

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJ KUMAR RAI: Sir, is it sufficient?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I have also accepted that a Minister must be present in the House.

(Interruptions)

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI SHEILA DIKSHIT): I would like to apologise

(Interruptions)

DR. CHINTA MOHAN: I want the Minister's explanation.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: What do you want now? The hon. Minister wants to say something about this.

(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI SHEILA DIKSHIT: I would like to apologise to all the Members that such a thing has happened. Prof. Madhu Dandavate has raised some queries. I would like to go into them and come back to you.

(Interruptions)

AN HON. MEMBER: You should explain the position.

SHRIMATI SHEILA DIKSHIT: For that I have apologised to the hon. Members in the House on behalf of my Government.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: That is all

SHRIMATI SHEILA DIKSHIT: Sir I would like to apologise to all the hon. Members that such a thing has taken place. Prof. Madhu Dandavate has raised some queries. I would go into them.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: What do you want then? She has already regretted.

(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI SHEILA DIKSHIT: I apologise to the hon. Members in the House on behalf of the Government.

*(Interruptions)**[English]*

ix) Demand for early clearance of Bakreswar Thermal Project in the State Sector.

SHRI GADADHAR SAHA (Birbhum): Sir, 630 MW Bakreswar Thermal Project was techno-economically cleared by CEA in 1985 and two proposals were submitted to the Central Government. The Prime Minister gave assurance at Calcutta in September, 1986, clear the project within two months, but it is yet to materialise. In the mean time, several rounds of discussions were held by Central Government with USSR-India Consortium culminating in final proposal furnished to Central Government in March, 1987. The latest message from the Government of India indicates that USSR State-to-State credit for the project has been linked up with the pre-requisite of its implementation in the Central sector which will mean that West Bengal system will be denied about 2/3rd of Bakreswar generation. Project site has already been identified with excellent infrastructure, power evacuation facilities and satisfactory rail and coal linkages visualised. The State Government has already provided Rs. 100 crores for this project during the 7th Plan and Rs. 35 crores earmarked for the project during 1987-88. The State Government is capable of funding the balance project cost which is expected to be about Rs. 210 crores during the 5-year construction period, assuming USSR credit will cover 70 per cent of the project cost.

Under these circumstances, I would request the Government to clear the project immediately in the State Sector with appropriate clearance of financial arrangements required in order to reduce demand-availability gap of 457 MW and 866 MW by the end of the 7th and 8th Plan respectively to avoid further time and cost over-runs.

12.29 hrs.

SUPPLEMENTARY DEMANDS FOR GRANTS (GENERAL) 1987-88 - Contd.

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The House will now take up further discussion and voting on the Supplementary Demands for Grants in respect of Budget (General) for 1987-88 and also further discussion on cut motions moved on 2nd December, 1987.

Now I request Shri Bhattam Srirama Murty to continue. Mr. Srirama Murty, you have already taken 14 minutes. Therefore, try to be brief.

SHRI BHATTAM SRIRAMA MURTY (Visakhapatnam): Sir, I have yesterday exhorted the Government to be more vigilant and alert and reminded them of the warning given by the Reserve Bank of India about the fast closing debt trap with grave consequences on the economic growth of this country. External indebtedness in fact rose by Rs. 18,500 crores between 1981 and 1987. The increase in six years has nearly equalled the borrowing for previous 30 years.

Now, about the internal debt, there is a large scale borrowing, as much as Rs. 8,570 crores in 1986-87 itself. The public sector undertakings, the financial institutions, even

the private sector units have all resorted to public borrowing. The quantified aid in the pipeline is about Rs. 23,000 crores. Thus the warning of the Reserve Bank of India about the debt trap is of special significance.

Sir, diminishing foreign exchange reserves, increasing debt servicing obligations, annual trade gap are the real danger signals. Deficit financing is swelling into high peak and is giving a more awful picture. About the 7th Plan, I made a mention earlier. But I would again reiterate that the 7th Plan is almost collapsed. Its targets, its resources and resource calculations have all fallen by way side. The Plan outlay for each State and Union Ministries will be frozen in 1988-89 at the current year's level. There will be no growth of income, national income this year. In fact, there will be a decline.

Let me first refer to the Central expenditure. The expenditure stood at Rs. 530 crores in the year 1950-51 and has moved up to Rs. 57867 crores in 1986-87, i.e. an increase of about 21% of GNP. May I point out in this connection that the Government is also taking recourse at certain measures for tightening the belt, by introducing some economy measures. I also had one such experience. When I wanted the front doors of my house which are only of glass to be replaced with wooden doors, from the point of view of security and other things, the Urban Development Ministry has said, in view of the economy measures due to the drought situation, nothing can be done and they would not be able to undertake any improvements, whatsoever, it is very good. But at the same time, may I point out here one thing, When the Prime Minister undertook a foreign journey. His recent foreign journey has cost over Rs.5/-crores. He travelled in one of the world largest jets 747. It was grounded one month in advance for being redone.

Shri MURLI DEORA (Bombay South): It is a wrong story.