

BETWA RIVER BOARD (AMENDMENT) BILL

AS PASSED BY RAJYA SABHA

SECRETARY : Sir, I lay on the Table of the House the Betwa River Board (Amendment) Bill, 1977, as passed by Rajya Sabha.

12.34 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Damage to crops and property caused by recent cyclone in Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry

SHRI P. RAJAGOPAL NAIDU (Chittoor) : I call the attention of the Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon—

“The damage to crops and property caused by recent cyclone in coastal districts of Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry and help rendered to victims and the remedial measures taken by the Government.”

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION : (SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH) : Sir, in accordance with the information obtained from the State Government of Tamil Nadu and the Administration of the Union Territory of Pondicherry, the position is as follows :

There have been heavy rains all over the State of Tamil Nadu from the 10th of November, 1977 culminating in a cyclonic storm which raged from 2.30 A.M. to 7. A.M. on the 12th November, 1977. power supply and communication facilities were disrupted in the Nagapattinam and several other parts of Thanjavur, Tiruchirappalli, Madurai, Pattukkottai and South Arcot districts. The Annaravathi railway bridge of Tirucnirappalli-Erode broad gauge section was washed away. The radio net work of Police Department in Nagapattinam and adjoining taluks was also completely immobilised. Breaches in the embankments of several tanks, Kaveri and Coleroon rivers and other minor streams have caused damages to roads etc. There have been several house collapses. Damages to human and cattle life, to cropped areas and other public property are yet to be determined.

An aerial survey was made by the Chief Minister accompanied by the State Minister

for Food and the officials concerned. The first impression of the survey is that the damages are extensive and the State Government is suspecting heavy loss of life and property. The Army, the Air Force and the Fire Service and the Police personnel are assisting in all relief and rescue operations. Members of Board of Revenue and senior officers are coordinating relief operations in the affected areas. About 30,000 loaves of bread have been sent from Madras for distribution in Nagapattinam and Tiruchirappalli by air till 14.11.77, and by road thereafter. Arrangements are being made for providing drinking water supply, inoculation against Cholera and for early restoration of power and communication for want of which relief operations are suffering. Boats from the Army, the Navy and private agencies have been used as also motor vehicles of all Government agencies and of the Army for relief operations. Marooned people are being moved to safety and provided with food and drinking water. Helicopters of the Air Force and the Navy have been made use of to reach inaccessible parts with supplies and for relief work. The State Government is keeping a close watch on the situation and proposing to seek Central assistance to meet the situation caused by long spells of rains from the 12th to 27th of October, 1977 which caused floods in Madras City and districts like Ramanathapuram followed by the cyclone in question. The Meteorological Department has forecast another cyclone of greater intensity to strike Tamil Nadu coast on 17-18th November, 1977 affecting weather conditions from the 16th evening and bringing in heavy rains.

In the Pondicherry and Karikal areas, dwelling houses and fishing villages have been damaged and about 7,000 acres of paddy crop are under water. Thirty-two mechanised fishing boats in these areas have been completely lost. The Pondicherry administration has not yet received any report about loss of human life. About six to seven thousand persons affected by the cyclone have been accommodated in shelters and are being fed through community kitchens.

The Central Government is keeping a watch on the situation and will offer all possible assistance at the request of the State Government.

A Central Team would be visiting the State as soon as the State Government is prepared to receive the Team and put up specific proposals for such assistance.