

pal, Hoshangabad, Jabalpur, Raisen, Sagar, Khandwa, Dhar and Indore. The total loss due to the natural calamity is feared to be about Rs. 40 crores.

The State Government took all possible relief measures promptly and in order to widen their scope made necessary relaxations in its rules and circulars. The State Government has already spent the marginal amount of Rs. 1.83 crores allotted to it and has submitted a memorandum to the Union Government asking for assistance. The Centre thereupon is said to have decided to send a survey team to the State to assess the extent of damage caused by the hailstorms.

Apart from, and in addition to, the suggestions made by the State Government in its memorandum for assistance, it is suggested that:

1. The Survey Team to be sent to the State should be given a time-bound programme to complete its survey and submit its report and recommendations without delay so that the Union Government is able to take a decision about the quantum of aid to be given to the State before it is too late. It would be better if the survey team at least went to the worst-affected districts immediately to assess the extent of damage on the spot. The first estimates of total loss incurred amounts to Rs. 40 crores. Central grant aid should be at least three-fourth of this figure, namely, Rs. 30 crores.

2. The Union Government should give financial assistance to the State to start crop insurance scheme against natural calamities as it is beyond the financial resources of the State to take up any such scheme.

3. The rabi crop unaffected by the hailstorms is in danger of being damaged by pests. Hence, the Union Government should make provision for aerial crop spraying in the State.

(ii) SUPPLY OF CEMENT TO WEST BENGAL
BY CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

SHRI R. P. DAS (Krishnagar): Sir, the West Bengal Essential Commodities

Supply Corporation, a State Government undertaking of West Bengal, is facing a serious crisis due to the sudden order of the Government of India to partially de-control cement effective from February 28 last. The West Bengal Essential Commodities Supply Corporation has so long been the sole distributor of cement in West Bengal. The Corporation has accepted deposits of value of cement from thousands of small and bulk consumers of West Bengal on the basis of allocation made for the current year. The Corporation has received only 1.65 lakh MT against the allocation of 2.58 lakh MT and the Corporation was waiting for the balance quota of 0.93 lakh MT. But due to the latest instruction of the Government of India, the Corporation cannot get more than 0.258 lakh MT during March being 10 per cent of the total allocation for the current quarter. Thus the Corporation cannot meet the demand to the tune of 0.67 lakh MT during the current quarter. The depositors who include a large number of small and bulk consumers have already started agitating for the immediate supply of cement against deposits already accepted by the Corporation. So, the Corporation has urged upon the Central Government to despatch the balance of 0.67 lakh MT during March even if necessary by making special *ad hoc* allocation in favour of West Bengal. All these difficulties have arisen due to the sudden change of policy with regard to cement made by the Government of India.

Hence I request the Minister concerned to look into this serious problem which is being faced by the Corporation and take urgent steps to order for the despatch of 0.67 lakh MT of cement to West Bengal this month itself by treating this as a special case since this Corporation is a State Government undertaking.

I also demand that the Minister concerned make a statement in the House in this regard.

(iii) DECLARATION OF RIVERS AS NATIONAL
ASSETS FOR BETTER UTILISATION OF
THEIR WATER.

SHRI K. T. KOSALRAM (Tiruchendur): Water is the most precious re-

[Shri K. T. Koshalram]

source of our country. Although 1440 MAF of water flows annually in the country's river systems, hardly 200 MAF is actually being used, the rest flowing down waste into the sea. Consequently, the country is suffering from floods—droughts—floods syndrome and relief operations have become a heavy recurring burden on the country's economy. The Sixth Plan envisages the creation of an irrigation potential of 13.7 million hectares. The achievement in 1980-81 is 2.28 million hectares and the anticipated achievement for 1981-82 is 2.45 million hectares. In the remaining three years, of the Sixth Plan, unless effective steps are taken to harness the waters that go waste into the sea, the creation of irrigation potential of 13.7 million hectares will not be possible. Presently only 14% of the available waters is being used for irrigation purposes. The recurring loss on annual flood control and drought relief measures is approximately of the order of Rs. 1000 crores in the loss of crops and fertility of the soil throughout the country, besides the loss of human lives and cattle and other movable property. The River Boards Act was passed in 1956 and till to-day no river board could be formed as the concerned States did not agree to their formation. The Inter-State Water Disputes Act of 1956 has not solved many of the water disputes which are holding up many projects. The River Basin Commissions could not also be constituted. In these circumstances, I demand that the rivers should be declared immediately as national assets so that the Government of India could take mandatory action in the utilisation of river waters going presently waste into the sea.

(iv) BETTER UTILISATION OF CAPACITY OF ORDNANCE CLOTHING FACTORY AT AVADI NEAR MADRAS.

DR. A. KALANIDHI (Madras Central): The ordnance clothing factory at Avadi near Madras was set up in 1961 mainly for the production of parachutes. Later on, this factory is undertaking only a few Brake Parachutes besides other garments.

Substantial quantities of woollen socks are still being purchased in open market for defence use. Though these items

are manufactured in the ordnance factories at Kanpur and Shajahanpur, a similar line could be opened at Avadi also which would curtail the open market purchase.

All the cotton vests now being purchased from private traders could also be manufactured at the ordnance factory at Avadi where the technical know-how and trained personnel are available in plenty. Setting up of a new line of production of Cotton Vests will definitely provide substantial employment potential at a lesser cost.

The Ordnance Clothing Factories are not receiving the due attention of hon. Defence Minister like other segments of Defence Department. There are lots of anomalies in the piece rate given to workers, supply of tools, promotions, inadequate supervisory cadre, wanting job clerical staff, and dearth of staff quarters for the workers etc.

I request the Hon. Minister to look personally into the functioning of the Ordnance Clothing Factory, particularly, underutilised Avadi Factory and take appropriate action immediately to the betterment of the Ordnance factory at Avadi.

(v) DELAY IN ELECTRIFICATION OF THE VIJAYAWADA—BALLARSHA RAILWAY LINE IN ANDHRA PRADESH.

SHRIMATI VIDYA CHENNUPATI (Vijayawada) : The Vijayawada-Ballarsha railway line with 454 RKM is among the lines already approved by the Government for electrification at an estimated cost of Rs. 18 crores. In November last year, high priority was accorded to the project and tenders for executing the work were called for and already an amount of rupees five crores has been spent in civil works of the project. As per the tentative programme, the OHE contract is to be awarded in March-April, this year.

Now, according to present reports, the Vijayawada-Ballarsha electrification project has been changed to one of lower priority and the work on it has been slowed down. The Vijayawada-Ballarsha