

MR. SPEAKER: I have got my arguments on that. I have to decide it.

SHRI A. K. ROY (Dhanbad): Mr. Speaker, Sir....\*\*

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member may take his seat. I will decide it. I have got it. It is my prerogative, I decide it. It is under my consideration and you can see me in my Chamber. Now, Mr. Shivkumar Singh.

12.10 hrs.

### CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

#### SOIL EROSION PROBLEM IN THE COUNTRY

SHRI SHIV KUMAR SINGH THAKUR (Khandwa): I call the attention of the Minister of Agriculture to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon:

"The soil erosion problem in the country."

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL RECONSTRUCTION (SHRI BIRENDRA SINGH RAO): The Government is conscious of the problem of soil erosion caused through over-exploitation of natural vegetation and land resources and have taken appropriate steps to combat the problem.

The high rate of population growth—both human and livestock—has resulted in indiscriminate exploitation of natural resources, namely, soil, water and vegetation to meet the ever-increasing demand for food, fodder and fuel. This has upset the delicate ecological balance and led to severe soil erosion problem.

According to the report of the National Commission on Agriculture, out of a total geographical area of 328 million hectares, it is estimated that

about 150 million hectares are affected by serious water and wind erosion. In addition, an estimated area of 9.60 million hectares is subject to erosion due to shifting cultivation (3 million hac.) and erosion of culturable wastelands (6.60 million ha.). Soil erosion in the country can be broadly classified into erosion by water and erosion by wind.

*Erosion by water:*—Erosion by water constitutes the most serious menace to the land resources of the country not only because it affects the soil directly but also because it leads to siltation of multi-purpose reservoirs and tanks, occurrence of floods and loss to the sea of a great deal of sweet water. It has been estimated that the total annual loss of soil nutrients which takes place in this manner is equivalent to 8.4 million tonnes of NPK. The premature siltation of tanks and multi-purpose reservoirs is a particularly alarming consequence of water erosion. Observations have shown that the average rate of sedimentation in the reservoirs is many times higher than the rate which was assumed at the time they were designed and built. This reduces the effective life-span of the reservoirs.

In the hills and foot-hill regions, the problem of landslides, landslips and torrents is predominant. Whereas in the plains—particularly in the States of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat and to a lesser extent in Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal—guilty and ravine erosion has assumed serious proportions threatening the fertile cultivable lands. In addition, the traditional practice of shifting cultivation (Jhum or Podu) by tribal population has led to depletion of forest resources and consequent soil degradation in the North-Eastern region and the hilly regions of Orissa and Andhra Pradesh.

Soil erosion and consequent silt load results in drainage congestion

\*\*Not recorded.

[Shri Birendra Singh Rao]

and rising of river-beds and shifting of river courses which aggravates the flood hazards. Floods affect about 80 lakh hectares of land and cause an annual loss of the order of about Rs. 250 crores to the country by way of damage to crops, houses and other property.

**Erosion by wind:**—Wind erosion is predominant in the States of Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat and the coastal areas. It is estimated that an area of about 32 million hectares (including about 7 million hectares under sand-dunes) is affected by wind erosion.

The urgency of providing appropriate conservation treatments to affected areas, including the drainage system, has engaged the attention of the Government right from the First Five Year Plan period. A number of programmes have been launched under Central and State sectors to check soil erosion. Substantial part of the area under State sector schemes has been treated with contour/graded bunds. There are other schemes like ravine reclamation hill area bench terraces, afforestation and other engineering measures. The Centrally-sponsored sector programmes *inter alia* includes schemes like (i) soil conservation in the catchments of river valley projects; (ii) integrated soil, water and tree conservation in the Himalayas; (iii) Drought prone area programme; (iv) reclamation of alkali and acid soils; (v) control of shifting cultivation; (vi) protection of tablelands and stabilisation of ravinous areas; and (vii) social forestry. Excepting the first three schemes, the other schemes stand transferred to States since 1979-80 as decided by the previous regime.

By 1979-80, an estimated area of 23.40 million hectares will be covered by various soil conservation measures at an expenditure of about Rs. 661 crores. This includes treatment of about 21.75 million ha. under State sector and about 1.65 million ha. under Central sector.

In the Sixth Plan, a new Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Integrated Watershed Management in the catchments of flood prone rivers in the Indo-Gangetic Basin has been proposed with an outlay of Rs. 90 crores on 50:50 sharing basis for the remaining period of the current plan with a view to mitigating the fury of floods.

श्री शिव कुमार सिंह ठाकुर (खडवा) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, यह देश का एक बहुत महत्वपूर्ण प्रश्न है। इस देश में 328 मिलियन हेक्टेयर जमीन में से 90 मिलियन हेक्टेयर जमीन तो सोयल ईरोजन से, पानी से खराब होती है और लगभग 50 मिलियन हेक्टेयर जमीन विंड ईरोजन से नष्ट होती है। इस तरह 328 मिलियन हेक्टेयर में से 145 मिलियन हेक्टेयर जमीन हमारे देश की इम से प्रभावित है और इस से देश को जो नुकसान हो रहा है वह 700 करोड़ रुपया प्रतिवर्ष पटिनाइजर के रूप में होता है जो 6 हजार मिलियन टन जो ऊपर की सतह बढ़ता है उसके कारण होता है और फ्लड के कारण 300 करोड़ रुपये प्रति वर्ष का नुकसान हो रहा है। इस तरह से 1 हजार करोड़ रुपया प्रति वर्ष इस देश का जमीन के कारण व्यर्थ जा रहा है। मैं आप के माध्यम से मंत्री महोदय से यह पूछना चाहता हूँ कि क्या उन्होंने इस के लिए पर्याप्त व्यवस्था इस वर्ष के बजट में रखी है और क्या गंभीर गमरया को वह पूरी गंभीरता से लेते हैं और इसके लिए पर्याप्त उपाय कर रहे हैं।

SHRI BIRENDRA SINGH RAO: I am very happy that the hon. member has drawn the attention of the Government and the House to this most important problem being faced by the country and this problem is getting increasing attention even from world organisations. As I have stated, we have various schemes on hand, but due to financial stringency, we have not been able to tackle the problem on a very large scale.

So far we have been able to treat only 13 per cent of the total area that has been damaged by erosion. As the hon. member said, it is about 175 million hectares and we have been able to deal only with a part of the problem. I have mentioned all the schemes and we are taking up further measures. But I must say at this juncture that the real need is a mass awakening for conserving our natural resources. Unless the people

in general are conscious of the damage that is being done due to deforestation, indiscriminate felling of trees and employment of greedy contractors, this problem cannot be fully tackled by Government measures alone.

I will not be doing justice if I do not mention this. Some women in Garhwal district—I must commend their example—when the contractors reached the jungle area to fell the trees, embraced the trees and they offered their bodies to be chopped off by the hatchet of the greedy contractors to save their trees. This is a sort of consciousness that is to be created for our flora and fauna and, I hope, with the attention that this Government is now giving to soil erosion and soil conservation and preservation of flora and fauna, this problem will be solved in due course.

MR. SPEAKER: Much more attention is needed now.

श्री सुम.ष चन्द्र यादव (खरगोन) : माननीय अध्यक्ष महोदय मैं इस बात को बहुत गम्भीरता से लेना चाहता हूँ और मैं समझता हूँ कि इस सदन को भी इस बात को बहुत गम्भीरता के साथ लेना चाहिए। जैसा कि माननीय मंत्री जी ने बताया है, स्वायत्त इरोजन को रोकने के लिए बहुत काम कर रहे हैं, मैं मंत्री जी का ध्यान आकृष्ट करना चाहता हूँ कि स्वायत्त इरोजन दो प्रकार से कंट्रोल होता है—बायोलोजी कंट्रोल और मैकेनिकल कंट्रोल। आप जो मैकेनिकल कंट्रोल कर रहे हैं उस में एक प्रकार से पैसा बरबाद करते हैं उस का उतना फायदा नहीं पहुँचता है। मेरा निवेदन कि यदि आप बायोलोजी कंट्रोल के माध्यम से इस दिशा में कार्य करते हैं तो नेचर का लाभ भी मिल सकेगा। सरकार को इस दिशा में प्रयास करना चाहिये। मेरा सुझाव है कि हर राज्य के स्तर पर एक रिसर्च सेन्टर खोला जाए तथा ग्लोक स्तर पर ऐसे अधिकारियों की नियुक्ति की जाए जो कि जनता को उस से अवगत करा सकें। अभी तक किसान तथा साइटिस्ट्स भी बहुत गम्भीरता के साथ इस प्रश्न को नहीं ले रहे हैं कि किन्नी भूमि का इरोजन हो रहा है। इसलिए राज्य स्तर पर रिसर्च सेन्टर खोले जायें तथा बजट में प्रावधान कर के खण्ड स्तर पर अधिकारी नियुक्त किये जायें जोकि लोगों को इस बात की जानकारी दे सकें। यदि बायोलोजी कंट्रोल के माध्यम से आप स्वायत्त इरोजन को हल करते हैं तो उस से ज्यादा लाभ मिल सकेगा बजाए इसके कि आप मैकेनिकल कंट्रोल करें।

SHRI BIRENDRA SINGH RAO: I am thankful to the hon. Minister...

AN HON. MEMBER: The hon. Member.

## Matters under rule 377

SHRI BIRENDRA SINGH RAO: He might be a Minister also some day, why bother? I am so much used to sitting there that everybody seems to be a Minister. It will take me time to understand that I am on the Treasury Benches.

I am thankful to the hon. Member for the suggestion. All these points are under the consideration of the Government. As I mentioned earlier, there are various schemes already under way for soil conservation and for plantation of trees in the Mimalayan region. We have also got our DPAP programme being implemented. The reclamation of saline and alkaline lands is one of the projects.

MR. SPEAKER: Did you say anything about some incentive for the plantation of trees?

SHRI BIRENDRA SINGH RAO: Incentive will be provided under our new forest policy. That is under consideration. That is another question. I need not go into details now. As I said, we are giving all our attention to this problem. The Prime Minister is very much concerned about the increasing area being eroded and our hills being denuded. Forest will receive a larger share of the Budget, I hope, in future. But the real need is to make the people conscious of it by educating them. More of the chipko type of movement is necessary in the country.

14.43 hrs.

## MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

(i) CRISIS OF DRINKING WATER IN BIHAR

SHRI RAMAVATAR SHASTRI (Patna): Sir, under Rule 377, I raise the following matter of urgent public importance:—

A serious crisis of drinking water is feared all over Bihar in the coming months. Although the summer is yet to set, in, reports from various parts