannot clear this matter. That may be our Finance Minister or any other Minister, they cannot do anything without first obtaining the consent of the bureaucrats. Lakhs of people are facing starvation, cattle are dying and our economy is being destroyed because our economy is based on cattle. Under such circumstances, we need to provide more employment opportunities to the

people. Though we have launched Integrated Rural Development Programme to eradicate poverty but the way we are implementing it that will increase poverty. What I mean to say is that some concrete steps are required to be taken in this direction.

There is acute shortage of drinking water in the rural areas. Besides, about 146 cities including Jaipur, Jodhpur, Kishangarh, Byawar, Madras, etc. are also facing shortage of drinking water. For this we have formulated an emergent plan under which Rs. 112.27 crores will be spent. The Central Government can allocate a huge amount to us under the Rural Water Supply Scheme and the Rajasthan Government will also make every effort to provide drinking water to the people under the minimum need programme. Therefore we will have to fight unitedly to solve the problem of drinking water in both rural and urban areas.

The second thing before us is growing of fodder. I want to submit that fodder should be grown in the Suratgarh farm in Rajasthan and in all other farms of the Central Government. There is a need of growing fodder alongwith the left bank of the Indira Gandhi Canal. We should give cent per cent subsidy for growing fodder so that we are able to save our cattle.

We should double the NREP and RLEGP Programmes. Food for work programme is required to be promoted. It is a good source of employment generation. Irrigation work should be given priority under this programme.

In our desert area, we are unable to start afforestation due to acute shortage of water and even drinking water is not available there. Then how can we make arrangements for irrigation?

I have been to my area where there are no means of transport. The Central Government does not give priority to road construction. The existing roads have become eroded in the absence of means

of transport, our Public Distribution system cannot function and no progress can be achieved. Under the National Rural Employment Programme, priority should therefore be accorded to road construction work.

It has been seen that we give adequate assistance in case of floods but we have not enough money for famine relief. We have not provided enough margin money for famine. You will say that previously it was rupees 7.74 crore which has been increased to rupees 16.75 crores. It is not adequate in view of the persistent famine for the last four to five years. It should, at least be Rs. 50 crores. It is spent as a plan advance. We have been spending this money for the last four years and now the position there is not much money left to be spent under the plan. In view of the economic conditions in Rajasthan and continuous famine for the last four years, we have been demanding more and more famine relief. Even the Seventh and Eighth Finance Commissions have also recommended cent per cent subsidy in these circumstances. Famine should be treated like flood. There are starvation deaths due to famine. In the beginnings floods create havoc but subsequently it is helpful in increasing the crops, the level of water in wells increase and enhances the scope of irrigation. It is therefore necessary to take steps in this regard.

I request that Rajasthan should be given 3½ lacs tonnes of wheat free of cost. Besides an ad-hoc grant of Rs. 50 crores should be given to it. An amount of Rs. 25 crores should also be given to Rajasthan for conservation of cattle and food and for contingency plan an amount of Rs. 112.37 crores should be provided to the State. We have to provide this by resorting to a plan-cut. We should try to provide employment to the people. We should provide 200 machines required for 200 tanks and hand pumps.

I will finish it in five minutes. Keeping in view the grim situation in our area, at least one hour should be given to me. According to our information, the centres of Khadi

Commission at Barmer, Jaisalmer and Bikaner have stopped functioning. More assistance should be provided to the Khadi Commission to increase the production of Khadi.

The formula adopted in connection with the drinking water on the basis of fifty per cent population should be changed to make it need based. Special arrangement of drinking water should be made in the desert areas. Special assistance should be provided for the Indira Gandhi Canal. Though the Union Government is paying special attention to it but we want that this should be completed in ten years. For this purpose, we will have to increase the already allocated 100 crore assistance so that the canal may be completed in time. The construction of Indira Gandhi Canal will solve the crisis of drinking water and enable us to fight the famine condition. Therefore, the Indira Gandhi Canal should be given special importance.

All the schemes for supply of drinking water should be completed within a year. Farmers should be provided electricity for at least 10 hours a day. The Public Distribution System should be strengthened and the on-going projects should be given top priority. Prices of essential commodities should be brought down. Stress should be laid on production of milk rather than on production of ghee.

Regarding the motion moved by the hon. Minister, I have to say that he should play an important role by providing more and more assistance for providing famine relief to the poor people facing this crisis.

SHRI DINESH SINGH (Pratapgarh): Mr. Chairman, Sir, we have been told that this is the worst-ever famine in the last 100 years. Nobody knows that what happened 100 years before. However, it is clear that we will have to make all efforts to face this severe drought and to save the affected population.

The hon. Minister has also given a statement in this regard. He is our friend and a

[Shri Dinesh Singh]

well wisher of the farmers also. But in the statement of the hon. Minister there is no reference to the seriousness of the severe drought being faced by the country. He has not given any figures about the number of people and districts, which are drought affected, the extent of deficient rain-fall and the damage caused to the Kharif crop as a result thereof.

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (DR. G.S. DHILLON): Figures have been given.

SHRI DINESH SINGH: The figures which have not been given in the statement may be given later on to make them complete. I am, however, not satisfied with those presented now. Otherwise, I would not have said so.

The hon. Prime Minister has also constituted a Cabinet Committee keeping in view its importance. Today, in the morning, the hon. Speaker had stated that when the discussion on drought was going on in the house, only 25 members were present. It is very shameful. I think, he should have asked the members of the Cabinet Committee to remain in the House so that they could have known the feelings of the public. Otherwise, the Government will not be able to fight drought only depending on the advice of Officers.

Today, fortunately we have stock of foodgrains with the result that probably, nobody will die of hunger. But this drought has revealed some facts requiring Government's special attention. The hon. Member who spoke before me, has referred to the food for work programme. I think this is an essential way to meet this situation. So far as distribution of money among the people is concerned, I do not think it would serve any purpose. They should do some work for which payment should be made either in cash or kind. This is the right way but we should not make them baggers. During this drought situation we should give them work, the existing tanks, rivers and chan-

nels should be got desilted and deepened, embankments should be got repaired and above all it is very essential that we should adopt a balanced policy in regard to water. Perhaps, the hon. Minister might be remembering that a specialist from the Food and Agriculture Organisation who visited this country, had stated that there was so much water in the valley of the Ganga that it could feed the whole world but it is not being put to any scientific use. The canals are constructed but there are no channels to irrigate the fields along the banks of canals with the result that the land adjoining the canals becomes barren. Whatever water sources are made available to the farmers, they are given in such a way that they are not able to utilise them more usefully. I find in my area that a big canal has been drawn from the Sharda Distributary but the farmer's land along both sides of the canal, where good crop was being harvested earlier, has become barren. Therefore, if we do not utilise our sources properly, then we will have to face famine situation due to our own irresponsible deeds being done to meet this drought which is due to the scarcity of water

There is another aspect of the drought too. Due to scarcity of water and hot weather, diseases will break out. We should take care of this aspect also. Besides, prices will rise. What action Government will take? The Government should think over it with great responsibility because from this year we are going to start repaying the loan to the World Bank. Moreover, the deficit budgeting this year and also during the last two years, will affect the price rise. Therefore, we should look into this matter in a wider perspective. As I stated earlier, it is regretted that the whole burden of this crisis has been put on the shoulders of my friend the hon. Minister. His other colleagues should also share the burden to some extent.

DR. G.S. DHILLON: They are with him.

SHRI DINESH SINGH: They should know the public feelings.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I was telling that a very big economic pressure will fall upon us and therefore we should make a strong policy forthwith. I suggest that fifteen per cent deduction should be made in the Government's expenditure. When the people are facing difficulties, we should be ready to meet this situation and we are preparing for it.

I hail from Pratapgarh district of Uttar Pradesh which is drought affected area. This year, there has been no rainfall there with the result that there is severe drought there. There were, however, a few showers and the people expecting more showers sowed the seeds which dried up for want of rainfall. As the previous speakers have stated, it is very sad that our Meteorological Department does not give correct information about the rainfall so that the farmers may make all preparations. I want to tell the hon. Minister that if there would be acute shortage of power, then it would be said that it was due to shortage of water in spite of the fact that there are so many big coal mines in this country, and we have made so much progress in the field of atomic power. We should also look into it. Why don't we increase the number of thermal power stations, why don't we utilize the atomic power, why should we depend on only one source.

I hope that the hon. Minister who is a very experienced Minister and has already solved many big problems, will solve it also in a better way so that the people can get relief and have the feeling that this Government has provided them complete assistance in their difficulty.

[English]

SHRI B.N. REDDY (Miryalguda): Sir, an alarming situation raises out of an extensive drought the country is facing this year—the worst drought in the last 100 years. Out of 417 districts in the country, 273 districts with a population of 166 million and 81.5 million cattle-head have been affected. The States of Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh,

Orissa, Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra are badly affected.

Some of the States like Rajasthan, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh are facing the drought for the last 3 to 7 years successively. Only 10 out of 35 meteorological sub-divisions in the country have so far received normal or excess rainfall this year leaving, remaining 25 sub-divisions parched under the sun. According to official report rainfall have been deficient in 110 districts and only scanty or nil in 152 districts. Water level in major reservoirs in the country has gone down. In some reservoirs the storage capacity has been reduced to 25 per cent of the last year's level. Underground water level is steadily going down day by day. In some cases underground water level has gone down by 100 feet. Almost all the tanks in the drought affected areas have dried up. Even lakes are drying up speedily. Not only that, it is reported, that the size of the ice-cap over the Himalayas has been reduced considerably. Such is the horror of drought due to failure of South Western monsoon.

In Rajasthan this year 31,000 out of 35,000 villages are affected for the fourth successive year. The entire State has received less than 65 per cent of its normal rainfall and in several districts the deficiency is as high as 99 per cent. Only 33 per cent of the targetted 125 lakh hectares of land has been brought under kharif crop.

Now, I would like to mention the conditions of my own State of Andhra Pradesh, where the situation is worse. Last year, almost 18 out of 23 districts were severely affected by drought. This year also the situation continues to be the same. As it is reported, the kharif prospects in Andhra Pradesh, the largest producer of paddy in the country, are distinctly bleak with deficient rainfall in 17 out of 18 districts. 60 per cent of the sown area in the State is under dry cultivation. Because of the shortfall in rainfall as much as 70 per cent of the dry crop has not been sown at all. 14 out of State's 23 districts are affected by drought for the third successive year—8 of Tele-

[Shri B.N. Reddy]

ngana region and 4 of Rayalseema region, Groundnut crop in Rayalseema is the worst hit.

Now, the crucial point is how to deal with such a grim situation. In the official report our Hon. Minister repeatedly stressed that the monsoon has failed. Of course the monsoon has failed, but he confined to the failure of monsoon only. In the age of technology it is man-failure also. That has also to be mentioned. Man-failure in the sense that the Government of India, which is ruling over 70 crores people for the 40 years, is responsible for all this. In the event of grim picture of the country, the performance of the Government of India is rather shabby and hopeless. To tackle the grave situation, the Hon. Minister of Agriculture has come out with a Statement that there is going to be a high-level panel, headed by Prime Minister, for assessing the situation, for regular monitoring and for directing the State Governments, to take necessary steps in this regard. But there are no concrete proposals either for short-term or for long-term relief. Even after 40 years of Independence, only 20 per cent cultivable land in our country is irrigated. The rest of the cultivable land has to depend on monsoon alone. There is a wide gap between the irrigation potentiality and actual utilisation. According to the report on water resources, we are now in a position to use only 24 per cent of our ground water resources. We are not able to tap the rest of the ground water resources. There are many plans to link Ganga and Godavari, Godavari and Cauvery and so on. But in our State almost all projects, numbering about 20, are pending for the last 25 years. Out of these, nearly 15 projects are located in dry areas. Even when the situation is so serious, Government of India are not taking any decision in this regard.

When such grave calamities occur, these cannot be tackled by the State Governments alone because the resources of the States are very meagre. Knowing fully well that the Central Government is

getting more and more tight-fisted, State Governments are not willing to rise to the occasion even with whatever meagre resources they have under their control. Therefore, the Central Government should come to their rescue.

Government of India are bragging that they are maintaining a huge buffer stock of foodgrains, nearly to the tune of 20 million tonnes. When such huge buffer stocks are in store, how is it that crores of people all over the country are starving? Even starvation deaths are taking place. I should mention here that in the State of Orissa in two districts, viz. Kalahandi and Koraput, starvation deaths did take place. I visited Mahabubnagar district in our State and I met some families where starvation deaths are taking place in our country. Have the Government of India any plans to distribute food to starving people so as to prevent deaths due to starvation? As far as I can see, no plan is suggested in the official report of our hon. Minister.

Sir, shame to the precept and practice of Government of India that even after 40 years of Independence, about one-third of our villages have no permanent source of drinking water and 70 per cent of cultivable land has no source of permanent irrigation. During the time of floods, the rivers wash away our villages. But we are not able to utilise the same river water to our advantage. How is it so?

Sir, to meet this widespread and grave calamity, we demand immediate release of central assistance as asked for by the State Government. We also want immediate release of foodgrains from buffer stock to feed the people in drought affected areas. There should be uninterrupted supply of power for at least 16 hours a day to the fields. Derelict tubewells should be repaired and deepened soon. Pending irrigation projects should be given clearance immediately without any further delay. All essential commodities should be supplied in adequate quantities to drought affected people through extensive network of public distribution system. Food for work pro-

grammes should be started for agricultural workers and poor peasants who have no work. Immediate supply of all needed inputs free or at subsidised rates should be assured to peasants whose crops have suffered extensive damages. This measure will greatly facilitate them to sow their next crop.

Will the Government of India rise to the occasion and deal with this grim situation on a war-footing?

[*Translation*]

SHRIMATI USHA THAKKAR (Kutch): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am deeply shocked that we are discussing the drought situation which is continuing for the last three years. Today, a major part of the country is drought affected. In Gujarat, drought is being experienced for the last three years i.e. 1985, 1986 and 1987. The Government of India is aware of it but I request the Government to make arrangements for water and fodder on warfooting. I request for assistance for the Government of Gujarat. In drought situation, the relief measures include the desilting of tanks but now the tanks of villages have become deep. For the last two years, the work has been going on there, the remaining work has now been abandoned. Therefore, the construction of schools, roads, hospitals, houses and works under the twenty point programme should be included in the relief work. The work relating to construction of medium dams, major dams and other works of public utility should be included in the relief operations. The people are required to go very far to bring earth for dams, where what to speak of women even men cannot go. Therefore, the use of bullock-carts should be allowed to carry the earth. The arrangements for livelihood should be made for this year also as have been made during the last two years. The Government of Gujarat is also extending sufficient help but if the Union Government does not help, all the operations will stop and the people will not be able to earn their livelihood. Such jobs should be undertaken which are beneficial for the

public and they are able to get work. Similarly, the Government should also ensure maximum utilisation of the funds. The Gujarat Government has demanded Rs. 1.88 crores. I request for the early release of the amount upto the month of September to carry on relief works there.

I hail from the Kutch area and now I want to say something about that area which has been facing drought for the last four years. I like to thank those people who have been helping in saving the cattle wealth there for the last two years. The Government of Gujarat has made arrangements to make available means of livelihood to the people in small villages under the 'Antyodaya Schemes' and relief operations. In my constituency, 8.50 lakhs people live in villages and the remaining 2.50 lakhs people in towns. The towns are also very small and they too depend on agriculture. The border area is also very vast comprising 1/4th part of Gujarat. Here the population is 11 lakhs and the cattle wealth is 20 lakhs. Due to the efforts of the Government of Gujarat and others, 5 to 7 lakhs cattle have been saved.

Sir, I request the hon. Minister, through you, that the Government of India should make a separate allocation to the Government of Gujarat for Kutch. You may say, why a separate allocation should be made for it? When the Prime Minister visited that place, he sanctioned Rs. 10 crores for the technology mission for that region after seeing the condition there. During the last forty years of Independence, there has been drought for thirty-two years. Today, when the whole country is drought affected, our difficulties have further increased. I request that a separate allocation should be made for Kutch and the request for a separate allocation is due to this reason that the problem is very serious there. When the Prime Minister visited that place, he told me that keeping in view the circumstances, he would certainly do something. For example, Bita Valadaya dam had been proposed twenty years ago by the hon. Minister of the Government of Gujarat, but the work on it has not been

[Shrimati Usha Thakkar]

started so far....(*Interruptions*).....I request you to start the construction work of the dam to enable the people to get employment there. This useful work has not been started for the last many years. If the work is started, the farmers will think that the Government of India is doing some special work for them. Therefore, the work on this dam should be started early for the benefit of the farmers. There are also other works but due to lack of time I cannot mention them. I also request to make some arrangements to save the cattle wealth. The Government of Gujarat has given an assurance that it will bring fodder from Maharashtra and other places. But when we get the assistance from the Government of India, only then it would be possible to start work immediately there and to supply fodder for the cattle. The representatives from Rajasthan have also stated that the cattle wealth is our capital. Our economy will come to its end if it is not there. You should make early arrangements to save this wealth. There is scarcity of drinking water in the Kutch region. The work to make the sea water free from salt should be started early. There is sea-shore on all the four sides of Kutch. The progress of Kandla Major Port has stopped for want of water. There has been a shortage of water in the Kandla complex for the last three years. I cannot say what will happen this year. This is my fervent appeal that arrangements should be made to convert sea water into potable drinking water. That has been done in Jamnagar also. When the Hon. Prime Minister first time visited Kutch, he undertook to give assistance for technology mission. Some Members of Parliament have also sent an application for bringing Narmada water to Kutch and Saurashtra in collapsible containers. But Kutch is seven hundred kilometer from there. You will have to see how it can be done. Only rupees two crore have been received out of the amount sanctioned by the Prime Minister, a sum of three or four crores is yet to be received. Shri Ramnand Yadav also came there. According to my information there is shortage of funds.

Hon. Dinesh Singh has also mentioned about the shortage of power. I want to suggest one thing. Gujarat has a vast coastline. Survey of Kandla Tidal Project has since been completed. If work on this project is started soon it will help to meet the shortage of power. Many people were of the opinion that there would be no accord with Sri Lanka but that too has been reached, the credit for which goes to the Prime Minister. Similarly there should be an accord with Pakistan also. Like Indo-Sri Lanka accord of which we are proud, an agreement about the Indus river water should be reached with Pakistan so that Kutch may also get water and the old saying about Kutch proved to be true. We have been facing this drought situation for the last four years. There is an old saying in the Kutch region that:

"Shiyale Sorath Bhalo,
Unale Gujara^t,
Chowmase Ma Bagad Bhalo,
Katchhado Bare Mas"

because there used to be no rainfall in Kutch and the water used to come from the Indus river and there was greenery round the year. The Government of India should help Gujarat Government and assure the people of Gujarat who have been facing drought situation for the last three years. The people in Kutch are facing drought and there is need to save both people and the cattle by providing water there

SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR (Bijnor): Mr. Chairman, Sir, we have been waiting for the monsoon for the last two months but it has not turned up.

Out of 407 districts in the country, 262 districts are in the grip of drought today. Five states have been facing drought for the last three years and eight States for the last two years. This year Haryana, Punjab and Western Uttar Pradesh which are known as the granary of the country, are also in the grip of drought. Almost the entire Kharif crop has been damaged. Besides paddy crop, more than 64 per cent groundnut crop has also been destroyed

along with the fodder crop and now there is no hope for even grass being grown.

Water level has gone down and there is no water in the ponds and tanks in the villages. In our 47 main water reservoirs, the water level has declined by 70 per cent as compared to its level last year. Last year also there was not much water. There is no hope for rabi crop also.

On the one hand, we are facing seven drought and on the other, Assam, West Bengal and Bihar are facing the fury of floods. The Manjuli river, the Kamal Balam river and the Avdhara river are causing devastation. Army has been called out to assist the people there. The people have been rendered shelterless and there is hardly any area in the country which has normal rain fall and where the crops are in good position.

This is not limited to drought only. Today famine conditions have developed in the country and it is apprehended that this most severe famine will cause a huge loss of lives and properties and the country will have to face starvation, epidemics and unemployment. Besides, this will have adverse effect on our economy. Therefore, it is a very serious crisis. It is feared that we will have to face acute shortages. Hoarding and black marketing will also increase and there will be tremendous rise in the prices as a result of which the down trodden and those living below the poverty line, particularly Harijans and Girijans would be worst hit. Therefore, we will have to think about these people. I request you to immediately declare all those areas affected by drought and flood as famine affected areas and relief measures should be initiated there on war-footing.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude.

SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR: I have just spoken for five minutes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is agreed that eve-

rybody should take only ten minutes.

SHRI HARI KRISHNA SHASTRI (Fatehpur): It is an important matter. Let her speak.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE (Rajapur): This is only the first bell. Do not worry.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You go on.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR: We are glad to know that the Prime Minister is well aware of this situation and he has constituted a powerful committee under his chairmanship. This shows that he is prepared to meet this calamity. I am confident that this drought situation will soon be met under his direction.

As has been stated here, we are today in a better position to tackle the drought situation as compared to the situation prevailing in 1965. At that time we had not even a negligible stock of foodgrains but today the situation is different and we have a buffer stock of 2 crore and 30 lakh tonnes of foodgrains and also adequate irrigation facilities for 625 million hectares of land. I am, therefore, confident that we will be able to meet this crisis. Even then we will have to take some steps.

First of all, we will have to make arrangements to ensure proper distribution of buffer stock of 2 crore 30 lakh tonnes of foodgrains so that the people at the lowest strata of society should get foodgrains. I am talking about Harijans and Girijans. They should get it on priority basis. We should also see that it is eatable also as a good quantity of foodgrains have been spoiled due to heat. We have to ensure the quality of foodgrains supplied to the poor people.

The purchasing power of the down trodden and people living below the poverty line is decreasing. We should immediately, initiate relief measures and increase the

[Shrimati Meira Kumar]

purchasing power of this class so that they are able to purchase essential commodities. 'Food for Work' programme should be started immediately in order to prevent starvation deaths.

Though the realisation of agricultural loans has been postponed for three months, yet I want that these should be completely written off.

Besides, there is acute shortage of drinking water. Particularly this crisis is being faced by those people who normally draw water from wells. There is no water in wells as a result of which they are facing a lot of difficulties. I request that special attention should be paid towards this matter and arrangements should be made to provide drinking water because there is less water in wells and that too has become dirty. Therefore, attention should also be paid to its cleanliness. The position in regard to power supply should also be taken care of. I want that we people, who live in cities and easily get power and water, should think over it and should save every drop of water. We should not misuse the electricity and I would like to say that we people, who are getting full meal, should resolve to skip meal once a day. Here in big hotels the food is wasted even today and this should be banned immediately. Today, I find that big feasts are being arranged. These should be banned immediately. We should fight this famine on war-footing.

When the famine comes, the epidemics also come along with it. There is also a need to pay special attentions to health services. The Minister of Health is not present here, but I would like to say that she should be included in this committee and she should tell us about the programme she is going to undertake to prevent epidemics.

The pregnant women and children should be provided nutritious food because if they do not get sufficient food,

it will make adverse effect on their health and on the health of our future generation.

We have a stock of foodgrains but we have no stock of fodder as a result of which the cattle may die in big numbers. Therefore, we should open fodder depots at short distances and it should be kept in mind that where there is a depot, the facility of water should also be there.

My constituency is Bijnor. The condition there is very alarming and if the steps are not taken immediately, the situation may go out of control. 62 per cent crops in the fields have dried up. There is no arrangement of water. That area has not been declared as drought affected so far. No preparations have been made to fight drought there. There are no arrangements to supply electricity to operate tube-wells. The electricity is to be supplied for 8 to 9 hours but it is neither supplied fully nor during fixed hours. Consequently, the tube-wells cannot operate as a result of which we are not able to save even that crop which could have otherwise been saved.

There is scarcity of drinking water. There are two hundred such villages where there is no source of drinking water due to drought. The Hand-pumps should be installed there immediately and for this purpose rupees twenty lakhs should be made available immediately. I think it is not a big amount. Therefore, it should be provided immediately for installation of hand-pumps there.

I would like to say one thing more. Fifty tube-wells have been installed in my constituency with the help of the World Bank. I requested many times that out of these 50 tubewells, 25 should be installed at Afzalgarh, a tehsil in my constituency where there is acute crisis of water. But those tube-wells were not installed there because deep boring rigs were needed to instal them and I was told that there are only four deep boring rigs and these are being operated in the constituency of some Minister. As a result, instead of instal-

ling these 25 tube-wells there, these were installed at other places where the crisis of water was not so grave. There is very severe crisis of water in Afzalgarh. Therefore, I want that water should be provided there immediately.

Relief operations should be started immediately in Bijnor. The food for work programme should be implemented there. Immediate arrangements should be made for health care and for the supply of fodder for the cattle.

In the end, I express thanks to all of you. Mr. Chairman, I am also thankful to you for allowing me to speak for a little more time than what was allotted.

16.00 hrs.

[English]

SHRI V.S. KRISHNA IYER (Bangalore South): Madam, Chairman, every year and in almost every session, we discuss about the drought situation. It is merely being touched over. But this year, this cannot be allowed to be merely touched over. The Government must come out with a plan of action.

We are really sorry that the hon. Minister, who is a very experienced person, is not giving a true picture of the seriousness of the drought situation in the country. This drought has been unprecedented. Millions of people have been affected by this drought. Out of 25 States, nearly 13 States and 2 Union territories are affected by this drought. I am very sorry to say that the Government of India—ever since I have become a Member I have been observing—is not kind and does not realise the seriousness of the situation of the drought-affected States. You see the way in which they give the financial assistance. Do you know that the assistance given by the Central Government to the States has been only token? I will give two or three instances. For example, Andhra Pradesh had sought an assistance of Rs. 953 crores in 1985-86 and the actual assistance given

was only Rs. 63.09 crores. Karnataka had asked for an assistance of Rs. 587.93 crores and the actual assistance given was Rs. 62.46 crores only. Maharashtra sought an assistance of Rs. 664.37 crores and the actual assistance given was Rs. 65.66 crores.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You please continue next time.

16.02 hrs.

DISCUSSION ON PRIME MINISTER'S
STATEMENT ON 30.7.1987 *RE. INDO-SRI
LANKA AGREEMENT TO ESTABLISH
PEACE AND NORMALCY IN SRI
LANKA*

[English]

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN (Badagarc): For the last few days the Government controlled media, the Doordarshan and the All India Radio, has been trying to whip up a climate of euphoria over the recently concluded Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement or Rajiv-Jayawardene Agreement as it is called.

16.03 hrs

[SHRI VAKKOM PURUSHOTHAMAN *in
the Chair*]

The Prime Minister himself has not been found wanting. He has himself been leading the cheer—boys brigade—a refreshing change for a statesman or an astounding performance by a Prime Minister giving the impression or rather his own verdict, which ought to have come much later from our experience or from historians, that it is an agreement of the century, a great landmark, a great triumph of his conduct of our foreign policy and in defence of our national interests! I deeply regret that I cannot agree with him in his verdict on himself or his historic achievement. He was angry with the opposition that we did not join the chorus of approval when he entered the House the other day soon after the assault on him—unfortunate as it was—