

**INCOME-TAX (AMENDMENT)  
BILL, 1986\***

(Amendment of Section 230A)

[English]

**SHRI SHANTARAM NAIK :** I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Income-tax Act, 1961.

**MR. CHAIRMAN :** The question is :

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Income-tax Act, 1961."

*The motion was adopted.*

**SHRI SHANTARAM NAIK :** I introduce the Bill.

15.09 hrs.

**FLOOD CONTROL AUTHORITY OF  
INDIA BILL, 1986—(Contd.)**

[English]

**MR. CHAIRMAN :** The House shall now take up further consideration of the following motion moved by Dr. Chandra Verma on the 21st November, 1986, namely :—

"That the Bill to provide for the setting up of a flood control authority of India to control floods and for matters connected therewith, be taken into consideration."

**SHRI SATYENDRA NARAYAN SINHA (Aurangabad) :** I raise to support the Bill. Dr. Verma has done a laudable work in bringing this measure before the House. The other day we discussed floods and droughts in this House and we discussed

that floods have become an annual affair with us ; it has become almost endemic in our system and it causes colossal damage in terms of loss of property, crops, human lives and cattle heads. Besides it causes untold hardships and sufferings.

Government has been aware of this problem and as far back as in 1954, a national programme for flood control was set up which studied the problem and made certain recommendations for constructing reservoirs, embankments *bunds*, etc. A reasonable degree of flood protection was provided to about 13 million hectares out of 40 million hectares which have been identified as flood prone.

So, in 32 years we have been able to provide some sort of flood protection measures to 13 million hectares up to 1985. In fact, at this rate, I do not think that it will be possible for us to cover or provide flood protection measures to the rest of the flood-prone areas. I think it may not be possible even to cover half of it. During First Plan to Sixth Plan we have spent more than Rs. 1700 crores over flood protection and much more on flood relief. Actually, we have spent thousands of crores on flood relief. The Minister himself said that on an average they are spending Rs. 400 crores per year on flood relief and still there has been no respite from the scourge of flood and we are suffering. I know that the Government of India has been exercised about this problem and in 1976 the National Flood Commission was constituted which made a number of recommendations in 1980. It took about four years to study and make recommendations. Those recommendations were considered and reviewed by the Central Government. On that basis guidelines were framed and instructions were issued to the State Governments to implement those recommendations.

In 1981 and 82 the Irrigation Ministers' Conferences were held at which these recommendations were discussed and the Government of India impressed upon the State Governments to prepare an expeditious plan for the implementation of these recommendations.

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**(Shri Satyendra Narayan Sinha)**

Madam, only six States so far were able to do some thing in the matter of implementation of the recommendations and furnish information to the Central Government and that too very scanty information. The Central Government, it appears, is merely there to provide funds for flood relief and to give them loan assistance for flood protection and beyond that they can do nothing else. There is no way of ensuring implementation of these recommendations, and floods continue to ravage the country with unceasing regularity. This is the position. This constitutes a stupendous task before the country, and the problem appears to be intractable. It is a sad state. The State Governments are expected to take every possible measure to control the floods. But in my opinion it is beyond the resources of the State Governments to take effective steps to control the floods. Manifold measures have to be taken and comprehensive plans have to be made. But they have not been able to do so far and you might recall that the recommendation of the Mitra Committee for preparing a plan for every major river in the country has not been implemented. Only with regard to the Damodar Valley the plan was fully implemented. Regarding Brahmaputra it was started in 1982, but it has not been fully implemented. With regard to other States nothing has been done. West Bengal did appoint a Committee under the Chairmanship of Man Singh to make certain recommendations. It could not be implemented because the West Bengal Government itself did not make adequate allocation of funds. They allocated only Rs. 11 crores and the whole plan was to cost about Rs. 125 crores. Thereafter, a comprehensive plan has been prepared by the West Bengal Government which could be implemented in 25 to 30 years and which is pending with the Central Government. For everything the State Governments are coming to the Central Government for their help. Therefore, it is to be seen whether we should depend upon the State Governments for meeting the scourage of floods or there is a need for a Central Authority to do this because there are instances where the rivers are passing through one State to another State. Supposing a river is passing from Madhya Pradesh to Andhra Pradesh and the Madhya Pradesh Government is not prepared

to make any contribution for raising the embankments and all that, then who will do it? So, as I said, the problem is stupendous and needs the use of science and technology also. In my opinion, it is far beyond the resources of the State Governments to tackle this problem.

Floods are no longer unpredictable. We are able to know the movement of floods. An hon. Member from Andhra Pradesh while speaking on the last occasion said that the Central Water Commission did warn them of the coming floods in Godavari and that helped them to save many lives. So, we have the flood forecasting machinery with us but we do not have a comprehensive outfit to deal with the situation.

We all know that the embankments that we have erected to control the floods on both sides of the rivers also prove inadequate after some time due to siltation. The other day my friend Mr. Chardulal Chandra-kar made a suggestion that there should be a Dredger Corporation which should undertake the job of dredging activities so that the siltation could be removed. Then, a suggestion was made that when the floods come, they cause disaster and there is no arrangement for meeting such a situation. We have been meeting this situation on *ad hoc* basis. Therefore, it has to be considered whether we can leave things as they are and we should depend upon the various agencies that we have set up, or we should have a Central Authority with adequate powers to deal with the situation.

The National Floods Control Commission made several recommendations among which one recommendation was for constituting a Central Authority under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister, who should be assisted by a strong body of technical men. That idea was mooted by the National Floods Control Commission and I do not know what the Government has done so far. But it is very necessary that we should have a Central Authority with adequate powers to be able to deal with the situation. They should have funds of their own. They should have the powers that wherever there is a question of inter-State dispute, they can take decisions which will be binding on all

the parties concerned. They should prepare Comprehensive plans for the catchment areas and the river basins. They should take soil conservation measures. All these measures they should be able to take. Dredging operations can also be taken by this Authority. Disaster management can also be under taken by this Authority. Therefore, from all accounts it appears that we need such an Authority. There are many advantages also. Along with it we can have hydro-electric generation. The hon. Minister till the other day was incharge of energy also and we know that hydel power is very cheap. China has solved this problem by mini-hydel plant. You can adopt this plan. There is an entry of it in the Union List, so are able to solve inter-State disputes. We can appoint such an authority. If you think that there is a constitutional obstacle in the way you can go in for an amendment in the Constitution. In countries like Canada, Australia, U.S.A. which has a federal set up, they have this subject in the Union List. There is no problem to keep it in the Concurrent List.

We are going to have super computer. This is what the Prime Minister said. It will be able to forecast meteorological movements and we will be able to know actually the behaviour of the monsoon and plan accordingly. Then we can also prepare areawise programmes and plans. We can prepare river basin plan in catchment area. We are also in a position to develop remote sensing techniques through the use of satellites.

Two or three days ago the hon. Minister in reply to a question about the Himalayan Region—whether there is any remote sensing technique or not, said that there is no such arrangement. In fact I was surprised and also pained. When we are making such a big headway in this respect and the Prime Minister is so keen about it we have not yet developed that capability. It is necessary that we should develop this remote sensing technique through the use of satellite to be able to know the movement of glacial Himalayan Region. We should know about snow melting, about the movement of glacier. 60% of the Indo-gigantic river flow from Himalayas. They get their water from that and if you know all this, we will be able to

prepare our plans. The river basin plan requires not only creation of reservoirs, embankment but also requires aforestations so that it may act as a soil conservation and prevent siltation and carrying of silt through river water and we can control flow of water. We have scientific data with us. The Prime Minister is also thinking of having a area wise data, by preparation of collection system, so that we may be able to know the real position in the various States and in the various areas on the basis of which a plan could be prepared.

Now I am submitting before the Minister whether it is possible for the State Government alone to do all this or whatever the Central authority will be able to do it. In my own opinion it is the Central authority, which alone will be competent to take all these measures, it will have its own resources. My friend from Telugu Desam suggested that initially the Central Government may give Rs. 500 crores and the State Government should contribute their quota to create its funds and then you can impose levy on the various sectors of society. These are suggestions which should be considered for creating a fund to be placed at the disposal of the Central authority.

With these words I commend the proposal contained in the Bill moved by Dr. G.S. Verma.

SHRI R. P. DAS (Krishnagar) : Madam Chairman, I have only a few words to add to the discussion.

Madam, this is a very good Bill brought by Dr. Chandra Shekhar Verma—Flood Control Authority of India Bill. I support this Bill. It is a well meaning Bill,

We have found that some steps have been taken by the Central Government to control the floods. Out of 40 million hectares of flood-prone area, only 13 million hectares have come under flood protection. This is a very minimal thing. We find that the Central Boards that have been set up and all the State Boards could not cope with the problem. They have some schemes and plans for implementation of the schemes. But the States could not implement these

(Shri R.P. Das)

plans and schemes only because of lack of funds. The States did not have enough funds to implement the plans and schemes. That is why these schemes have remained all along unimplemented. That is why some hon. Members have already raised the question that the responsibility should be taken over by the Centre also not by the States alone. It should not be a State subject alone because States do not have the necessary funds. Their resources are very meagre. Therefore, it is quite impossible on the part of the States to implement any of the bigger schemes on the rivers. This makes the projects and all the schemes remain unfulfilled. Take the case of Tista projects of North Bengal. It requires Rs. 450 crores, but funds are not forthcoming from the Centre. Therefore, the project could not be implemented for years. For years over funds were not available from the Centre. This States of West Bengal is in such a financial constraint that it is not possible for the State to give funds for quick implementation of such a project as a Tista project. Therefore, Sir, I would urge upon the Minister to find out funds for this Tista project. If it is not possible for the Centre to do so at the present moment, then I should say, again that all these plans and schemes of the State Government would remain unimplemented. They will have a very slow pace of implementation and this slow pace of implementation would never serve the cause. Therefore, the question of bringing these rivers under the Central scheme and under Central projects is imperative.

Sir, this slow progress in implementing the plans and schemes clearly shows the necessity of having a bigger body like the proposed Flood Control Authority of India, the Bill for which has been brought in this House by Dr. Chandra Shekhar Verma. I support this. This sort of a body could go to some extent to help the States. If we look at it from another angle, we will find that the State agencies so far have more or less failed to implement its guidelines, its intentions because of absence of such a body.

In view of the severe floods and draughts in 1954, Government thought that something had to be done for the protection from the

flood. But very little has been done since then in this regard. Sir, the flood protection agencies, in the mean time, have clearly proved that they are not competent enough to face this gigantic task of flood protection in the country. Therefore, this Bill really suggests that a bigger body has to be set up immediately and that body may be called the Flood Control Authority of India. For this reason, I support the Bill.

I think, this Authority can go in for all the task of anti-erosion of soil; it can also take up afforestation projects. At the same time, it should also undertake construction of big dams across the rivers; construction of embankment along the big rivers wherever necessary. We know that, at present, all these tasks have been entrusted to the Central and state agencies. But due to non-allocation of funds by the Centre and insufficient funds being given to the States, this plan remain unimplemented. That is why, there should be one bigger Central body and that body should be given enough powers and funds so that it could carry out the programmes of flood protection throughout the States.

[*Translation*]

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE (Jadavpur): Madam, I rise to support this Bill introduced by Dr. Verma. The intention behind bringing this Bill is very noble. Our country faces the calamities of flood and drought every year and crores of rupees are spent on relief works but in spite of all this, no constructive way out is found and, as such, floods and drought cannot be eliminated from the country. Every year thousands of people lose their lives, crops are destroyed and farmers have to suffer huge losses due to the fury of floods and drought. Last year, while Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bengal and Arunachal Pradesh experienced floods; Rajasthan and Maharashtra witnessed drought. Rajasthan's 27 districts were hit by drought. We cannot check natural calamities, but we shall have to see as to how these natural calamities can be put to the benefit of the country by mobilising resources.



[English]

Under the leadership of our Prime Minister, we are going for the 21st Century. We are looking forward for the 21st century. We are moving for the 21st century.

[Translation]

Our scientist and technologists should carry out research to evolve methods for controlling flood and drought. The results of such a research will save thousands of people from death or becoming homeless and crores of rupees being spent at present will also be saved. Today we spend crores of rupees every year for controlling floods and drought.

15.34 hrs.

[SHRI VAKKOM PURUSHOTHAMAN  
In the Chair]

The Central Government as well as the State Governments contribute funds for this purpose but despite all this expenditure, no effective way out is found. There should be some permanent solution to get rid of the flood and drought problem. I would like to request the hon. Minister to acquire modern sophisticated electronic computers. It will help in forecasting well in advance the possibility of floods in a particular State, so that arrangements could be made in time. We participated in the World Youth Festival held in Moscow. At that time, the computer had forecast that there would be rain at the time of inaugural ceremony.

[English]

Why are you not sending one engineer team to Russia?

[Translation]

The resources that India has, are unmatched in the world. But they need to be mobilised. Our country commands great respect in the world. The development activities are also being undertaken on a large scale, but the problems of flood and drought also need to be tackled on a permanent

footing. There are dams on river like the Ganga, Godawari, Kaveri, Narmada and Tista etc. Most of these dams are either in a damaged state or are yet to be completed. I want that the entire situation should be reviewed so as to bring about certain improvements. Just now, an hon. Member from Bengal expressed his views. Though I do not find favour with his views, yet I would support him on the issue of Tista Project . . . . . (Interruption)

Our State was hit by floods in September. My constituency was the worst hit in the entire Bengal. The situation was so bad that even small boats were not available. The poor did not get even Halogen tablets and food. I want that the discussion on this Bill should be above political considerations. But one thing I would certainly like to say. The Chief Minister of our State has two daughters. One is called 'flood' and the other 'drought'. Whatever funds are given for flood and drought relief go to the accounts of their party fund and are not spent on the poor. When the floods struck there, the Prime Minister reached there even before the Chief Minister could reach there. Even his full security was not with him. An old man there had commented that the Chief Minister, District Magistrate and District Collector had not come, but the Prime Minister had reached.

When the relief camps were set up there, the red flags of the Marxists were put on them. A family consisting of five members was given 100 grams of 'chura' alongwith a party pamphlet asking them to vote for the C.P.M. Even the bread given to the poor is stamped by the C.P.M. Previously, the Ramakrishna Mission, Bharat Seva Shram Sangh and other religious organisations used to provide relief to the poor during floods, but this time, these organisation were not permitted to conduct relief works. No religious mission was allowed. When a calamity strikes—as has been the case of Bengal this time, where lakhs of people suffered due to floods—politics should not be dragged into it. We should make collective efforts to protect and provide relief to such people. I would submit that flood and drought both cause huge damage but of the two the floods are more devastating. There should be an emergency service to evacuate the flood hit people and doctors should be available there.

[Shri Vakkom Purushothaman]

You know that during floods, about 150 persons stay under the same roof. The water becomes contaminated which causes a variety of diseases, but they do not get proper medical help.

You should bring forward the Flood and Drought Control Authority of India Bill instead of this Flood Control Authority of India Bill. You should utilize the services of science and technology in this endeavour so that we could show to the world that we are second to none.

SHRI D. P. YADAVA (Monghyr): I express my thanks to Dr. Verma for bringing forward this Flood Control Authority of India Bill. Dr. Verma and myself come from the region through which the Ganga flows. The maximum water holding capacity of the Ganga is about 4 to 5 lakh cusecs. If the quantity of water remains upto five lakh cusecs, she looks, beautiful, captivating and the one that removes the miseries of the people. But the moment the quantum of water increases to 22 to 24 lakh cusecs, it becomes the devastator and no longer remains captivating. I and Dr. Verma represent Monghyr and Khagaria constituencies respectively which are situated on the banks of the Ganga. Perhaps no other Member of this House witness devastation so closely every year as we do. Even the rains in Madhya Pradesh cause floods in Monghyr. Rain water of Madhya Pradesh flows into the Ganga through the Sone river which causes lightning floods and colossal losses. Whether the rains fall in Delhi or in the foothills of the Himalayas, our district Monghyr is the worst affected area every year. So I would request the hon. Minister to visit our district in August next, the time when the floods are at the peak, so that he could have a glimpse of our miseries caused by floods. I do not want to present before the House any big technical issue. We have three major reports on flood with us. The first report was prepared by the Agriculture Commission, the second one by the Irrigation Commission and the last one was the report submitted by the Flood Commission. All these reports have suggested measures for preventing losses caused by floods. I think we cannot suggest more measures than what is contained in these reports. The main

thing is that we cannot check floods. If someone says that floods can be checked by the embankment of the Ganga, I do not find it practical. The most essential thing is to prevent the losses caused by floods and it is well within your reach. Mr. Minister, you cannot prevent floods but you can prevent the losses caused by floods to a large extent, if not completely, by adopting post-flood and pre-flood measures.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, if the worst devastations caused by the floods is to be seen in any area, it is in my area. Drinking water becomes scarce. All embankments are breached resulting in inundation. Water-logging takes place in the shape of a drain or ponds which causes disease and puts all agricultural operations out of gear. Therefore, I would personally suggest that immediate steps should be initiated to build check dams in the upper areas wherever possible. You should set up a combined task force of the Survey of India, the Geological Survey, State Government and the Ganga Flood Control Commission which could prepare a map after surveying each area. If you have district wise maps, division wise and block wise, you can prevent floods by constructing check dams. It means that movement of water can be controlled. I think you can prevent floods in the upper regions of Monghyr, Bhagalpur and Patna by constructing check dams there.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, you cannot assess the extent of loss caused by flood unless you conduct Micro Level Contour Survey and initiate area planning. The Central Government should take initiative in this matter. There is nothing like the State Government being embarrassed if you go ahead with setting up an authority to deal with it. I think it is better if you get some help from the State Government. So I want you to get a total survey conducted by the Flood Control Department to have an assessment of the losses caused by floods. It will benefit the Health Department and the Agriculture Department as well. So I urge you to implement the post-flood and pre-flood immunisation programme at the earliest.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, with these words I support this Bill and I urge you that should Dr. Verma choose to withdraw this Bill, the Government should bring forward a comprehensive Bill to undertake this work.

**SHRI VIRDHI CHANDER JAIN** (Barmer) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to express my views on the Flood Control Authority of India Bill introduced by Dr. G. S. Verma which will pave the way for bringing forward a Bill for the setting up of Flood Control Authority of India and making provisions for the subjects related thereto. Sir, famine and flood are the major problems before the country. The easiest as well as the most difficult solution to solving both these problems is the conservation of forests. If we do not conserve forests, floods as well as famine will continue to occur and no one will be able check them. So the most important and most essential thing is the development and conservation of forests.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, while speaking on conservation of forests I want to mention about my area. I want to tell you about a very old incident about our desert area. About 250 years back, the then ruler of Jodhpur ordered timber for the construction of his palace. To meet the demand for timber, the employees of the ruler went to a village in Jodhpur district and started felling a 'Khejri' tree. A woman who was churning milk near-by, heard the notice of noise of sawing of tree . . . . .

[English]

**MR. CHAIRMAN** : One minute, Mr. Jain. We have to conclude the discussion on this by 3.50 p.m. I think some more members want to speak on this Bill. If the House agrees, we can extend the time on this Bill. By how much time shall we extend it ?

[Translation]

**SHRI VIRDHI CHANDER JAIN** : It must be extended by one hour. It is a very important issue.

[English]

**MR. CHAIRMAN** : All right One hour extension is given.

[Translation]

**SHRI VIRDHI CHANDER JAIN** : The woman whose name was Amrita stood up and saw that the servants of the King of Jodhpur were felling a 'Khejri' tree. She at once said that felling of trees was a crime there and that they would not allow the felling of trees. That woman hung to the 'Khejri' tree and lost her life. Alongwith her 3 girls also lost their lives. In all, 363 farmers lost their lives. The green trees were felled over their dead bodies.

Therefore, the problems of famine and flood will keep recurring unless we conserve forests. Therefore the foremost thing for the Environment and Forests Development Department is to take interest in the ecology and to accomplish this task.

Generally, we see that inter-state disputes crop up. The Narmada dispute concerns Rajasthan and especially the desert area of Rajasthan will receive water from it. The Tribunal took 15 years to settle this dispute. The various inter-state disputes are referred to the Tribunal and it takes 10-15 years to settle them. The Chief Ministers of the concerned States hold talks. For example, the Chief Minister of Karnataka holds discussions with his counterpart in Maharashtra and these discussions continue for a long time, but the dispute are not settled. Due to the non-settlement of disputes, we can neither control the floods, nor implement our hydel power projects. Hence, in the Bill which he has introduced.

[English]

Under 56 of the list, the union of the 7th Schedule.

[Translation]

It has been suggested that in case of such disputes, the Central Authority should get the required powers to settle all such disputes. At present, these disputes drag

[Shri Virdhi Chander Jain]

on for years. due to which development cannot take place and projects cannot be implemented. But, in case the Centre gets the authority to settle the river disputes, then the developmental work can take place smoothly. The Central Authority should get the requisite powers, so that it could settle the disputes and solve the problem.

In the Sixth Five Year Plan, we have spent Rs. 1200 crores to provide relief to the people of the flood affected areas, whereas we have spent only Rs. 780 crores for implementing the flood control schemes. The case is similar in regard to the famine conditions as well. Whenever there is a famine, large amounts are spent on relief work, but not much is spent on projects which could control such situations. It is due to this reason, that the construction work of the Indira Gandhi Canal Project has not been completed even today. The construction work of this Canal began wayback in 1968, but has not been completed till today. Had this work been completed, our desert areas would have bloomed. I have to say it with regret that you have not made enough efforts for the control of famines.

I agree with Prof. Ranga's suggestions regarding creation of an Authority. He has said that in order to implement the flood control schemes, a re-construction tax has to be imposed on the concerned states. This would enable us to collect enough funds which could be utilised for such constructive work.

There is a river called Luni in our desert area. When this river was flooded, we had to suffer heavy damage. Many cattle heads perished and human lives were lost. But you will be surprised to know that it proved to be a blessing in disguise also because we raised a bumper crop and the water level of our wells also increased.

The second crop, after the floods have receded, is always good. But the same is not true of the crops in the famine-hit areas. Only one kharif crop can be raised under such conditions. Moreover, the Central Government aid for relief purposes is

sanctioned under advance plan or is given in the form of loans, whereas in the case of floods, 75 per cent of the aid is given under non-plan expenditure. I want to imply that the Governmental assistance for relief purposes in famine affected areas is inadequate. Hence, the quantum of assistance given for the flood hit areas should be equal to the assistance given to the famine-hit deserts areas relief,

With these words I support the Bill introduced by hon. Shri Verma.

[English]

DR. G. VIJAYA RAMA RAO (Siddipet) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I congratulate Dr. Verma for having come with this Bill. Members from both sides for the last two weeks have expressed themselves in favour of this Bill. In spite of the unanimous support from the House the Minister may not accept this Bill and may ultimately reject this Bill.

Sir, even if he rejects this Bill I would request him to come forward with a concrete Bill in future for controlling floods in our country. In every Session we are discussing either about drought or floods but ultimately the steps that we take are only temporary relief measures.

16.00 hrs.

The Government never thought of any permanent arrangement to face the floods in the country. Sir, the floods are mainly confined to some particular areas near the major river beds. Every year, you see the floods either in Bihar or U.P. or Andhra or Gujarat. Recently, in Andhra we had a major flood. I don't think you might have seen that type of calamity in the country during the last five or six years. During the floods in Andhra, there was a loss to the extent of nearly Rs. 1,700 crores for the people of Andhra Pradesh. These people were crying for the Central aid and in spite of such a big loss, we could get only Rs. 132 crores as aid from the Centre. It is not the case with Andhra Pradesh only. But wherever floods occur, the assistance given by the Centre was not at all sufficient to compensate for the loss.



In order to prevent the floods, we must give a serious thought to this problem and find out a permanent solution to prevent this sort of floods in our country. What I feel is whether it is Andhra or U.P. or wherever there are major rivers in our country, we must take measures to control the flow of water during the rainy season by constructing recurrent dams at short intervals on that particular river. Even our former Irrigation Minister, Shri K.L. Rao, had also advocated the diversion of rivers like Ganga from north to south so that we could find a permanent solution for the floods; not only floods but also to face the drought situation in the country. Not only Ganga, if you divert the major rivers from one place to another, you can irrigate the drought prone areas. You can get more crops; you can remove poverty you can improve the economy of our country. I, therefore, request the Minister to draw up a plan to divert the rivers permanently to get major dams on recurrent basis to save the water for the purpose of irrigation so that our water will not be wasted. This will bring about an improvement in our economy.

With these few words, I conclude.

[Translation]

**SHRI DHARAM PAL SINGH MALIK** (Sonepat) : Mr. Chairman Sir, I support the Flood Control Authority of India Bill, 1986. At the same time, I would like to say that there has been a lot of discussion regarding floods and drought in this House. I think, this subject is discussed in every session. I am grateful to Dr. C.S. Verma for introducing it in the form of a Bill instead of a debate. This topic attracts a large number of speakers in every session, who deliver long speeches. However, speeches can only form the contents of a book, but cannot save anybody's life. The hon. Minister should pay attention to this point. Just now, while sitting in the Central Hall, I mentioned that this point ought to be raised in the House, and some of my colleagues replied that it would be of no use. These issues are not given much importance. I want that such bills regardless of whether they are Private Member's Bills or Government Bills, must receive full attention.

Besides, I would like to submit that although Flood Control Boards have been set up in all the States, yet there are certain disputes which cannot be settled by these Boards, and it is due to this reason that the present Bill has been introduced. For example, at many places the cause of floods is inter-state rivers; one State releases the water into another state which leads to floods. In this connection, I would suggest that an Authority or a Board should be set up at the national level, which should conduct a survey of the entire country in order to find out as to which areas are flooded every year, for it is essential to control such situations. If incidentally an area is flooded by a river which emanates from another state, we cannot take precautions beforehand. But wherever floods are an annual feature, there should be a survey at the national level and maximum funds should be allocated for this purpose.

At the same time, I would also like to say that the Chairmen of the State Flood Control Boards should be the Ex-officio members of the Board which is to be constituted at the national level. Besides, the experts of the State Flood Control Boards should also be associated with the national level Board, because they could give the details of those areas which are prone to floods.

One of the major reasons underlying the occurrence of floods is defective drainage system. This fact can be verified by conducting a survey in any State. Several defective drains have been constructed. Defective drains are constructed on the recommendations of certain influential people. What is the use of such drains if instead of flowing out, the water flows in. It simply implies that the drainage system is defective. In this manner, considerable amount of State Government funds are misused. You might have seen that during the time of floods, funds are sanctioned for earth-works, but actually nothing is done, and it is shown on paper that so much of earth work had been done which had been washed away by the floods. I think there is maximum corruption in this department. The extent of corruption in this Department can be gauged if you ordered checking of

[Shri Dharam Pal Singh Malik]

the property owned by the Executive Engineers, Suprintending Engineers and others. There are hundreds of daily wage workers in the Drainage Department, but they work as domestic servants in the homes of the officials. If 100 such workers are actually employed, it is shown in the register that 500 workers are on the rolls.

Therefore, I would like to say that it is true that we are helpless against the natural flooding of rivers, but the man-made floods, which occur due to the inefficiency or the negligence of the officials, bring a bad name to our Government and we are unable to answer the queries of our people. Hence, I want that a proper check should be maintained to see that the funds sanctioned for this purpose are actually spent or not and strictness should be exercised in this matter. If possible, district-wise committees comprising the representatives of the people—district MLAs with a Member of Parliament as Chairman, should be constituted, which should check whether the funds have been properly utilised or not. Usually, these funds are diverted to areas where there is no need for drainage system. The officials in league with some farmers go out of their way to harm or to benefit someone. Therefore, I would say that it is absolutely essential to include the representatives of the people in the Flood Control Board, as otherwise the system would not improve. The local people are able to point out correctly in which direction the drains should flow and from where it should start, but the officials are not able to do it correctly because they make amendments in the original plan to serve some vested interests. I would also suggest that such a Board at the national level should be constituted not for the purpose of floods alone, but to control all kinds of natural calamities, including droughts and hailstorms and also for providing relief to those affected by such calamities. I agree that this subject falls under the State List. But when, there are huge losses of life and property every year, this subject should be brought under the Concurrent List, so that the funds granted by the Centre for this purpose are utilised properly.

With these words I support this Bill and conclude.

DR. G.S. RAJHANS (Jhanjharpur):  
Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Bill which has been introduced in the House by my colleague, Shri Verma, is praiseworthy. I come from an area which is affected by floods for nearly 8 months in a year. The hon. Members might recall that I have repeatedly drawn the attention of the House to the plight of that area viz, North Bihar. It is also called Mithila and it is badly affected by floods every year. I think, there is no other area in the country which is so badly affected by the floods.

A number of rivers originate from the Himalayas and in the absence of any obstruction down the hill, they directly flow into Mithila. The flow of these rivers is so powerful that they ruin lakhs of people on their way, whether it is Kosi, Kamla, Bhutahibalan, Adwara or Bagmati. The names of these rivers except Chutahibalan, sound good. All these rivers are like dragons that devour anything that comes in their way. They cut through the alluvial soil and the fertile land first as a knife cuts the cake. An important point that needs to be mentioned here is that these rivers do not have a definite course, they keep on changing their courses. Even repeated requests in this regard could not solve this problem. With the efforts of late Shri L.N. Mishra, a dam was constructed across Kosi river but the work is still incomplete. The proposed Western Kosi Canal is not yet complete and silting in the river is causing a problem. Thousands of people were ruined last year due to the breach in the Kosi dam. Shri Rajiv Gandhi had to rush there. He was not the Prime Minister but the General Secretary of the Congress Party at that time. A number of people were ruined at that time. This is not only true of the Kosi river alone but also of rivers like Kamla. When the latter is flooded, you would not believe, it looks more or less like a sea. It happens almost every year. The river Bhutahibalan originates from Himalayas in Nepal and flows down to the plains without any obstacle on its way. When it is in spate, it ruins lakhs of people within an hour. I mean to say that this destruction is a recurring feature and if we calculate, the amount of relief that has already been spent on it since independence it might run into crores of rupees. But that is a different story. I will

tell you later what happens to that relief fund. Some steps are being taken in this direction and the hon. Minister is also trying to monitor the funds. All these rivers originate from Nepal. "I would suggest that in consultation with the Government of Nepal, a reservoir or a dam should be constructed in order to tame these rivers. If these rivers are tamed, it will not only change the economy of Nepal, but will also meet the power requirement of Northern India particularly, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh as also Orissa and West Bengal and will facilitate speedy industrialisation of the area. Today our natural resources are causing destruction, but if we harness them properly we can make our land a heaven. The question is not of negotiating with the Government of Nepal but of negotiating with those foreign agencies who can help us in the construction of these reservoirs and in taming these rivers.

As soon as the month of March ends, the people of Bihar begin to shudder lest there should be heavy rains in the coming months. The rainy season sets in as soon as the month of May begins and by June it starts raining so heavily that there is no let up it. The people cannot move out of their houses. The pregnant women cannot move out of their houses in order to reach the hospital for delivery. Similar is the plight of the old and the infirm. There is so much of water around that it is very difficult to wade through and, moreover, there are no other means of communication. There is so much of destruction in North Bihar, that it seems that it is not a part of the country. We repeatedly raise this issue in the House that something should be done in this regard. Actually, the engineers and the bureaucrats have their vested interests in such floods. They wish floods to strike every year. The relief funds are misappropriated by the engineers and bureaucrats and as a result, the general public suffers. Even the affluent people of that area have been forced by the floods to migrate to Delhi and Punjab and eke out a living there. There are people who own 100 acres of land there, but even they have migrated to Delhi and are working here. They are badly affected by the destruction caused by these rivers, which emanate from Nepal. These rivers bring death and destruction.

Therefore, the Bill introduced by Shri Verma is welcome. If the proposed Flood Control Authority is set up, it will not only look into all these problems, but will also find out ways and means to prevent floods. It will be a great achievement. The floods ruin lakhs of people, besides destroying the fertility of the soil. The entire area between Kosi and Farakka bears testimony to it. Kosi falls into the Ganges and from there right upto Kala Gola or even upto Farakka the river bed of the Ganges is getting silted. On the one hand Kosi, Kamla and Balan are causing havoc and on the other side the Ganges is ruining Bihar and Bengal.

Besides, we are in desperate need of water particularly for irrigation purposes. The need of the hour is proper planning. We can utilise every single drop of water if we plan properly.

Today, we have cordial relations with the Government of Nepal. If these rivers are not tamed and dams are not constructed across them in Nepal, then that particular area of North Bihar which is called paradise would turn into a hell. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, Sir, I request you, that it is high time to mete out justice to the starving people of North Bihar because there are no industries and the people are solely dependent on agriculture and that too is destroyed by the rivers.

With these words, I support this Bill and urge the Government to bring a comprehensive legislation on its own incorporating the main provisions of this Bill therein.

*(English)*

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN (Kishanganj): Mr. Chairman, Sir: I rise to support the Bill moved by Dr. Chandra Shekhar Verma.

Many hon. Members have pointed out that floods are a recurring phenomenon and an endemic situation which occurs with a regularity. To me, however, it is not that man regards water as a hostile force. Man was born in water. We know of situations where water is the gift of God; and yet abundance of something can be a difficult thing to manage.

[Shri Syed Shahabuddin]

We are faced with this situation of flood control in many parts of our country, which requires a total approach. We must plan the management of our water resources as such. And, therefore, when we speak of flood control, we are not speaking merely of a system for monitoring rainfall in the catchment area, or the rise in the level of waters or of forecasting the onset of the flood season or even of establishing a disaster pilot system. We are certainly not speaking of the *ad hoc* relief that is provided to those who are the victims of this flood. We are not just talking about our dam-building capacity, or the installation of a dredging system.

We must really think in terms of how to command, control and put to use the entire water resources of our country, for fruitful purposes. I have no figures with me, but I imagine that a very high proportion of our water still flows into the ocean, into the sea, without being of much benefit to the country. So, on the one hand we allow our waters to go away into the ocean, and on the other we allow our waters to devastate our land. This is an anomalous situation, which can be corrected only by what I call a total planning system, and a system in which there is an efficient management of our water resources.

I would like to point out that apart from identifying the flood-prone areas geographically and geologically, the country must be scientifically classified into basins of various river systems. I am not talking of the minor rivers—there are any number of them in our country—but about the major river systems in our country which need to be planned as an integrated unit, as a basin or sub-basin.

I know a lot of work has been done, because as far as research and development part is concerned, India is not behind any other country in the world in the field of technology of flood control, or of water management. It is really a question of husbanding our resources and going about them with a political will. I find that we do spend a lot of money. We have not made much progress. However, somebody mentioned here the figure that only 13 million hectares have been brought under flood

control over the last 40 years; and that is not only a small segment but we also know that the flood control is only partial because areas which are said to have been brought under flood control still suffer from recurrent phenomenon because sometimes there is adhocism in our approach; sometimes there is regionalism in our approach; sometimes there is regionalism in our approach and also the river systems do not respect State frontiers; the river systems do not even respect international frontiers. Therefore, there has to be a plan cutting across the State boundary within the country and cutting across international boundary with our neighbours. Therefore, I suggest that this is a matter which can only be handled properly and efficiently by the Union Government. As it is, Union Government does do all the research, does make all the plan, does provide the fund for meeting urgent and emergency situation and yet whenever we have something to report here the hon. Minister says that he has given money; he has no control over this thing. This is the recurring reply that he gives us in the House. He is a Minister of Water Resources and water resources are a national asset, a national problem and a national challenge. Therefore, I support the basic idea of this Bill that the flood control authority must be a national authority; it must be statutorily established, if necessary, by bringing about an amendment in the Constitution, by bringing flood control under the Concurrent List where we can make a clear cut division just as in the case of irrigation we have major irrigation programmes directly handled and planned and funded by the Central Government and minor irrigation is left to the State Governments. Similarly, here, all the major river systems in the country must be directly handled by the Central Government, by the Union Government, and it is with this end in view that I have supported this Bill.

We have a Kosi system in which something has been done. Our hon. friend just now complained that even a Kosi system is still prone to recurring floods and enormous devastation. On the other side, we have the Teesta system which is also under implementation. We have the Mahanadi system and nobody knows anything about the Mahanadi system; not even the slightest work has been done in that area.



Except certain embankments from year to year ; there is no total planning at all. If you look at the geographical picture of north-east India between Kosi system and the Teesta system, you have to consider it as a sub-basin in a scientific sense. This Mahanadi system, as far as its planning is concerned, I also plead particularly for the Mahanadi system because I happen to represent that unfortunate part of our country.

**SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI** (Deogarh) : I thank you for giving me an opportunity to a peak in this debate on flood control Bill brought forward by our good friend Dr. Verma. Since he has brought this Bill, that has provided this House an opportunity to discuss such an important matter.

How to control the menace of floods which is a national calamity is not the subject matter of the discussion today only here, it has been discussed in different forums, in the State Assemblies, in Parliament during the different sessions in as much as Congress prior to independence had applied its mind to this aspect. The Planning Committee that was set up by the Congress under the Chairmanship of our old lamented first Prime Minister, Panit Nehru, who was the architect of modern India, he had also hinted about it. Our rivers cause havoc when there are heavy rains in different regions. These rivers are required to be dammed, and they are required to be tamed. There is no other alternative. Because of such planning because of such advance planning prior to independence immediately after independence, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's Government, first Government, took up three major river valley projects. Hirakud on the river Mahanadi, Bhakra Nangal and Damodar Valley Project. They are the pioneers in this field. And a lot also has been done. Money—large amounts of money has been spent on this. But this has not been sufficient to control this menace. India being a vast country—it cannot be called a country, we can call it a sub-continent or even a mini world— the geographical position and the climatic condition is such that when there is dearth of drinking water in the summer in some areas, in some other parts there are floods.

In some parts in the Himalayan range or in the Eastern parts, and Assam region there are floods at that time. This is our plight in India.

As the Revenue Minister of a State I have seen the plight of the flood affected areas. I have myself talked to the parents. While they were discussing the problems, they narrated how before their very eyes, flash floods came and took away their son in floods. What sort of description can be given? It is simply beyond description. When we see their plight only tears roll down our eyes. There is no solution, in sight except construction of dam, embankments etc. Nobody seems to know how to control it.

The hon. Minister is certainly aware of it. The Hon'ble Member and the State Governments also know it. This is a stupendous problem, of water management. Because of want of rains somewhere there are drought conditions and the crops are withering away and in some places because of heavy downpour the crops are damaged. We know that in one instance, three years back, in 1983 or so, within 24 hours there was a heavy downpour of 625 mm that is 25 inches of rainfall was recorded during one single day, in twenty-four hours. That sort of rain caused havoc. In some areas these floods are most unpredictable. Earlier we could know that these are the areas which are flood-prone areas and these are the areas which are drought-prone areas. Because of denudation of forests, these days even in dry areas and in the hilly tracts suddenly there heavy rain resulting in flash floods.

Earlier there were areas where there was no necessity for drains. Now they have become absolutely necessary in those areas because of unexpected rains and it thus adds to the problems. This has become a menace. Because of the population growth—abnormal population growth—the river and nala beds are being encroached upon and causing floods. At some other places the cause of the rivers are changed, and that contributes to floods.

[Shri Sriballev Panigrahi]

What is necessary? What is required now? I agree and I endorse the view points expressed and the suggestions given by several honourable friends. It is not something to be disputed. This is an uncontroversial matter. But, what is necessary? Comprehensive planning and integrated planning are necessary. We are concerned about this problem.

Somebody mentioned about the political will. Yes, political will is there in abundance on the part of the Government. But the Government requires the support from all political parties. The time has come for collecting thinking in this regard and cooperate with the Government whole heartedly.

Last week there was a Conference of the Irrigation Ministers. They were discussing some problems. I do not know exactly what transpired in that conference but naturally it is time that water be declared a national property, a national asset. Flood control is not a subject which can be effectively dealt with by the States. So, naturally, it has got to be brought over to the Union List as has been done in federal countries like America, Canada and Australia. The States also should not have any objection. Not only it should be placed in the Union List, not only we demand construction of dams on all the rivers and also the construction of embankments and so many other things, but at the same time, how funds can be created, how resources can be mopped up for this lofty and laudable scheme, that has also to be thought of. Yesterday, while I was going through the debate, I found that Professor Ranga has made a very good suggestion that some sort of a fund should be created, some sort of a levy or some sort of a tax be imposed for this purpose. All the Opposition Members, regardless of their party affiliations, should agree to such a provision. We know that we are in dearth of money. In our programme, we have so many different schemes. Everything is noble but it is a question of priority. Everybody wants that floods should be controlled, rivers should be tamed and dammed. Naturally, by doing so, the floods will be controlled and it will provide irrigation for

our agriculture. Without irrigation, can you talk of advancement in the field of agriculture? We cannot just conceive of progress, prosperity of farmers as a class, or advancement in the field of agriculture without proper irrigation. Till today how far have we gone in the field of irrigation? Hardly 32 per cent. or 33 per cent of the entire crop area. Even that is also doubtful. These are the figures on papers but in the fields the position is something different. So, naturally, water should be declared a national property, a national asset, and should be brought under the Union List. There should be a consensus among the political parties and of the States also. Sitting together they should apply their mind jointly as to how a comprehensive plan could be drawn up and implemented and how the requisite finances could be mopped up. We have to raise something. We have to contribute something. That has to be supplemented by the Government of India by the World Bank and by different financial institutions.

I was referring to the Hirakud Dam which is now about thirty years old. But till today it is yet to be fully completed. It has not been fully completed. On the contrary, it is unfortunate that it has developed cracks. I would request the hon. Minister Shri Shankaranand Ji to kindly visit that Dam. That has created a panic in that area. A plan estimate is pending in his Ministry involving about Rs. 700 lakhs to Rs. 800 lakhs. Some global tender is involved in this matter. It has to be attended to on priority basis. This is one of our first modern temples in terms of development. Pandit Ji was calling it a temple, a modern temple, and that temple has developed cracks, threatening the security of the entire State.

Silting of the reservoir is another problem. Why this problem is coming up? It is because the afforestation programme which is a part of the original plan, is not materialising. So, wherever there is a dam, it should be looked into so that silting up is avoided, so that the dam lives its full term, it does not die an untimely death which involves lot of risk.

Brahmani river is the second river in Orissa to be demand and to be tamed. Since there are no funds, the second phase of the project is not progressing at all. The relief portion is a very temporary measure. When floods come, you give some relief. But that is only a taken thing. Can you compensate the loss that they are suffering, those people, the afflicted persons. Human lives and property worth crores of rupees are lost.

In one year only crop worth Rs. 2000 crores has been washed away. That we cannot calculate in terms of money. It is beyond description and beyond calculation also. Naturally it is a question involving human consideration economic consideration and it has to be above politics. With this I support this Bill. This is a very good Bill. It has a very laudable objective and I would request the Government to apply their mind and come out with a comprehensive Bill taking the entire scenario of the country in mind.

**KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE :** We have got information just now that five people have been murdered by the terrorists in Bangla Sahib in Delhi.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS :** Fifteen.

**KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE :** Fifteen or five ? I understand five people have been murdered in Bangla Sahib. The House must condemn this thing. We want a statement by the Home Minister.

**MR. CHAIRMAN :** We will find out from the Minister.

**KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE:** You ask the Minister.

**MR. CHAIRMAN :** We will try to get the information.

**SHRI SRIHARI RAO :** We want to have a statement from the Minister. Let him come and make a statement.

**MR. CHAIRMAN :** We do not have any confirmation.

**Shri Ram Bhagat Paswan.**

[Translation]

**SHRI RAM BHAGAT PASWAN (Rosera) :** Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to support the Bill introduced by Dr. C.S. Verma regarding setting up of a Flood Control Authority. The problem of floods and drought has become a permanent bane for the country, specially for North Bihar. As a result of this, every year, standing crops on thousands of acres are destroyed ; thousands of lives are lost and thousands of cattle heads also perish. During the natural calamities, the grant provided by the Government gives only temporary relief to the people and it does not provide a permanent solution to their problems. It is a matter of shame for us and we should try to find a permanent solution to it, so that the human lives, Cattle and crops could be saved from perishing. The Central Government has sanctioned Rs. 2000 crores for flood control and Rs. 1000 crores for drought control since Independence but you may appoint a commission to enquire whether the schemes that were launched to prevent such calamities, did function satisfactorily. In fact, these schemes added to the miseries of the people instead of redressing them. For instance, when we did not have projects like Western Kosi Canal, Kamla Dam, Gandak project and Sone Canal project, the loss to life and property was far less as compared to the loss that occurred after these projects were launched. Mr. Chairman, Sir, the area which I represent includes Vishail, Ghanshyampur Hasanpur and Kuseshwar etc. of North Bihar which is particularly flood prone. Previously, standing crops on only one thousand acres of land used to perish as a result of floods, but after these schemes were launched, standing crops in ten thousand acres of land are destroyed. Similarly, whereas only 800 persons used to die in floods earlier, as many as 5000 persons die now. Previously, whereas 700 houses of the poor were washed away, nearly 10000 houses are destroyed now. The Government should go a step further and find out how much work is done by the Flood Control Authority to redress the grievances of the people. The relief granted from the Centre is not used to redress the miseries of the people but is misappropriated by the officials. The floods bring miseries for the people but are blessing for the officials. This indeed is a matter of great sorrow for us that goes

[Shri Ram Bhagat Paswan]

officers take, advantage of the miseries of the people. It certainly needs to be looked into.

Mr Chairman, Sir, Kamla-Balan Project is pending for a long time. Actually, Kamla and Balan are two separate rivers which on their way join other rivers originating from the Himalayas. In order to check floods, you were to construct these dams parallel to the Kosi river, but you have abandoned them midway. Do your engineers not know this thing? If you ask a layman there, he will also say that it should be constructed further on. You should construct it upto are river from that side and from this side upto Kamla-Balan, close to the Ganges and after joining these two, a canal may be constructed by providing sluice gates in between. This canal can provide the required amount of water to the farmers in order to fight the drought and the excess water will go into the Ganges. This will provide a permanent solution to the problem. This fact is well known to the Engineers but if it materialises, they will lose extra source of their income. Being the representative of that area, I would request the hon. Minister to look into it so that further work on Kamla-Balan Dam could be started.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, every year floods cause damage worth Rs 200 crores and you provide Rs. 50 crores for flood relief. The Kamla-Balan Dam project and other minor schemes will cost only Rs. 148 crores. If you honestly invest this much amount, you will be able to control the floods. If you do not do it and go on wasting Rs. 250 crores every year on flood control without any positive result, then how are you going to do justice to the people and fulfil their aspirations? How can we prevent the damage caused to the economy due to floods and save the lives and property which are lost? Therefore, I request you to consider my suggestion in this regard.

Mr. Coairman, Sir, even a layman is concerned about the poverty, backwardness, soil fertility and natural calamities in North Bihar. Then why cannot the officials comprehend it? How can we find a permanent solution to it? As I have told you, the dam is already breached. What will happen at

the time of floods is that all officials will be reaching there from Delhi and other place by helicopter. But I ask you to make an enquiry just now, because the dam is already breached and the water has dried up. The Begampur Dam was breached during September-October last year. Later on, it was revealed that the breach was caused by the officials, so that they could get another allocation of funds. The Army personnel were ready to repair it for Rs. 4 lakhs. Why then this contract was given to a contractor for Rs 60 to 70 lakhs? When the Army personnel were ready to do it, what was the need to spend 60-70 lakh rupees? This is simply a betrayal of the trust of the people.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I want to tell the hon. Minister that he is a dedicated person and we are proud of him. Therefore, I would request him to look at the poverty and backwardness in that region. The money sanctioned for the flood control is not being properly spent. Actually, it does not need to spend this much amount there. The real question is that of honesty and redressal of the sufferings of the people.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I want to tell the hon. Minister, through you, that the relief funds granted by the Centre are not reaching the needy people. Therefore I would like to say that the Central Government should discontinue this practice. This relief fund is being pocketed by the officials and it is not going to benefit the people in any way. Therefore, we want that priority should be given to finding a permanent solution to it rather than granting relief fund.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, there are three types of sufferings. The first type is suffering on account of hunger—the crops are destroyed and the people die of starvation. The second is suffering on account of losing a house—the houses are destroyed by the flood; and finally the epidemic that follows. You have to solve all these problems.

[English]

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : Sir, I would like to bring to your notice.....



**MR. CHAIRMAN :** It was brought to my notice. (*Interruptions*)

**SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY :** Sir, three policemen are reported to have been killed.

**MR. CHAIRMAN :** That has been brought to my notice and I have sent it to the Home Minister to collect detailed information, and after the details come, I place them before the House.

[*Translation*]

**SHRI RAM BHAGAT PASWAN :** Mr. Minister, I would submit that if the funds granted by you are spent in a planned way to complete these dams, it will not only benefit the people but will also help in controlling the floods. Therefore, I request you to find out a permanent solution to the miseries of the people.

You may ask any engineer about the force of the current and depth of the flood water, but he will tell you nothing. Actually, they do not visit the site ; they simply make assessment while sitting in Delhi or Patna. On an average of 5 to 10 persons are drowned daily. Let at least one engineer meet this fate ; otherwise, they will not be able to understand our miseries.

This is a big problem, with country-wide dimensions. It has broken the backbone of the people. Therefore, I would request that a special arrangement be made for the Kamia-Balan Dam so that a permanent solution to this problem could be found.

**SHRI RAMASHRAY PRASAD SINGH (Jahanabad) :** Mr. Chairman, Sir, I thank the hon. Member, through you, for bringing forward this Bill in the House. The floods have been discussed a number of times. Even then I would say that floods are a curse for our country. The loss caused by floods is the loss to National assets. If the total funds granted for flood relief are worked out, the figure will be many times more than the funds spent on flood control, and that too go waste. The funds spent on relief works are pocketed by the officials.

I also come from an area which is prone to floods. The area to the South of the Ganges has a number of rivers like punpun, Dardha, Phalgu, Baldaiya, Murhar. These rivers are flooded every year as a result of which not only the crops are ruined but the top soil is also washed away, thereby turning the land into a desert. I think thousands of hectares of land have been rendered desert due to floods this year and a layer of 3 to 4 feet of sand has been deposited over it. The fields are not fit for cultivation. The farmer used to grow paddy and wheat on this land but now it gives a barren look. The farmers do not have land to cultivate. Many of them are marginal and small farmers who have not been left with land worth cultivating.

I would suggest that the Government should formulate a scheme for those farmers who have been rendered landless and extremely poor, to restore the fertility of soil by removing the sand that has been deposited in the fields.

I have one more suggestion to give to check floods. Previously also, when zamindars dominated the agricultural scene there used to be floods. They also used to control floods. However, the damage caused by floods now-a-days is far more than caused in the past. The reason being that all the distributaries of the rivers have been silted making the river-beds shallow. The level of water has gone up and even a small amount of excess water causes flood. The distributaries alongside the rivers should be desilted. If it is done, it can check floods.

I would like to tell the hon. Minister that most of the suggestions given by the hon. Members are useful. When Zamindars were there, they also used to take measures to check floods. The distributaries along the rivers used to be desilted every year and there used to be several outlets instead of one. But now those distributaries are full of sand and that is why water level rises very high during floods. Therefore, you should get the flood control schemes formulated by your officials approved, in order to control floods. If these schemes are approved, we can not only save our districts

[Shri Ramashray Prasad Singh]

from floods, but also make a permanent arrangement for irrigation. Besides, you can also save crores of rupees which are otherwise spent on relief works.

The Punpun-Dardha project is pending with the C.W.C. The estimated cost of this project is Rs. 22 crores. I fail to understand that when you can spend Rs. 200-300 crores by way of relief, why can you not spend just Rs. 22 crores for this project? If you can get this project approved, I think, it will save Jahanabad, Patna, Gaya and Aurangabad districts from the fury of the floods. Every year you spend crores of rupees on relief works, but if you spend the same amount on this project, we can control floods forever in these districts. The approval of this project will be a right step on year part.

Just now I met the Irrigation Minister of Bihar in the Central Hall. I spoke to him about the Punpun-Dardha project. He told me that he would include that project in the agenda of the meeting that is to be held on 8th and 9th of this month and would try his level best to get it approved. I would like to inform you that the foundation stone of this Punpun-Dardha Project was laid in 1984 by Shri Ramashray Prasad Singh and a lot of money was spent on it. But I am sorry to say this project has not even been got approved so far. Why are betraying the was farmers?

There is large-scale soil erosion in many villages of Bihar. This will certainly create a big problem in the near future. The Harijans, living on the banks of the river in Bera village of Masaurhi block in Patna district are also endangered by it. You are also constructing a colony for their rehabilitation but a better colony is already there. I want to know what steps Government propose to take to save the people whose land is endangered due to soil erosion. Similarly, the Harijans living on the banks of the river in Sugaon village of Makdumpur block in Jahanabad are endangered by soil erosion. I have written to the Bihar Government and to the Centre in this regard but to no avail. If you spend even a small amount of money for this purpose, these villages can be saved.

A proposal, regarding the construction of embankment on Punpun river was submitted to the Government. It is pending for the last ten years. You should get it approved as well. I have been requesting the Government to approve these schemes ever since I was elected to this House, but it has turned a deaf ear to our entreaties.

With these words, I conclude.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : The extended time is already over. Still there are a number of Members who like to speak.

PROF. N. G. RANGA : Let it continue.

MR. CHAIRMAN : We will extend it for another one hour. We will extend the time for the discussion of this Bill. Some more Members want to speak.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY : Shri Sudhir Roy has to move his Bill.

17.00 hrs.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY (Katwa) : The time need not be extended by one hour. It may be extended by half-an hour.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shall we extend the time by one hour or half-an-hour.

SOME HON. MEMBERS : It may be extended by one hour.

MR. CHAIRMAN : All right. The time for this Bill is extended by one hour.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Half-an-Hour discussion will be taken up.

[*Translation*]

**SHRI MOOL CHAND DAGA (Pali) :**  
Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to remind the hon. Member who has introduced this Bill that in fact there was no need for this Bill, because all the objectives of this Bill have already been met.

[*English*]

In 1976, National Flood Commission was set up.

[*Translation*]

All these objectives were set out in the terms of reference of the said commission and it submitted its report in 1980. So, at the outset, I would like to ask the hon. Minister about the fate of that report? The National Flood Control Commission submitted its report in 1980. Was any action initiated on it after 1980? It deals with all those objectives which the present Bill intends to fulfil.

[*English*]

“to identify the areas which are prone to floods; to suggest measures for flood control; to make a time-bound plan for joining the rivers which are prone to floods with the ones which are not so; and to suggest measures for development of land in areas which are prone to floods.....”

[*Translation*]

The commission submitted a comprehensive report. I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to what happened to that report? How much money was spent in bringing out such a voluminous report?

[*English*]

The flood control work was started in 1954 in our country.

[*Translation*]

The flood control was started in 1954, and since then crores of rupees have been spent on it. The Government should not hide the figures and should categorically state the entire amount that has been spent so far on flood control in the country. I dare say, crores of rupees have been spent on it. I fail to understand why the Government cannot think of the points raised by the hon. Members. The Central Flood Control Board was set up.

[*English*]

State Flood Control Boards were set up ;  
A Central Flood Control Board was set up ;  
A Commission was set up.

[**SHRI SHARAD DIGHE** *in the Chair*][*Translation*]

So many organisations have been set up and the hon. Minister might be having all the reports and the requisite material but not the necessary resources.

The hon. Member, who has introduced this Bill, has demanded Rs. 100 crores. What do you think, will this amount suffice? Rs. 700 crores were sanctioned in the Sixth Five Year Plan for this purpose. What is the intention behind this Bill? All the spade work has already been done and the details are with the Government. The Bill clarifies that :—

[*English*]

It will be an autonomous body.

[*Translation*]

Then what will our hon. Minister do? Will he wind up this Department? Will this autonomous body replace it? If the hon. Minister is left with no work, what is the need of keeping him? Then, you go ahead with setting up of the proposed Flood Control Authority. What a strange set up? The Bill provides that there would be a Chairman

[Shri Mool Chand Daga

of the Authority. Will he be an old man of 65 years? What will be his age? Will he be an expert and if so, what would be the terms and conditions of his employment? Have these things been left to be decided by a subordinate authority? The Bill provides for a Board consisting of members from every State and Union Territory. How many members will there be in the Board?

[English]

Too many cooks spoil the broth.

[Translation]

To my mind, you will have to make a big round table for that Board. After all what was the need for bringing this Bill? Do you know what all the Government has done in the past in this regard? Then the Bill States :—

[English]

“The cost of taking up the flood control measures suggested by the Authority shall be borne by the Central Government.”

[Translation]

The Central Government will not be able to come to the rescue of small villages that may be hit by floods. Will you handover all the powers to the Central Government? Suppose, a protection wall has to be constructed along a river, in a small village, will the Central Government decide these matters? While drafting this Bill, have you ever thought that there are several river water disputes still pending with the Government? For example, Rajasthan was to get its due share from the Narmada river but it has not been settled so far. The Brahmaputra river water dispute is still continuing. A number of meetings have been held with Bangladesh regarding distribution of Ganga waters and Farakka dam. What will be the powers of the Flood Control Authority after setting up the Board? To whom will you give these powers?

[English]

Here you say :

“The Central Government may make rules for carrying out the purposes of the Act. . . . .”

[Translation]

The Central Government will frame the rules. But the programmes, that you have formulated in the Bill, already exist in the records of the Central Government. What do you want after all?

You have said :—

[English]

“ . . . . . the manner in which the Chairman and other members of the Authority shall be nominated”.

[Translation]

Arunachal Pradesh is going to be granted statehood and you would like implement it immediately, as it would enable the State to send a Member on the Board. The same is true of Mizoram and Goa, Rajasthan is a big State areawise and even though it is not frequently hit by floods it can nominate only one Member to the Board like other States.

Government is spending a lot on flood control every year but despite this Shri Verma has brought this Bill and has demanded Rs. 100 crores, Mr. Minister Sir, to my mind, he has done a favour to you by bringing this Bill as it would lessen your work. But have you even thought will Rs. 100 crores suffice? It includes miscellaneous expense like T.A., D.A. lodging and board expenses of staff and other things. You have brought a Bill, which runs into 15 lines only and have asked to set up such a body but what will be its powers?

[English]

It will be an autonomous body. This will be binding on the State. This will be binding on the Central Government.



[Translation]

You neither know the purpose of this Bill, nor the subjects that you want it to cover. Therefore, I sincerely request you to go through the report on this subject presented in 1980, before introducing this Bill. That is a voluminous report and covers all aspects. Therefore, this Bill is not required at all. The setting up of an Authority to know how much funds are needed and for what schemes, is not justified in my view. All the hon. Members have mentioned in their speeches the extent of damage suffered. The House has already discussed flood and famine in this session twice. The discussion on floods and famine has become a regular feature in every session. Mr. Chairman, Sir, therefore, I shall request the hon. Minister to go through all those proceedings. Today, we do not need this Bill. If anything is needed, it is the political will and the will to do some work. Some persons have said that monitoring work should be done as the funds allocated are not utilised properly. But it is no use repeating it time and again. With these words I conclude.

\* SHRI A. J. V. B. MAHASWARA KAO (Amalapuram): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am extremely thankful to you for providing me an opportunity to say a few words about my constituency which was badly affected by the recent floods, while speaking on the flood control Authority of India Bill. Sir, Dr. Chaadra Sekhar Verma has done a good thing by introducing the Bill seeking the establishment of flood control Authority of India. I wholeheartedly welcome this Bill.

Sir, India is the land of many perennial rivers. But the recurring floods on these rivers are proving a bane than a boon. Hence the establishment of a permanent Authority to take care of floods will go a long way in mitigating the suffering of the people. We are spending hundreds of crores every year on relief operation after floods. But by investing half of that amount for controlling the floods, we can avoid heavy losses that the floods bring with them.

\* The Speech was Originally delivered in Telugu.

Hence this Bill is a right step in the right direction and I request the hon. Minister to agree to it.

Sir, there were heavy floods during August last in river Godavari. My constituency which is surrounded by Godavari was the worst victim. I brought it to the notice of the hon. Minister by writing to him. The entire standing crop in 19 mandals were washed away. There was not even a single acre of land which was not affected by the floods. All the farmers without exception were ruined. Sir, I was also a victim and lost everything that I had.

Sir, there are various reasons why the floods occur every year on river Godavari. Many bunds built by Sir Aurthur Cotton a century ago are too old now. There are several breaches on these bunds.

The waves of floods of 1953 were only of 19 feet. But in 1986 it was 23 feet. Moreover many cracks have already appeared on these bunds. These fragile bunds nearing hundred had given way to the rising waters of Godavari and countless number of villages were washed away during the 1986 floods. The hon. Prime Minister was kind enough to visit the flood affected area. The State Government had to spend a huge amount on rescue and relief operations. The State Govt. had requested the Centre for a grant of at least Rs. 1000 crores. But the Central Government sanctioned only Rs. 132 crores and washed off their hands. If the flood control Authority of India is constituted, it can take proper care of the flood affected States. The proposed Authority can immediately jump into action and come to the rescue of victims in their hour of need. Be it the raising the height of floods banks or the desiltation of the river beds which cause the floods, the proposed flood control Authority can handle in a better way. Sir, one of the main reasons for floods on river Godavari is siltation. Lot of sand is accumulated on the river beds obstructing the free flow of water in the river. Even at the point of confluence with the ocean, there is a heavy siltation in Godavari river bed. Since there is no free flow of river water into the ocean, it is resulting in the floods. Hence desiltation is very necessary. It is a

[Shri A.J.V.B. Mahaswara Rao]

gigantic operation and beyond the means of State Govt. The constitution of flood control authority can go a long way in meeting the challenge. Hence I request the Govt. to accept this Bill without standing on any prestige. Sir, Dhavaleshwaram barrage is one of the oldest in the country and was built by Sir Arthur Cotton more than a century ago. During the recent floods it was washed away. There were breaches in the barrage parts of which were washed a furlong away during the recent floods. It also washed away the hope of raising the second crop in the entire area. The Central Government was requested to give assistance to repair the breaches and rebuild the bunds. But unfortunately, no assistance has come from the Centre so far.

Sir, the early execution and completion of Itchampally-Polavaram project is very much necessary for averting floods on river Godavari. I take this opportunity once again to request the Central Govt. to accord sanction and executive Itchampally and Polavaram project early.

Sir, the elevated portions amidst the river Godavari which are usually called as lankas are very fertile. Many important crops are being grown on these lankas. Some of the villages on these lankas as big as towns. But unfortunately, at the time of floods all these crops will be covered with very thick layers of sand. They have to spend thousands of rupees for removing the sand. In order to avoid the damage that takes place during the floods, it is necessary to raise safety walls namely, flood banks around these villages. The setting up of flood control authority of India will help immensely in taking up such important construction works. Hence I support this Bill wholeheartedly. The land on Rankas are very fertile. Many commercial crops are being grown and thus contributing to our economy. But the fury of floods year after year is washing away the precious crops. Farmers are facing starvation. Hence the flood banks have to be constructed as early as possible. If a permanent Authority is set up, we will succeed in controlling floods and minimising the damage to a considerable extent. Setting up of a permanent machinery is very much necessary now. Instead of

spending crores of rupees in rescue and relief operation, by investing half of that amount for a permanent solution under Flood Control Authority of India, we can save millions of acres crop and avert the loss of life and property. Besides, Flood Control Authority of India can jump into action whenever and wherever there is flood. If constituted, the flood Authority of India can help in storing the flood waters by building necessary storages. This flood water if stored properly, can be diverted to the areas where there is no water. Thus the shortage of water for drinking and irrigation can be completely eliminated. A scheme to store and divert the flood waters of Godavari to the areas where there is drought should also be taken up immediately.

Sir, March and April are the ideal months for taking up the construction work of flood banks. Even the farmers will lend a hand of support since there will not be agricultural operations during that time. At present Central Govt. while releasing grants is asking the State Govt. to take up construction work during monsoon. It is impossible to carry on the construction work during rainy seasons. Hence the present policy of the Central Govt. should be changed. Hence the grants released for raising the flood banks should be done during summer, so that the grants can be better utilised. Entire Konaseema area which is in my constituency is constantly affected by floods. Hence the Central Govt. should release more grants in time for raising the flood banks.

Conclude my speech, thanking you for providing me an opportunity to speak.

17.19 hrs.

SHRI R. S. KHIRHAR (Sitamarhi):  
Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Bill under discussion is on Flood Control Authority of India.

Our friends have drawn the attention of the hon. Minister to the loss of life and property and damage caused to agriculture by floods every year. The present Bill is praiseworthy and I support it. Mr. Chairman, Sir, half of the country suffers the

destruction by floods and everytime it takes place, it is discussed in this House. Floods cause huge loss of life, and, property worth crores of rupees is destroyed. Crops also are destroyed. The State Governments as well as Central Government allocate funds for relief work in the event of floods. There is nothing bad about providing relief funds to save lives and property at such times. As my other friends have said, the funds allocated for flood relief are not properly utilised. Flood relief works should be conducted only on state and district level and the works taken in hand should be time bound and should be completed within that period. The work, whether it is flood relief or some other scheme, should be completed within time. We cannot be successful unless we see to it that all the schemes and projects started for this purpose are completed within time.

I also hail from North Bihar. Some of our other friends have also discussed North Bihar. There are some rivers which originate from Nepal and flow towards Bengal through Bihar. Sir, I want to mention specially about the Bagmati Project of my constituency Sitamarhi. This Bagmati Irrigation Project was launched 19 years ago. During these 19 years, about Rs. 123 crore have been spent on this scheme. What are the results? About 200 to 225 acres of land has been uselessly occupied by the dam. About 225 acres of land has been dug up for canals. Not even one third of this project has been completed during these 19 years. Due to the non-completion of the Bagmati Project, about nine or ten districts of North Bihar like Sitamarhi and Madhubani along Nepal border are affected by floods every year. The floods cause huge loss to the people. The crops are either destroyed or do not grow at all due to floods. What does it all mean? Despite all these spendings and deployment of engineers and technicians on this scheme and all other efforts to prevent destruction, the results have been altogether negative. Now the destruction by floods has become more severe than in the past and it is all due to the fact that we do not have any timebound programmes. Had those people been left to their own fate, the losses, perhaps, would have been less.

As some other hon. Members have also said, in Bihar we find that when the floods strike, the cultivators curse their fate whereas on the other hand the officers celebrate the occasion. I am not saying this for the sake of criticising the officers nor am I telling some concocted story. The Bagmati Project has been named by the local people as L/4. The funds allocated for flood relief are misappropriated by dividing it into four shares. That money is embezzled in collusion with the contractors.

In such circumstances, it becomes necessary that the Government should assume responsibility of completing all the schemes within a time frame. The Government should not take up a scheme if it cannot complete it within that time frame. In that case, the people could better be left to their own fate.

With these words, I support this Bill.

[English]

SHRI MAHABIR PRASAD YADAV (Madhepura) : Mr. Chairman, before I speak on this Bill, I want to know what about the shocking news that Mamataji brought here. Is it a fact? Something unusual has happened here.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please speak on the Bill.

SHRI MAHABIR PRASAD YADAV : This is a very important Bill—Flood Control Bill. I have not to speak on so many things except one, that is, the Kosi Project in Bihar. Kosi had been known as the 'sorrow of North Bihar. In the year 1954 when Jawaharlal Nehru saw with his own eyes the devastation and damage caused by that flood, he brought that central project, that is Kosi Barrage System. It was hoped and thought that by constructing the barrage and the two embankments, the North Bihar problem would be solved to a great extent, but the problem has not been solved, rather the flood problem has been aggravated. There are two embankments connecting the barrage, the eastern and the western embankments. This has resulted in heavy silting as pointed out by Shri Rajhans. Not only the

*Bill*

[Shri Mahabir Prasad Yadav]

river bed of Kosi is being silted, rather the canal system is also being silted and as a result, the flood has become a regular feature of that area.

You might be knowing, Sir, that when there was breach in the eastern embankment, several blocks like Maheshi, Simri Bakhtiar-pur, Shalkhua, Nahata and a part of Saharsa were washed away. Railway services were also disrupted. With an expenditure of Rs. six crores, the breach was repaired. I have to say that if early steps are not taken by the Central Government, the whole Kosi project may go to the winds. The whole canal system would become worthless.

Side by side after having this barrage and embankment system, water logging has been another problem. Flood has not been duly controlled, rather water logging is causing a serious problem for the cultivators of that area. Sometimes, it has been found that the surplus water from the canal system is given outlet through the drainage system and that is causing another problem. Some villages are being washed away. If the drainage system for the water logging is not created and if the canal system is not cleared of the heavy silting, then the problem of flood, problem of silting would be causing serious damage and devastation to the public at large.

One thing more. It should be treated as a Central project. The work is done through the machinery of State Government and I agree with the views of Shri Ram Bhagat Paswan that the money given by the Central Government is not being spent on the programmes and projects for which that is given.

I have come to know, I do not know whether it is correct or not, that the Wangho river of China was the river of sorrow of China, but with some sort of mechanism they have been able to control the heavy silting and the floods have been controlled there. If it was possible there, it can be done here also and some sort of control measures may be taken for the River Kosi Project.

Lastly, Kosi barrage is just over one km in Nepal territory from the territory of India. This barrage in the territory of Nepal is not a source of convenience for the Indian people. However, it is a source of income for Nepal people and the Nepal officials. I would request to the hon. Minister that this matter must be gone into, how far the people in Nepal territory are taking undue advantage of this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We will continue discussion on this subject next time. Now, we will take up half-an hour discussion.

Before the half-an-hour discussion starts, I have to inform this House that after the discussion is over, the House will adjourn. No further item will be taken up. And this item also should be completed exactly by 6 O'clock.

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#### HALF-AN-HOUR DISCUSSION

[*English*]

17.30 hrs.

#### *Implementation of Assam Accord*

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Dinesh Goswami.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI (Guwahati): Mr. Chairman Sir, I rise to raise a discussion on the points arising out of the answer given by the Minister of Home Affairs on 12 November 1986 to Unstarred Question No. 1372 regarding the implementation of the Assam Accord.

Sir, the nation is in agony today because of the developments in Punjab. In Assam after six or seven years of incessant struggle, peace and calm prevailed. But again, the State is going towards a period of uncertainty because of the non-implementation of the various clauses of the Assam Accord. People are feeling cheated and disenchanted.