

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That the respective supplementary sums not exceeding the amounts on Revenue Account and Capital Account shown in the third column of the Order Paper be granted to the President out of the Consolidated Fund of India to defray the charges that will come in course of payment during the year ending 31st day of March, 1988 in respect of the following demands entered in the second column thereof—

Demands Nos. 10, 18, 21, 22, 24, 27, 40, 42, 44, 46, 53, 58, 64, 66, 69 and 77."

The motion was adopted

15.39 hrs.

DISCUSSION RE: SITUATION ARISING OUT OF DEVASTATING FLOODS IN ASSAM, BIHAR, WEST BENGAL AND OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY—
Contd.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The House shall now take up further discussion on the situation arising out of the devastating floods in Assam, Bihar, West Bengal and other parts of the country resulting in immense loss of life and property and remedial measures taken by the Government in that regard.

Now Mr. Haren Bhumij will continue his speech

SHRI HAREN BHUMIJ (Dibrugarh): While going to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of India's Independence the country faced severe drought in one part as well as devastating flood in the other part. Assam, Bihar and West Bengal and some parts of the country are now in the grip of flood. Sharing the woe and misery of the flood affected people of these States, I confine myself to the State of Assam.

Monsoon greeted the N.E. region in April-May in time showing a deaf ear to the other parts of the country. The first wave of flood in May-June was a blessing divinely bestowed upon the human being of the State of Assam. But because of heavy and continuous rainfall in June-July, particularly in Arunachal and Assam the water level of the Brahmaputra and Longal and their tributaries rose alarmingly above the danger level inundating hectares and hectares of paddy land. In the successive second wave of flood in June-July vast area of 13 districts viz. Nalbari, Borpeta, Dhubri, Goalpara, Kamrup, Darrang, Sonitpur, Lakshimpur, Jorhat, Sibsagar, Nagaon, Kokrajha, including Dibrugarh came under the grip of flood. According to the official record of the State affected, the figures are like this: area being—2.12 lakh hectares; population—25.56 lakhs; villages—2716 nos; families—527.9 thousands; loss of life—12 nos.; loss of cattle—1146; roads affected—729; bridges & culvert—1093 nos; damage to roads including erosion—1117.8 kms; crop affected area—177.7 thousands hectares. The total loss estimated to be incurred as a result of flood damage to the crops was Rs. 24.85 crores; value of crop loss being estimated at market rate. This was the official report of assessment upto mid of July; unofficially damage and loss were much more.

Occurrence of flood in Assam is not a news, but recurrence of successive waves of flood within the year and every year is certainly most pathetic and deplorable. While the central team at the initiative of the Government of India visited the State a few days ago to assess the loss and damage caused by the flood of June-July, the State has come under the grip of successive third wave of flood which spread over to all the 18 districts of the State of Assam, submerging new areas including the 37 & 52 National Highways and rail tracks in several places causing disruption of traffic both roads and rails till yesterday. Even Indian Airlines could not operate beyond Gauhati because of worst weather. Army was out to help the authorities as the flood

situation aggravated further. According to recent news the district Dibrugarh is worst affected where 21,000 hectares of crop land has been affected. The old and famous Assam Medical College and the district jail have been alerted. The very existence of Dibrugarh was threatened.

The water level of the 800-kilometre Brahmaputra has crossed the danger level several metres—more than two metres—here and there. Though the actual assessment of the loss and damage caused by the successive third wave of flood all throughout the State is yet to be known from the State Government and the Central team of the Union Government, yet the most grave situation of the State can easily be assessed, without cultivation of imagination. In view of the heavy loss and damage caused by the three successive waves of flood the financial assistance for relief and rehabilitation to the State of Assam to the tune of Rs 3 crores is not at all adequate. It is something like pouring a spoon of milk in a drum of water.

Let the impression of the Chief Minister of Assam who has accused the Government of India of showing apathy towards the State be not substantiated. I would urge upon the Government of India to extend adequate and sufficient financial assistance to tackle this problem. There should be a clear directive to the State, while extending the financial assistance that the amount given should be used for the purpose it is given. Under no circumstances should it be transferred to some other purpose.

The river Brahmaputra, son of Brahma, bearing the name in masculine gender, is as furious as Shiva. Hectares and hectares of tea plantation areas are being eroded every year by this river. This Brahmaputra river has to be controlled. For this I would like to request that both short term as well as long term measures must be adopted. Among short term measures, the breached

dykes and embankment should be swiftly erected, because the occurrence of the successive fourth wave of flood cannot be ruled out in September and October.

The Brahmaputra Board which was constituted under the Act must be activated. It must not be left to exist only on paper. The Master Plan chalked out by the Board should be given a serious and sincere thought.

The solution to the problem of recurrence of floods lies in taking up long term measures for which national comprehensive programmes are called for.

While concluding, I want to say, that in view of the severe drought throughout in one part of the country as well as devastating flood in the other part of the country simultaneously, the water resources which are in abundance in the country should be utilised in a proper way. Why should they not be utilised in a proper way the way it deserves? The country should not be left to live solely under the blessings of Nature after four decades of Independence.

*SHRI GOPAL KRISHN THOTA (Kakinada): Madam Chairperson, the floods and droughts have become a regular feature. Floods and droughts are causing enormous damage to both life and property every year.

At the time of these natural calamities, there should be a perfect coordination between the Government and the people. Then only it is possible to confront and overcome the situation. There should also be perfect coordination between the Central and State Govts. I am sorry to say that the Central Govt. has so far failed to discharge its duties effectively.

Madam, there were unprecedented floods in the Southern States during 1986. There was a heavy loss of life and property. Though there were devastating

* The speech was originally delivered in Telugu.

[Shri Gopal Krishna Thota]

floods and much damage had been done, there was no Central assistance to help the affected people. It is the responsibility of the Centre to come to the rescue of the affected people yet the Govt. chose to ignore the loss caused by the natural calamity of a high magnitude. Floods are in full fury once again this year causing much devastation to many North-States like Assam, Bihar, Jammu & Kashmir and West Bengal etc. Vast stretches of land in these States are still inundated by the flood waters. Much has to be done to rescue them.

Floods are a common feature in the Southern States. One reason why they are subjected to floods year after year is that there are only a few perennial rivers like Godavari. In my region there are only rivulets like Eleru and Erra Kalva. During rainy season these rivulets and streams which are small and without much depth, while flowing through the hilly regions get swollen and finally result in the floods. They inundate all the low lying areas. Sometimes entire villages get washed out. There will be enormous damage to life and property. The loss will be much more if the area is located nearby the sea. The magnitude of loss is unimaginable if there are floods in the river Godavari.

Madam, my region is constantly exposed to floods. If the Eleru reservoir comes up the magnitude of floods will be minimised considerably. But unfortunately the construction of Eleru reservoir is being delayed very much. Eleru reservoir also provides water to the prestigious Visakhapatnam Steel Plant. Hence speedy completion of Eleru reservoir is very much necessary in view of its importance not only in averting floods in the area, but also in supplying water to the steel plant.

Similarly there were floods in West Godavari due to the overflowing of Era Kalva. Large areas were inundated and the entire standing crop has been washed out. The loss, both to life and property was quite heavy. Madam, Godavari is a might

river. Whenever there are floods on river Godavari the loss will be quite high. It will cripple the life and economy of the entire region. Last year there were floods in the river Godavari which resulted in heavy loss both to life and property. The construction of Polavaram project is the real solution for averting floods of this river. Hence early clearance and execution of this project will go a long way in mitigating the sufferings of the people. The constant fear of threat from floods will be removed from the minds of the people.

Hence once again I emphasise that construction Eleru reservoir and Polavaram project should be completed as early as possible.

Madam, I make a few suggestions to the Govt. which may help in fighting the fury of floods effectively

Madam, early warning system is not functioning effectively. Seldom the forecast proves correct. I will cite one example. One and a half years ago, the District Collector of Kakinaada has informed the people in the lowlying areas to evacuate their villages in view of the warning given by the weather experts. The villagers did not evacuate their places. When asked why they did not do so in spite of a cyclone warning, the villagers said that the warning was not correct and hence they did not evacuate. When they were asked to explain how they could come to that conclusion, they said that experience has shown that their method of forecasting is more accurate than the weather man's forecast. Ultimately their forecast was proved right and the weather man's forecast wrong. This example shows how imperfect the present early warning system is. Hence steps should be taken to make it accurate.

Madam, the present administrative set up is such that a Central Committee visits the flood affected area days after the floods had receded. There is an inordinate delay in extending help.

Madam, the Minister has given a reply in this House.

"The States of Assam and Bihar have reported damages due to floods in current monsoon period. Government of Jammu & Kashmir submitted preliminary Memorandum for damages due to hailstorm/heavy rains and floods of May & June, 1987 "

Already two months have passed

The Government further says

"The Government of Assam sought assistance for flood relief for Rs. 151.61 crores in 1984-85, Rs. 86.74 crores in 1985-86 and Rs. 338.20 crores in 1986-87

The ceiling of expenditure approved for flood relief by the Government of India was Rs. 39.12 crores for 1984-85, Rs. 22.16 crores for 1985-86 and Rs. 31.83 crores for 1986-87 "

The State has asked for more funds, but the Central team recommended this small amount. What a difference in the next answer. The Minister has also given an answer to another question as under

"A Central Team is scheduled to visit the States shortly, to make an on the spot assessment of the situation. On the basis of the report of the Central Team and recommendations of the High Level Committee on Relief, a ceiling of expenditure will be approved to the State Government "

This is the answer given by the Minister. After inspection of the Central Team only, the States will get the assistance. I think it is not admissible. The Government should think to change the system

Everybody knows about the crop insurance. You should also change the policy in this respect.

Hence there is no use of sending a Central Committee after a long delay. The help should be immediate and commensurate

with the loss the State had suffered. It should not take months and weeks to extend the necessary Central assistance.

Madam, thank you very much for giving me this opportunity and conclude.

15.57 hrs.

[SHRI VAKKOM PURUSHOTHAMAN *in the Chair*]

[*Translation*]

SHRIMATI MANORAMA SINGH (Banka) Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is good that the Parliament is having discussion on food today. It is very serious problem for the country. Most parts of the country are facing drought, but at the same time several parts of the country have been hit by floods which have posed a grave threat to the common people

Entire North Bihar, West Bengal and Assam are under the grip of heavy floods. The people of these areas are facing great difficulties. The Government is also fighting floods with equal promptness to meet the situation. But the situation is still not under control. The situation is very serious especially in Darbhanga, Madhubani, Purnea, Sitamarhi and Katihar districts of Bihar. The flood water is still increasing with no let up in the rains. People are looking at the sky and praying to God to stop rain, but to no avail. People are fleeing towards railway lines and platforms, wherever they find safer places. Consequently, a large number of their cattle have perished

The flood has played havoc in 23 districts of Bihar. Other places, where there are no rivers, have also been affected by flood due to freaches in embankments and overflow of canal water. All the houses of poor people have collapsed. Standing crop of paddy have been submerged in water. Maize crop has totally been destroyed. It has become a matter of concern for the people as to what could be saved for future. It has become difficult to trace out the location of several villages. Government officials travelling by boats

[Shrimati Manorama Singh]

are not able to spot out the location of the village and cannot say for sure, whether there was any habitation or not. Not only that; about 10 thousand people have been washed away. Most of the bodies have flowed towards Nepal.

Some of the voluntary organisations who were engaged in relief work had their boats capsized in the high current of water and were washed away. Sisters' team of Begusaraj Mission was one such team. Water level of Sone river is far below at Patna at present. But when the water level in the Ganga rises at Patna, it poses a threat to the areas like Chapra etc. It may not be possible to estimate the losses till the flood water recedes.

What is needed urgently is that relief material should be sent there expeditiously. Special care should be taken to provide all help to poor people whose homes have either collapsed or have been washed away. As a matter of fact the Central Government grants Rs. 750 to poor people for construction of houses from the relief fund. This amount is very meagre keeping in view the pace at which the prices are rising. I would like to request the Government to increase this amount. The farmers should be supplied seeds, medicines and kerosene. At the same time a team of doctors should also be deputed to check the spread of epidemic. On the one hand, the flood is playing havoc and on the other hand, various diseases are spreading causing deaths. More and more fair price shops should be opened. The public distribution system should be further geared up and the Government should exercise full check over the system. It has been observed that with the increase in demand, commodities disappear from the market. At the same time the people who have these commodities in their shops are facing forcible seizure. Some undesirable elements follow them and snatch away their goods. Their only aim is to meet their selfish ends. I request the Central Government to take effective steps at the appropriate time to

undertake relief work. Floods have become a recurring phenomenon. Hence it needs to be given a serious thought.

Bihar faces floods every year. But the Government have not taken any measures to check floods permanently. Siltation in Ganga goes on increasing every year. Forests are being cut indiscriminately. Earlier when steamers were operating in Ganga, the gush of water caused by the steamer did not allow the sand to be deposited at one place. If dredging is not done to clear the sand, the level of sand in Ganga will further go up within a few days. I would, therefore, like to request the Government to pay attention towards it. There are some regions in Bengal, Bihar and Assam where rivers originate from mountains. Therefore, the Central Government should formulate a concrete programme in consultation with the Chief Ministers of the concerned States to find a solution to this problem.

The rivers passing through the northern part of Bihar originate from Nepal. Therefore, the situation at these places becomes terrible. The water is flowing above the roof tops. Police Stations and Post Offices have been sub-merged in flood water and movement of trains has come to a halt. It is not possible to narrate the situation prevailing at these places. It is heartening to note that the Hon. Prime Minister is himself going there today to take stock of the situation. I would like to request the Central Government to send the relief material meant for the poor and the weaker sections immediately so that they could stand on their own feet. Sowing of the ensuing Rabi crop will start as soon as the rainy season is over. Arrangements should be made to supply seeds to the farmers and their loans should be written off. They should be extended all possible help. I would like to request that Government should pay special attention towards Darbhanga, Madhubani, Purnea and Sitamerhi and start relief work at these places.

I would like to make more submission. Though the damage caused by flood is not

much in our area, yet due to breaches in embankments, several villages have come under the grip of flood. The Government should exercise proper control over the embankments and dams wherever they are constructed. It has mostly been found that embankments are constructed only on paper. They do not exist physically. There should be a proper check on these things. Otherwise they will pose a threat in future. Mr. Speaker, Sir, thousands acres of land have been covered by sand-layers due to breaches in dams and embankments in my area, Bhagalpur-Banka. It has become a problem for the farmers. The land has lost its fertility. Therefore, I would like to request the Government to direct the Government of Bihar to conduct research through their Soil Conservation Department to educate the farmers about the type of crops that can be raised on such sandy soil

SHRI DAMODAR PANDEY (Hazari-bagh): Mr. Chairman, Sir, for the last 7 days, we are discussing in this august House the situation caused by drought which has hit a major part of the country. We are, in fact, fighting a very grim situation. There is nothing wrong in it. But the gravity of floods has over-shadowed the gravity of drought. The speakers who spoke prior to me gave an account of the gravity of the flood situation and it should in no way be under-estimated. Under the drought situation, one can at least think of the future. Whatever foodgrains one is left with, can be preserved. Water can be fetched from a distant place. Communication is in no way disturbed and goods can reach the people easily. But flood destroys everything. All means of communication gets disrupted. The farmer loses his all and is left with nothing. We cannot easily imagine the severity of flood. The farmer does not have any bank balance. His house and his granary is his bank balance. When his foodgrains are washed away, he is left with nothing but sobs. The extent to which he has suffered destruction can be imagined only if one goes to Bihar. It is really heartening to know that the Hon. Prime Minister has gone there

today to see the situation himself and to find the ways how relief can be provided to the people of that area. The Government is very vigilant about relief. Some of the leading newspapers have carried news reports to the effect that 10,000 people have been washed away. Thank God, they did not put the figure at one lakh. Had they done so, it was difficult to say as to which of the figures was correct because the senerio at these places looks as if the entire habitation is floating on water. Some people have taken shelter on trees and some others have reached safer places located at some height. But nobody knows the whereabouts of the weak people who could not cross the flood waters. Nothing can be said with certainty wheter they are alive or have been washed away. The newspapers of Calcutta and Delhi keep on guessing as to the number of casualties and publish news reports on their own assessment. Today, the situation has reached a stage where the entire North Bihar looks like a sea. There seems to be no boundary line between villages and towns. Only water comes in sight everywhere. If today we are able to say with a little bit of courage that we can face this situation, it is because the economy of the country is so sound that we are able to sustain it. Five helicopters of our armed forces have been pressed into service for relief work. Three aircrafts of I.A.F. including the 'Gajraj' with a loading capacity of as many five trucks have been pressed into service to transport relief material to Purnea and Darbhanga. Efforts are being made on house to house basis that those who have been left behind in their houses do not remain hungry or face shortage of foodgrains. The country's economy is so sound that we are in a position to make arrangements for their food. Every effort is being made to collect puri, bread and gram and other items of general use, to be supplied to these people. *(Interruptions)*

DR. G. S. RAJHANS: People are starving for the last 13 days.

(Interruptions)

SHRI DAMODAR PANDEY: I am telling what I have seen there. *(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Pandey, you please address the chair. Do not reply to his points. (*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

SHRI DAMODAR PANDEY: We people belong to Bihar. All people whether working in an industrial area or living in any other part of Bihar have been engaged in this task. I would like to inform you that the coal mine workers have resolved.....

[English]

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY (Mahbubnagar): Sir, I have not followed the point raised by Mr. Rajhans.

DR. G. S. RAJHANS: I have just come from that area. About 1.5 crore people are trapped and marooned. They are starving for the last 13 days. They have not got any food.

[Translation]

SHRI DAMODAR PANDEY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the workers of industrial area have resolved that they will contribute a day's salary and collect the amount for providing relief to the people trapped in flood and those affected by drought. The total amount comes to about Rs. 4 crores. All the workers belonging to different trade unions sat together and took this decision. Especially, the working in factories in all the areas have resolved that they will collect at least one cloth from each family and provide relief to flood victims. Truck loads of clothes are being collected and sent to Patna. From there, these clothes are being airlifted and supplied to the needy people. But this would not be a solution to the problem. Every year floods hit Bihar. Sometimes the gravity is more and sometime it is less.

The situation in Gandak river is that water has flowed 400 feet above the river

level. Anybody can imagine that no embankment can sustain this overflow of water. The situation was so grave that it did not allow any means of communication to work. Everything has gone out of gear. Arrangements will have to be made to repair it afresh. Roads will have to be constructed. Nominal relief will not serve the purpose. This requires investment on a massive scale. The Government of Bihar has requested the Central Government to sanction at least Rs. 200 crores so that the means of communication, already snapped, can be set right. Due to water-logging, the standing crops have been destroyed. Foodgrains stored in the houses have also exhausted. Now the problem before the people is where to get wheat seeds from for sowing because the flood water has washed away all their foodgrains stored in their granaries. A major part of the country has also been affected by drought and people are facing crisis. Under the circumstances the Government will have to make arrangements for the supply of seeds right from now. If I do not touch all the points we cannot have proper assessment. Therefore, I want you to have some pity. We want that we must chalk out future plans in this regard. Every year we face floods and seek relief. The people have stared saying that relief itself has become like a crop. We do not want to be given relief on permanent basis. The relief should be given when it is needed. But we must consider what should be our future planning.

It was hoped that Kosi Barrage would provide a lot of relief. But if silting continues at the current pace, the embankments and barrage would be of no use after 10 years. If steps for desilting of all rivers of North Bihar are not taken, we shall have to face a horrible situation in future. Therefore, I would suggest that we should take up this matter with the Government of Nepal. We are having very friendly and family-like relations with that country. We should express our concern with them and through mutual discussion should find a way to tame these rivers so as to convert this curse into a boon. We can use the

[Shri Damodar Pandey]

flood waters in many ways and and also utilise it for commercial purposes. Both the countries should work unitedly and should formulate programme by adopting long-term measures.

One more thing I want to say. A few days ago, hon. Minister of Irrigation had said that the plan to inter-connect all the rivers right from Ganga upto Kauveri, formulated by late Dr. K.L. Rao was not receiving consideration of the Government. I would suggest that it should be given a serious consideration. Had that plan of Dr. K. L. Rao been taken up for implementation at that time, it would have generated a lot of employment and the economy of the country would have been strengthened. You set up an industry with an initial investment of Rs. 1200 crores to 5,000 crores, but how much employment is generated therein and to what extent the country gets benefited theretrom? Had this much money been invested for this work, it would have generated employment for lakhs of people besides inçreasing the wealth of the country. This plan would also have enabled the Government to provide permanent relief to those who successively hit by drought, besides reducing the ravage caused by flood. That plan should be given consideration afreash at the national level. The Ganga water which is used as holy water for taking a bath on auspicious occasions in Bihar can be utilised for turning the fields into greenery. My submission is that this special plan should be given consideration afreash and some viable scheme should be formulated keeping in view the future needs. I want that it should be considered afresh so that we could reduce the destruction that is caused by floods. This needs immediate consideration. Today, we have sufficient stock of foodgrains in the country. Had we produced still more foodgrains, we would not have faced difficulty. For this purpose, some effective plan should be formulated. What more can I say? You are ringing the bell repeatedly. I had many more things to

say. I shall express my views in the House when I get an opportunity next.

With these words, I conclude.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Ramaiah, two persons have already spoken from your Party. If you take only 4 minutes or 5 minutes, I will call you.

SHRI B. B. RAMAIAH (Eluru): I thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to participate in the very important discussion about the serious problem of the country, namely, floods. For the last two days, we have been discussing about drought which is the immediate problem of this country and floods are also equally bad.

(Interruptions).

We are discussing about the floods in Assam, West Bengal and Bihar and parts of Jammu & Kashmir and we can see the amount of damage that is caused due to these floods. 17 districts in Assam, 22 in Bihar and 5 in West Bengal are affected very much and it is roughly estimated that the damage is about 40 lakhs of hectares of crop and about 20 lakh population is affected by floods and the damage is more than Rs. 1,000 crores. About 300 people might have lost their lives about whom data is available. We do not know how many cattle perished in each State.

There are a number of proposals to improve on these things so that this flood damage can be reduced. The main proposal is Brahmaputra. There is an Expert Committee which submitted a report on Brahmaputra valley. If implemented, it would have really helped the country a lot and now it is called a sorrow river, instead of calling it a prosperity river which helps not only Assam but even Bengal and Bihar and rest of the country. (Interruptions). Due to these floods, every year thousands of crores of rupees of crop is damaged, population is affected and lot of damage is

[Shri B.B. Ramaiah]

done to everything and in spite of that, for 40 years now, we have not been able to solve the problem at least to some extent.

Last year, we had tremendous problem in southern part of the country, specially in Andhra Pradesh. Godavari river caused lot of damage and we incurred heavy losses of crops and various other things.

We feel that Central assistance is very important for these flood-affected areas. The State Governments are unable to put up with the amount of expenditure that is required to meet the situation and they are thus unable to come to the rescue of the affected people. This is because the loss is huge in magnitude. Though sometimes we get assistance from the military, unfortunately we find that the services of boats or helicopters provided are not that much sufficient to meet the situation, unless they make real efforts to serve the people.

It is of the utmost importance that the flood or cyclone affected areas should be given advance warning and for this purpose lot of warning systems are required. The wireless sets would communicate better. You know how badly the telephone system works in this country.

The relief measures required for provision of medicines and food to the affected people are not being provided in time. Unless we keep some reserved stocks in the particular areas where these floods and cyclones occur it will not be possible to meet the emergent need in time. Even in coastal districts, cyclones and even tidal waves are occurring.

Dr. K.L. Rao has given a suggestion to join Ganga, Mahanadi and Godavari, Krishna and Kavery. These things really help to minimise the flood damage and it will be an advantage for the improvement of the crops in the country.

Specially in Andhra Pradesh, we have a number of problems every year. The

droughts can be reduced to some extent by taking up these projects like Palonerm even though it costs thousands of crores. We will be gaining every year several times more by food and power than what we are going to spend on these projects. That is why, these measures are very essential in the larger interests of the country and I am sure that the Government of India would help the flood and drought affected people in various States.

I thank you very much for giving me this opportunity.

[*Translation*]

SHRI SALAHUDDIN (Godda): Mr. Chairman, Sir, after having seen the flood situation in Bihar, Bengal and Assam, I can only say that it is a natural calamity. If we see the flood situation in North Bihar, it is clear that Government alone cannot meet this challenge. For this, the assistance of voluntary organisations will have to be taken. The loss of life and property in North Bihar cannot be assessed properly because many villages have been totally washed away and there is no trace of them left behind. A sizeable population is reported missing and we are not able to exactly assess their number. A critical situation has been created in Darbhanga, Madhubani, Khagaria and other areas of North Bihar. I would request the Central Government to make some arrangement soon in cooperation with the State Government, otherwise, we cannot even imagine how many lives will be lost in the coming days. Epidemic has broken out there. Besides, an atmosphere of thefts and looting is also developing there. I would like to submit that this is not a normal period for us and, as such, normal law will not apply there. Amount of normal relief will not suffice in such an extraordinary situation. Some people from the voluntary organisations had come to us this morning with the complaint that their services were not being utilised. I would like to say that you invite such organisations at Government level. The organisations which are able to offer their services during flood should be

welcome and Bihar Government should recognise their services. There are many such organisations which are ready to come forward for help and some of them are doing so even now. Abnormal situation has arisen in North Bihar, Bengal and Assam. It has become a social problem. We should work for it by rising above the party affiliation. It becomes the duty of the Government to remove this social problem. Such a situation will be created in the flood-hit States after the floods that the farmers will be left neither with seed to sow nor money to spend. Therefore, I would like to request that bank loans and cooperative loans in respect of such farmers should be written off and assistance should be provided to them urgently so that the farmers and other people of those areas could be rehabilitated. Through you, Sir, I want to draw the attention of the hon. Minister that the situation prevailing in those areas is not an ordinary one. It is extraordinary situation and, as such, the Government should take some revolutionary step to mitigate the problems of those areas.

SHRI R.S. KHIRHAR (Sitamarhi): Mr. Chairman, Sir, sympathies have been expressed in the House during the last few days because a major part of the country is facing drought. The people are reeling under the drought and my sympathies too are with them. But the situation that has arisen today in three States viz. Bengal, Assam and Bihar is more grave than the drought. During their speeches, our colleagues have given even the figures to show how North Bihar, half of Bengal and the whole of Assam is submerged in flood waters for the past 15 days. The gravity of the situation can be assessed only by those who visit there personally. As soon as the flood struck, our colleagues from Bihar met the hon. Minister of Water Resources. Shri B. Shankranand whom I must thank that he inspected the flood-hit areas and submitted the report to the Central Government. The situation in Bihar today is that 40 districts are affected by floods out of which 23 are severely hit. Out of these 23, 11 districts are totally sub-

merged in water. There is no means of transport or communication from Patna, the Capital of Bihar for reaching the flood affected areas. If Government want to send relief material, such as medicines, fodder, etc. there, it is finding it difficult to do so. In a situation like this, two of our friends were engaged in a dispute a shortwhile ago, but the submissions of both of them are correct. Shri Damodar Pandey said that the Bihar Government was grappling with the situation with whatever resources were available with them in order to save the life and property of the people. This is a fact. This is beyond the capacity of the Bihar Government. Though they have done whatever was possible to provide relief to the people whose houses and crops have been destroyed and to mitigate the sufferings of the people, but they do not have the needed resources. Therefore, as a representative of that State, I would like to request the Central Government that the State Government of Bihar should be given as much assistance as possible in this matter. Gandak, Budhi Gandak, Kamla, Bagmati and Kosi rivers originate in the Himalayas and after crossing Nepal flow through Motihari, Jharia, Purnea, Darbhanga and Muzffarpur. Although these areas are flooded every year, the ravage caused by floods this year is particularly more. Therefore, whatever assistance you can give in the form of loan, grant or relief must be given so that the life and property of the people could be saved and the stranded population could be removed to safety. Can these flood be stopped in a year or two? No, it cannot. Due to natural calamity, heavy rains are received as a result of which floods are caused and it is difficult to stop them. Some faulty planning on our part is also responsible for it. Bagmati Scheme in Sitamarhi district has been going on for the last 15 years and crores of rupees have already been invested therein, but its embankments are still incomplete. The river water inundates the areas on either side of the river. Although Flood Control Board is there and it has made on the spot study of the situation but going by the large area of land in Bihar, it appears that not even one tenth of

[Shri R.S. Khirhar]

it has been covered. Under the circumstances, I would request that on the one hand short term facilities should be provided and on the other long-term schemes which include flood control, irrigation and roads, should also be formulated for the future. If we formulate some scheme by coordinating roads and flood together, it can certainly protect North Bihar from the devastation of floods in future. Here I want to thank the Central Government once again for giving maximum assistance to Bihar Government so as to check further loss of life and property. At the same time, I would like to thank the hon. Prime Minister also that he has gone to visit the flood affected areas of three States Bihar, Bengal and Assam today. Tomorrow when he sees the revage caused by floods with his own eyes, I am sure, he will consider giving more Central assistance to Bihar Government.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr Pathak, your party has already taken 16 minutes. If you take only four or five minutes, I can allow you

SHRI ANANDA PATHAK (Darjeeling): An alarming situation has arisen due to the devastating flood in Assam, Bihar, West Bengal and other parts of the country. Even some of the States which were suffering from severe drought, now they are also facing flood, according to the latest report.

Recently, I toured some of the flood affected areas of North Bengal which are badly affected. The flood has taken the toll of 47 human lives, nearly five million people have been affected. A large number of people are reported to have been missing, an area of about 3000 sq km has been affected, hundreds and thousands acres of crop land with standing crops worth than 30 crores rupees have been swept away, a large number of cattles have died and several thousands of hutments have been submerged. A large number of bridges, culverts and roads have been damaged.

West Dinajpur, Malda, Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri and the plain areas of Darjeeling district are worst hit. Even in the hill areas of Darjeeling, some villages have been completely swept away by the landslide. The neighbouring State of Sikkim has also been affected by heavy landslides. According to the latest information a vast area of Murshidabad and Birbhum districts have also been submerged. All the major rivers of North Bengal, namely, Teesta, Mahanadi, Balasun, Punarrava, Atraji, Torsha and other tributaries crossed the danger level.

In such a situation the West Bengal Govt. has undertaken the task of rescue and relief on war footing. The Chief Minister and the Planning Minister of West Bengal visited the affected areas. Other Ministers, MPs, MLAs, Panchayat members and officers are also visiting the affected areas regularly, meeting the suffering people and supervising and organising the rescue and relief operation.

The State Government is stepping up its efforts in tackling the situation. It has already spent its share of Rs. 11.75 crores in providing relief. But the Central Government has not yet released the matching grant. According to the preliminary estimate, expenses incurred by the State Government on account of relief, repair and restoration works would be more than Rs. 100 crores. The State Government has requested the Central Government to sanction this amount immediately. It has also urged the Centre to release the share of its matching grant of Rs. 11.75 crores already spent for providing relief to the flood victims without any further delay. The State Government has urged the Central Government to send a central team immediately to West Bengal for visiting the affected areas and to assess the magnitude of the damage done by the devastating floods.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please come to the last portion of your speech.

SHRI ANANDA PATHAK: I therefore reiterate and urge upon the Central Government to release the matching grant of Rs. 11.75 crores without any further delay, send the central team to West-Bengal immediately and sanction Rs. 100 crores for relief, repair and restoration works as early as possible.

Coming to the basic problem of such calamities, I should say that even after 40 years of independence and after executing six Five Year Plans, we have totally failed to solve the serious problem of flood and drought which are taking the toll of a large number of human lives and adversely affecting our agriculture, putting pressure on the entire economy of our country.

The Government has set up so many Committees and Commissions. They have submitted their reports and recommendations; but the Government has not implemented any of their recommendations. The National Commission on Floods had made some important recommendations years back; but they are rotting in the cold storage.

The Brahmaputra Board had drawn up a master plan; but the plan has not been implemented.

The main problem is that we have failed to maintain the ecological balance. Due to ecological imbalance, we are simultaneously facing droughts on the one hand and floods on the other. Therefore, the ecological balance should be maintained. Unless the deforestation is stopped, we cannot hope to tackle these calamities.

With these words, I conclude.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAM BAHADUR SINGH (Chhapra): Mr. Chairman, Sir, though the people of three States, namely, Assam Bihar and Bengal are suffering from devastation of flood, I would particularly speak about Bihar. My State Bihar, especially northern

part of it, has been severely hit by flood. 188 Blocks out of 587 are under the grip of flood and a population of about 1 crore to 1.75 crores are facing the fury of flood. 23 out of 40 districts of the State have been affected by flood and there are some districts, such as, Khagaria, Purnea, Katihar, Madhubani, Janjharpur, Darbhanga, Motihari, Sitmarhi and Vaishali which have been totally cut off from other parts of the State. There places have become inaccessible from all sides as a result of which lakhs of people have taken shelter in high altitude areas, so much so that some of them are living on trees. There are thousands who are still stranded in flood waters. There is no arrangement for the relief material to reach them. The people are on the verge of starvation and cholera and typhoid have broken out as epidemics resulting in deaths. What to talk of food, they are not getting even medicines.

One hon. Member was saying just now that Bihar Government was grappling with the flood situation. I do not know whether the State Government is grappling with the situation or not. However, two things have come to light. According to one report, some food packets were being taken to Darbhanga by helicopter for the flood victims, but a Minister got some 400 packets unloaded simply because he himself was to go to Darbhanga. The concerned officer, though agitated, agreed to unload 400 food packets by saying that when hundreds were dying in the flood, it would not make much of a difference if a few more died, but the Minister had to go.

There is yet another report that the Chief Minister of Bihar issued a statement saying that the road to Darbhanga which was washed away had since been repaired. Hearing this, the former Chief Minister of the State who was anxious to tour his Constituency Darbhanga left for Darbhanga but had to come back because the road was not repaired. I do not know why the Chief Minister issued such a wrong statement? The former Chief Minister had, perhaps, sent a telegram to the Prime Minister

[Shri Ram Bahadur Singh]

to apprise him about what was happening there.

The situation of flood being very grave, the people can do nothing but to pray to God. The Government of Bihar has sought Rs. 200 crores as relief from the Central Government, but the Centre must exercise restraint, otherwise these 200 crores too would be swindled and the people would not get any benefit.

You spent Rs. 1200-1300 crores to construct 3100 kms. long barrage on the rivers of Bihar and another 20-30 crores are spent on repairs every year. In spite of all this, if the barrage collapses, it means that the money has been swindled.

I know that the work of soil depositing has not been done for years on the barrages of Mahananda, Kosi, Bhutahi, Balan, Kamla rivers and Western Kosi Canal. No repair work has been undertaken during the last 7-8 years. The entire planning and estimates are on papers only. Therefore, I would request you that you do give relief funds because nothing can be done without money, but it should be ensured that once money is given, proper monitoring is done, otherwise, the people will continue to die in spite of the money having been granted. (*Interruptions*) These are not my words. The former Chief Minister has sent a telegram to this effect which was carried by the newspapers and you can verify it.

Mr. Chairman, Sir this situation is temporary. Every year the people of our country are either facing floods or drought. You may go through the report of the National Commission on floods. From 1976 to 1978, crops worth Rs 3180 crores were damaged by floods, in 1983 the losses were worth Rs. 2292 crores and in 1984 the corresponding figure was Rs. 1650 crores. If this situation continues, we will have to incur losses to the tune of Rs. 2000 crores every year. Therefore, in addition to providing immediate relief, we have to think of long-term measures and the first of such steps

should be to hold talks with the Government of Nepal in this regard. You should make some arrangements to tame the rivers which originate from Nepal and flow into Northern Bihar so that a reservoir could be constructed in Nepal which would help in irrigation and in the generation of electricity. Besides, the pending projects should be cleared.

A proposal regarding the construction of an embankment on the northern bank of river Ganga has been under discussion for years and I have raised it two or three times in the House but the matter is still oscillating between the Central and the State Government. I want to submit that you should complete the projects which are lying incomplete

Along with it, the beds of some rivers are filled with sand pebbles. You should get such river beds cleared. You cannot escape from your responsibility by saying that it involves huge expenditure and requires a long time. Of course, it will be expensive but you can formulate a long term plan spanning 20 or 25 years and work steadily on that. You go on building new dams and getting the old ones repaired, but until you get the river-beds cleared and implement the Ganga-Kauveri project, our country will not get relief from the ravage of floods.

SHRI VIJOY KUMAR YADAV (Nalanda): Mr. Chairman, Sir, while speaking on the floods which have hit Bihar, Bengal and Assam, I will confine myself to Bihar only. The situation in Northern Bihar is so alarming that it is beyond words to describe it. I do not have words to express the condition in those areas. It is not possible to assess the situation by merely surveying it from the helicopter. What I mean to say is that the situation is absolutely miserable. I also want to point out that Southern Bihar, where my constituency Nalanda is located, has been flooded 4 times this year. I have returned from that area only today. One Central team is going there. Our hon. Minister of Water Resources has already made an aerial survey the

Hon. Prime Minister is going to the flood affected areas to assess the situation. But neither the Bihar Government nor the Centre is paying any attention to Nalanda.

A lot has been said about relief measures and a stress was laid on the need for keeping it above the party level. I also feel that the issues of floods and drought level. I also feel that the issues of floods and drought should be kept above party politics. But when we say something during the course of debate in the Parliament on the subject, it is stated in reply that the Government is taking all possible steps within its capability. So far as Bihar is concerned, I think it is far from truth. Anyone can go there and verify it. Basically, Bihar Government is incapable. When it is incapable of doing work in ordinary times, what can it really do in times of crisis like floods? There is a lot of resentment among the people in these areas which are quite backward. The efforts made by the Government in times of such calamity are far from adequate.

SHRI DAMODAR PANDEY: They are working according to their capacity.

SHRI VIJOY KUMAR YADAV: They are not doing any such thing. What reply can I give to him about it? I am also a Member of Parliament like him. I have as much information as he has. It is not that he is better informed than me. Relief measures should be taken according to the gravity of the situation prevailing there. The people and the cattle are dying in large numbers. I will now make some submissions about my district Nalanda. There are a number of rivulets, such as Lokine, Sakri, Gointhwa, Soiwa, Mahana, Malisandh, Paimar and Panchane. When the floods struck, all the embankments and other protective structures were destroyed. No work has been undertaken in this direction. The entire relief funds were pocketed by the contractors and officers. If you intend to take serious measures, then you should rise above party-politics, take all the opposition parties into confidence and send a

Central team there to assess the magnitude of the damage caused by floods.

I think that the Bihar Government has sought Central assistance of Rs. 200 crores. I think Rs. 100 crores will be required for my district alone. Therefore, Rs. 200 crores is totally, inadequate. Government has schemes for the removal of poverty. Fifty-thousand cattle are bought every year under these schemes but more than 50 thousand cattle die during floods and droughts. Besides, 10 lakh houses are proposed to be constructed every year for the weaker sections of society but more than 20 lakh houses are washed away in floods and rains. You spend thousands and thousands of rupees annually in the name of relief. Countless amounts have been spent for providing relief.

measures since independence. According to the economists, our developmental efforts will yield results only when we take the floods and droughts seriously and formulate long term programmes to prevent them. We should spend more amount on our long term schemes. Only then we shall be able to protect the people from floods and droughts and ensure progress of our country. The situation in our State is that the people are dying of starvation. I spoke to the collector only yesterday. Boats have not been provided there. I asked him as to why did he not make arrangements for boats when we had emergency powers. There is water and water all around and people are dying of hunger and there are no means to reach them. No relief is being provided to them. This is the state of affairs. After all, who is going to take this responsibility? Aerial survey is being conducted and after that a Central team will be sent there and God only knows how many days you will take to release funds and how many more people will die by that time. You have to pay attention to the relief works. The breached embankments have to be repaired immediately and other relief measures taken up on a war footing. No work has been started so far. Hence, I think that it should be started at the earliest.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Only one person can speak

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, it is not possible. The small party representatives cannot speak on all Bills. See there are one or two party representatives, so all of them cannot speak.

SHRI PARAG CHALIHA (Jorhat): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am thankful to you for giving me this opportunity. I am also thankful to my colleagues on this side and also from the other side....

AN. HON. MEMBER: Sir, where is the Minister?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ministers are here.

SHRI PARAG CHALIHA: ...for joining issues in this particular natural calamity and it cannot but be so. I also take this opportunity to thank the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh for offering a gift of 10,600 tonnes of rice for the flood affected people of Assam. "Delhi Door Ast", it is not merely a legendary saying said by the first Mughal invader it is bitter truth for Assam and for that matter the North East is known for area which acquires prominence only when negative issues are involved. Very seldom, if ever, the positive aspects of North-eastern regions and more particularly of Assam have been prominently discussed much less appreciated not only on the forum of this House, but I am sad to say also in the national Press as well.

We have Sri Sankardev who is not been known even by some great scholars. It is a great pity. We pity them, we do not censure them. We come from that place which taught,

"Dhanya dhanya Kalikal, dhanya dhanya Naratanu thal dhanya dhanya Bharat Varishe."

But in Assam even during the calamity we did not find any due programme of action. Therefore, I would say, our woes and weilings take far to reach the ears and eyes of Delhi. Of course, the Minister for agriculture was good enough to visit this year as well as last year and we are also thankful to the Prime Minister for at least accepting our repeated request although he failed to, oblige us at the time of the last flood. Sir, it is very sad for us to note that we have to come here with a begging bowl when thousands of our people have been suffering because of the recurring floods. No other State in India has to suffer so heavily and so regularly from this ravage as Assam has to. For your information, the flood is the foremost single impediment to any programme that the Government of India and for that matter the Government of Assam envisages towards the progress and welfare of the people.

17.00 hrs.

Sir, under the 7th Plan the Government of Assam has submitted proposals for flood control to the tune of Rs. 150 crores. But Delhi did not appreciate it. They cut the figure down to Rs. 70 crores. Only 70 crores for executing a plan which requires Rs. 150 crores! What can be done in this way?

A delegation of MPs from Assam visited the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Water resources. They pleaded with the Minister for Water Resources for relief. But the Minister did not care even to visit Assam, which is the worst affected area in the whole of the country, as far as floods are concerned. Unless he visits the area personally, how can he have a good idea about the extent of damage caused by the floods? How can he estimate the magnitude of ravages of floods and the misery of the people? But he did not visit Assam.

As I mentioned earlier, we met the Planning Commission people also. We asked for special grants under Tribal Sub-Plan because people most affected because of the recurring floods are mostly tribals.

These people inhabit the riverine areas. That is why, the Government of Assam submitted a plan for the development of tribal areas, which are the most affected by floods. The tribal sub-plan amounted to Rs. 171 crores. But I am very sorry to state that not a single farthing has been given so far.

Thank to this august House, the Brahmaputra Board was constituted in 1981. It submitted a master plan in December 1986. The only immediate effect of this master plan is that the Board has been functioning without a Chairman! It has no chairman from 1-1-1987. So, you can very well imagine as to how much interest is shown by the Central Government to solve this pernicious problem of floods in Assam.

The magnitude of the problem is such that we have three waves of floods in just one month. And the area affected included the South East of Arunachal Pradesh upto the North East of Bangladesh.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN Mr. Chaliha, please wind up.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI (Guwahati): Please give him two or three minutes.

SHRI PARAG CHAIHA: Sir, only on the 12th of August, I was in Dibrugarh. About two lakhs of people were waiting as if to be devonved by the deluge for some relief....*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude.

SHRI PARAG CHALIHA: Last year, damage caused by floods totalled to Rs. 400 crores. But even Rs. 40 were not given by the Central Government. This year 11,525 villages have been affected. 2.564 million hectares have been badly affected, out of which crop area alone accounted for 5.81 lakh hectares. 7.615 millions of people were affected out of which 16 lakhs of fami-

lies have been very badly affected. Total damage comes to Rs. 600 crores. But nothing is done so far. There is a huge loss of cattle. About 41,934 cattle perished. 77 people had lost their lives. We had to open 1,077 relief camps to take care of the victims. So, you can visualise the magnitude of the problem.

We are asking for a short term loan of Rs. 50 crores to meet the expenses with regard to 1077 relief camps, etc. We want money for providing drinking water. We want money for pest control. We want at least Rs. 550 crores for rehabilitation work, for repairing roads and for building damaged schools and houses. We want the TSP to be executed. In particular, we want that the Subansiri Project be completed as early as possible.

Sir, this Government is well noted for its adhocism. When we are facing such a grave calamity, let us do away with this adhocism and do something permanent to find a solution to this great problem. When will this acute problem be solved or is it really insoluble? I do not think that anybody wants this region to be allowed to rot and perish.

SHRI PIYUS TIRAKY: Please give me some time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Not now.

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY: His area is flooded. He must be allowed to speak.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Don't speak. It will serve no purpose.

SHRI PIYUS TIRAKY: Sir....

*(Interruptions)***

MR. CHAIRMAN: Whatever he says will not form part of the record. Without my permission, you can't speak, now.

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY: With your permission only, he will speak.

**Not recorded.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM BHAGAT PASWAN (Rosaera): Mr. Chairman, Sir, floods have become a permanent feature in North Bihar and they bring with them miseries to the people. Crops on about 31 lakh hectares of land have been destroyed and about one lakh people and cattle have been washed away. The communication system has been paralysed. There is water and water everywhere. Not a single house is visible.

One point which I want to submit is that ever since you have formulated the flood control scheme, the damage and the sufferings of the people have increased manifold. About 500 to 600 crores of rupees have been spent on control schemes but the miseries of the people have increased further. What sort of a plan is this?

The relief funds meant for distribution among the flood victims of North Bihar goes into the pockets of officers and do not reach the people at all. On one hand floods have hit North Bihar and on the other hand the officers are having a heyday. During floods people are faced with three kinds of difficulties namely, shortage of food, diseases and lack of shelter. Wells and other sources of water have been submerged. That is why, the people are not getting even potable water. Epidemics have broken out and essential commodities are being sold at very high prices. Potatoes are being sold at Rs. 8 per kg. and one litre of oil is selling at Rs. 15. There is an acute shortage of foodgrains as well. The people are drowning. Why should not the officers meet the same fate? I had requested the Collector of Darbhanga district to go there and see the situation for himself. He agreed but never went. Not a single official has paid any visit there. That is why the people are in so much agony and pining for foodgrains. The essential items are being sold in the black market. I appeal to the Central Government as well as the

State Government to distribute foodgrains free of cost there.

One more thing which I want to point out is that when the flood waters recede, the farmers will need seeds and fertiliser. Therefore, I would suggest that seeds and fertilisers should be supplied to the farmers free of cost.

Yet another thing which I want to submit is that Kamala Balan dam which is running parallel to Kosi should be extended. Further, I want to submit that the officers associated with the Flood Control Scheme are all irrational. Each engineer has constructed buildings for himself worth lakhs and crores of rupees. From where did they amass so much of money? The swindle funds allocated for various projects they construct defective dams so that they breach often and repair work is undertaken quite frequently. Thereby enabling them to make money. That is why, no permanent solution is being found to this problem which has become a permanent feature. Hence, steps should be taken to find a permanent solution to this problem. Our suggestion in this regard would be that embankments that are constructed should be from one end to the other. You should construct the embankment till the very end. What happens is that sometimes it is left from one side and sometimes from the other side. This results in water spreading to all sides. Your officers take the problems of the people very casually which causes much trouble for the people. Our Government is very liberal. It is spending plenty of money. It is providing relief in the form of foodgrains and seeds. Crores are being spent for controlling floods. But this money is being pocketed by the officers in charge of the implementation of the relief works. You should go there and make an assessment of the situation. So I want to request you that the Kamala Balan embankment should be extended from Poiya to Kursaila. It has already been constructed from Jaynagar to Kuthram.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, canals should be constructed in between and water released in

them. The remaining water should be allowed to go into the river Ganga. This is the scheme which they do not understand. You should ensure that this scheme is completed.

With these words, I thank you.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you continue, nothing will be recorded. You resume your seat.

The hon. Minister may reply now.
(Interruptions)

I have already told you that if the small parties insist on talking on all days, it is not possible.

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY: His party has not participated. Don't be so cruel. Please give him two minutes.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: No; that is not possible. Please resume your seat. It is not possible. How is it possible if all small parties want to talk on all subjects? Is it possible?
(Interruptions) No; it is not possible. Is it the privilege of small parties to talk on all subjects? If there is only one member in a party, can he talk on all subjects? It is not possible. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY: In this case, you have allowed all the parties. Kindly go through the record, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please resume your seat.

SHRI PIYUS TIRAKY: In protest, I am walking out.

17.12 hrs.

(At this stage, Shri Piyus Tiraky left the House.)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now the Minister.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA): The House has been discussing the current flood situation in various parts of the country, and a number of hon. Members have taken part in this discussion.

This year, floods of serious intensity have caused extensive damage, affecting the life and property of the people in Assam, Bihar, West Bengal and Jammu and Kashmir. In Assam and Bihar, the situation has been very bad, and flood levels have surpassed and crossed the highest flood levels reached in the past. It shows the extent of the flood situation in these States.

Many knowledgeable and perceptive speeches have been made by hon. Members. Many Members have narrated their personal experiences in this respect, and have described the havoc wrought by these unprecedented floods. We extend our profound sympathy to the people who have been affected by this, and I can assure that the Government of India will do all it can to see that these difficulties which the people are suffering from, would be minimized to the extent possible.

I could give you some figures regarding flood damage and other related matters which we have received from the State Governments. An area of about 52 lakh hectares has experienced floods, affecting a population of 26 million, the crop in the area of about 18 lakh hectares, about 5 lakh houses and public utilities worth about Rs. 193 crores are reported to have been damaged. 401 human lives are also reported to have lost so far. The total damage so far assessed and reported by various States is of the order of Rs. 880 crores. The report is incomplete because the full details from the States are yet to be received. But as of now, this is the information we have received from the State Governments.

Almost all the members mentioned about central assistance which the State

[Shri Ram Niwas Mirdha]

Governments have been wanting in this respect, and in respect to other natural calamities like drought etc. I can straightway say that the Government of India does not discriminate between one State and another; and I would very much disagree with the hon Member Shri Chaliha when he says that they come to the Centre with a begging bowl. There is nothing like a begging bowl. It is the right of the State to come to the Central Government for assistance, and it is the duty of the Central Government to help the State to the extent possible. But the problem arises that the Central Government has also limited fund and it has to act within the ambit of a certain policy. The last Finance Commission laid down certain norms about the margin money and how it is to be used in the case of drought and other calamities. So, we are acting completely in accordance with that, and any amount that is asked by the State Government, it is not just possible to get it. Therefore, I would submit that the Central Government has a certain way of working in this and it is very well laid down exercise; nothing is hidden. The central team goes there, discuss with the State Government and the State Government submit their memorandum. Some States have not submitted their memoranda about damage, etc. But the teams are going; and I can assure once again through you to the whole House that the Central Government, as in the past, would do all it can in this respect.

From 1965-66 to 1986-87, the Central Government assistance towards flood, cyclone, etc. was Rs. 2389 crores; and I wish to assure the House that no discrimination of any type would be discernible in whatever the Central Government does in this respect.

Now various suggestions have been given as to how the situation has to be controlled.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: The Central Team has already visited Assam. A report

has come. Will you kindly indicate the amount of assistance that you are giving now, because if you do not give the assistance now and even if the assistance is given some time later, the problem becomes insurmountable?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA: As I said, some amount is already available with the State Government. In the present system, under the margin scheme, they are expected to spend that.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: They have spent it.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA: Even if they spend more, it would be adjustable against the Central Government's assistance; it has a certain procedure and it takes a few days. But I can assure that the teams have already gone; even if the States have not sent their memoranda, the teams have already gone.

SHRI PARAG CHALIHA: What about West bengal?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA: I can only say in a general way that no discrimination would be shown against any State.

SHRI ANANDA PATHAK: You have said that you have given some money. That should be released immediately.

What have you done with that?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA: Incidentally, the West Bengal Government has not even sent the memorandum of demand, etc. They may submit their demand. They may have to have a comprehensive picture of the whole thing. The Central Team goes there and studies about it. It is all open; everybody is free to discuss about it. I can only say that we would expedite the assistance as much as possible and the State Government are expected to initiate the relief measures in anticipation of what the Central Government do.

SHRI PARAG CHALIHA: What about

the memorandum received from the Assam Government?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA: A memorandum has been received from the Assam Government. We are examining it. The Central Team has gone. The Prime Minister has arrived there today with a team of officers and other Ministers have also visited Assam. We will give them full support. Regarding the Central Government's assistance to Assam, again Mr Chaliha has said that Assam does not receive assistance. There is a certain part of the flood component grant which the State Government have in their own budget, then another component—Central Government central sector, this we give; and I think Assam has got most out of the central sector assistance, so far as flood control is concerned; and we are happy that they are doing so, because their needs are great. Brahmaputra Board is there, it has just submitted its master plan of the Brahmaputra basin. They are following it with all possible steps. (*Interruptions*) To say that Brahmaputra Board is neglected is not correct. Once in a while, there may be something. But the whole set is there and they have come out with a report which we are examining. We will consult the State Governments and we will take early steps as to what can be done in this respect.

The problem of floods has been studied by various committees all these years and a large number of suggestions etc., have been given from time to time. A Rashtriya Barh Ayog was constituted which has given certain recommendations. I would not go into details because those recommendations of the Rashtriya Barh Ayog were considered by the Conference of Ministers of Irrigation of various States. They have been recommended by them. I am sure they will receive the attention.

Two type of approaches are there for flood protection or to tackle the flood problem. One is the structural aspect of it which means construction of dams, flood protection works like embankments and things of that nature. Besides structures which

receive lot of attention, every one demands to have more of them. These structures by themselves cannot solve the problem of flood protection.

There are what we call the non-structural measures which are really very important and the Rashtriya Barh Ayog as well as various other committees that have been appointed in this respect have already stressed the non-structural measures. Two examples of non-structural measures I give. First is a flood forecasting system. Because if it is known in advance how much flood is being received in a particular area the Government and the people can prepare themselves for this. The Central Water Commission - which deals with the various inter-State rivers - has flood forecasting stations numbering 147. In Bihar there are 36, in West Bengal there are 14 and in Assam there are 20. This year 1500 forecasts regarding Assam were sent, 650 forecasts to Bihar and 230 forecasts to West Bengal were sent; and 93 per cent of these forecasts came true. This is a very important function that the Central Water Commission is performing. We are trying to strengthen the system and we are going to have more and more flood forecasting stations. Reports about rivers and rivulets even in inaccessible areas are sent by wireless because the stations are unattended and unmanned. No one can live there. Even at the top of a mountain if a stream is flowing they can say how much water is there in the rivulet and how much it will become when it reaches a certain point. So, this system is being strengthened and the flood forecasting system is working very satisfactorily and our intention is to strengthen it to the extent possible.

Another aspect of the non-structural measures is Flood Plain Zoning. This is very important. And, unfortunately I have to confess in the House that the State Government have not taken it seriously. They have their problems, I admit. But unless this is done, there cannot be any protection from the floods for the people who live in those towns. Soon before the report of the Rashtriya Barh Ayog came a

[Shri Ram Niwas Mirdha]

model bill for Flood Plain Zoning was sent to the various State Governments. Various State Governments have responded. Only one State, Manipur has passed this Bill. But it has not been enforced till last year. About the other States, we are in touch with them and we want that it should be done at the earliest so that this aspect is attended to.

What it actually means is that in certain areas the flooding takes place or in the rainy season. The river becomes very narrow in the summer before the rains come. And they have certain flood plains which it naturally spreads out in certain areas. But unfortunately these flood prone places are being encroached upon by people due to pressure of population and other factors. People are settling there. People are constructing houses.

17.24 hrs.

[MR DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

This is a natural area where floods would come. So unless some restrictions are placed on the type of development and the constructions of houses is stopped in the flood plain zones, these damages and these problems will always arise. Therefore, the necessity of having some type of a flood plain zoning is very important. And unless that is done, we will not be able to do anything in this respect.

For example, even when there are two embankments like Kosi embankment for example, as the Kosi is a very wide river embankments are aligned up to 10 to 12 kilometers about, even more wide some times. When it gets narrowed, a large number of people get within the embankments, cultivate, live as villagers and settle there. When the river comes up as it is bound to in a situation, they say that they should not be affected. If you live in the bed of the river and do not expect floods to come, I think it is very unusual. So, a series of steps will have to be taken, when they

can be shifted in time, what sort of relief they get when the flood is on, when they get back to the lands and how to do it. Along with the flood zoning, a lot of other policy measures have to be taken, for which we have been requesting the State Governments from time to time. In Delhi, five or six villages lay right in the bed of the river. When the river rises as it is bound to after the monsoon, they shift out and they say they are affected.

So, instead of getting panicky about the whole situation, the whole thing should be very systematically planned, there should be high places where relief camps can be established, free ration or other facilities to be given to them for a few weeks when they are there. When the flood recedes, they can go back and cultivate. Sir, they do not want flood protection all the time. Even when the embankment is being constructed in their places, they say please keep sluices, we want water to come in because the soils gets regenerated by floods as silts come with it. So, it has some advantages also. It is a very complex situation and no simple solution can be found for this problem. For this, the cooperation of the State Governments and the enlightened support of this House is really very much necessary. Broadly, this is our approach to the whole thing.

I would like to touch one or two points which were raised before I finish. Among the long term measures suggested was, our talks with Nepal and Dr. K.L. Rao Scheme about Ganga Cauvery project, about which a lot of things were said.

As regards floods, the problem of North Bihar is that all the rivers come from Nepal. We do not have any control over their catchments. We want afforestation of the catchments in a big way. We cannot do anything because this is in their area. There, the whole silt comes in and we have to put silt traps in some of the barrages that we have made. But there is some limitation. We are conscious of the fact that a lot of silts come and settle there, and even the embankment becomes difficult because

the silt level rises and the whole thing becomes unworkable, and water instead of draining, it gets back into the embankment itself. We are in touch with the Nepal Government and we are receiving some cooperation from them. I am sure that with their cooperation, some progress can be made in this respect. We can cooperate with them in constructing dams either in our areas or in their areas wherever the experts tell us, which will help them and they can generate electric power, whose benefit the two countries India and Nepal can share. We are very keen that we get the fullest cooperation from the Nepalese Government.

Some progress has been made on negotiations with His Majesty's Government Nepal for Karnali dam. On Pancheshwar, surveys and investigations have been done in the Indian Territory whereas surveys in the Nepal territory have not yet been started by the Nepalese Government. The Kosi High dam Report was prepared by India in May, 1981 and handed over to the Nepalese Government.

Indo Nepal discussion at the level of Secretaries to Government are expected to be held at mutual convenience.

We are very much conscious of the fact that the North Bihar situation can be tackled only in cooperation with the Government of Nepal.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: What about permanent measures for Brahmaputra where no foreign Government is involved.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA: For Brahmaputra, I commend this report. I will send a copy of this report to the hon. Member.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: Unless it is implemented, the report will not help.

(Interruptions)

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: Can Assam Government take a project of Rs. 3,000/- crores?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA: Even a discussion with the neighbouring Government.....

(Interruptions)

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: No neighbouring Government is involved.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA: Neighbouring Government means neighbouring State.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: Who will do it? The Central Government should do it.

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA: One component of Brahmaputra Plan is a very big dam in Arunachal, for which Government of Arunachal is not willing.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY (Katwa): Why?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA: Ask them.

(Interruptions)

Whether it is the Cauvery dispute between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu and other States or Brahmaputra dam, etc. the Central Government on its own is doing the work of talking to State Government. We are prepared to assist the respective State Governments to come to a settlement. We can lend our good offices, we can bring them together. But just leaving everything to the Central Government is not possible. We are very much keen on that.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: You are not taking any action. *(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Let the Minister reply. This is not the way. If everybody speaks, how can he answer?

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY: Has the Minister any knowledge as to why Arunachal Government is objecting to it? What is the reason for that?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA: It submerges a large portion of their area.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY: How to rectify that? This is their problem also? They have to sit together.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA: The Central Government is prepared to lend its good offices.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY: What is this scientific study? Every year floods take place.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA: Water and irrigation is a State subject...
(*Interruptions*)

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY: when it comes among many States, then the Centre will have to take actions ..
(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA: We will do everything possible to obviate their difficulties. We will need the cooperation of the State Governments concerned.

Now, we come to the Ganga Cauvery link about which a mention has been made by so many Members. There are two schemes which were floated at a certain time, a few years back. Dr. Rao's idea was to lift the Ganga waters and send them to the south. Our experts examined that scheme and they found it very difficult to implement. One reason was, it needs massive power to lift the whole river. This we have no way of getting. If we could get it, then we have other better uses of this. You cannot lift the whole river. You can do it on paper, theoretically. Dr. Rao was a brilliant person who conceived this brilliant idea. But our experts thought that this was not very practical. Secondly, it did not have much of flood protection content. Similarly, there was a proposal by Dr. Dastur. He had a proposal of garland canal....

SHRI M. RAGHUMA REDDY: The other day the former Minister had agreed that technically the project was good but eco-

nomically it was not viable. But now you are saying that technically it is not feasible.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA: I did not say that technically it was not feasible. Technically everything is feasible. But is it practicable to lift such a large amount of water? It needs tremendous power. From where do I get that tremendous power? We have not abandoned this idea of having inter-basin transfer of water. If there is excess water in one basin of river, we believe that it should be transferred to another area which lacks water. This basic concept of Dr. Rao we still stick on to. And for this purpose, we have set up the National Water Development Agency..

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY: What did it do? (*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA: It has to be surveyed in great detail and it is doing a very good work. It has surveyed many basins. It has identified excess waters in certain areas. It is continuing its work. This agency has been given 10 years mandate starting with 1982 to finish the work of survey of the whole country, as to how much water is available in which river basin and through which short way - having dams, diversion of canals and things like that—can this water be transported to areas which have no water. This agency has been created specially for this purpose.

So, Sir, I can assure the House that this is very much before us and this recurring spectre of drought and floods which we find almost every year in our country can only be remedied if some such big measures are taken for which we are doing everything possible and I think some concrete suggestions will certainly emerge out of this. Again I thank the hon. Members for the suggestions they have given.

SHRI BIPIN PAL DAS (Tezpur): Sir, what has happened to Ganga-Brahmaputra Canal Project?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now we go to the next item—item No. 12. Shri Vengala Rao.....

(Interruptions)

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: Sir, he has not given even the minimum indication of the relief that is going to come.....
(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Shri Vengala Rao.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: As a protest we are walking out.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: We are walking out as a protest.

17.36 hrs.

{At this stage Shri Basudeb Acharia and other hon. Members left the House.}

BRENTFORD ELECTRIC (INDIA) LIMITED (ACQUISITION AND TRANSFER OF UNDERTAKINGS) BILL

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI J. VENGALA RAO): Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Bill to provide for the acquisition and transfer of the undertakings of the Brentford Electric (India) Limited, with a view to securing the proper management of such undertakings so as to subserve the interests of the general public by ensuring the continued manufacture and production of electrical equipments which are essential to the needs of the economy of the country and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto, be taken into consideration."

Sir, my Bill is a small and simple Bill. Government have decided to acquire the Undertaking of Brentford Electric (India) Limited, by nationalisation with effect from 1st April, 1986. Accordingly, the Brentford

Electric (India) Limited (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Bill 1987 has been introduced in the Lok Sabha for consideration and passing.

M/s Brentford Electric (India) Limited has been in existence for the last about 23 years. It employs about 200 persons.

Important products of the Company are regulators, rectifiers, transformers for Defence and Atomic establishments.

Shareholdings are:

Andrew Yule	...	50 per cent
Brentford U.K.		40 per cent
Dr. Graham's Homes	...	10 per cent

Brentford Electric (India) Limited started incurring losses and ran into difficulties in 1978 when its funds position became critical. On the one hand there were numerous creditors whose dues were long outstanding on the other hand there were certain orders placed by Madras Atomic Power Project and Bhabha Atomic Research Centre for some critical components which were pending. Its management was taken over by Central Government with effect from 26.2.1979 and M/s Andrew Yule & Co Ltd. appointed as the authorised person to manage the affairs under the provisions of I (D&R) Act 1951. The period of the take over is due to expire on 25.11.1987.

After take over in 1979, the Unit has shown good results as regards production, sales and profit, except during the period 1982-85 when workers continued agitation.

Government approved nationalisation of this concern with effect from 1.4.1982 and its vesting in Andrew Yule and steps were being taken to introduce a Bill in the Monsoon Session of Parliament in 1983. Meanwhile, Andrew Yule were making efforts to sign an agreement with the Unions regarding service conditions.