

16.00 Hrs.

MOTION RE : STATEMENT ON FLOOD SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY

MR. SPEAKER : Now we take up the discussion on the flood situation.

SHRI P. K. DEO rose—

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE (Kanpur) : May I make one small request, Sir ? I would only say that before we start this discussion we may stand in silence for a minute in memory of those who have died in thousands either in Bihar or West Bengal or in Orissa. After all there is no politics involved in it. Let us show our respect.

श्री रबी राय (पुरी) : मैं इस प्रस्ताव का समर्थन करता हूँ ।

MR. SPEAKER : Now let us begin the discussion. A number of people are there. I would suggest that first the Minister will speak and afterwards the members will be speaking. We must confine ourselves only to the two points, floods and cyclone. 2 hours are enough and if necessary you may take another half an hour.

SOME HON. MEMBERS : More time may be given.

MR. SPEAKER : It all depends upon your capacity to sit in the House.

SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY (Cooch-Bihar) : I think you might have seen some sort of an appeal to you signed by a number of members belonging to all Parties that the discussion on the flood situation should be extended by another 2 hours.

MR. SPEAKER : If you are willing to sit another half hour, I have no objection. I have not received the paper, but that does not matter now. It may be in the office.

DR. K. L. RAO.

THE MINISTER OF IRRIGATION AND POWER (DR. K. L. RAO) : Sir, I beg to move :

"That the statement laid on the Table by the Minister of Irrigation and Power on the 13th November, 1968 regarding flood situation in the country, be taken into consideration."

I have already given all the information that is available. Some supplementary information I can give but I thought that it is much better if I hear the hon Members giving their suggestions and at the end I shall

submit whatever further information I have. The only thing I would like to add is that in the case of Orissa another Rs. 50 lakhs has been granted by the Finance Ministry towards flood relief.

श्री रवि राय : वहाँ नुकसान तो पचास करोड़ का हुआ है ।

DR. K. L. RAO : This Rs. 50 lakhs is an additional amount to the Rs. 50 lakhs already granted. But the central team has not been able to go. The team must have gone there but there was a kind of repetition of the cyclone. Therefore, they were prevented from going there. After they go, further funds will be sanctioned.

I would request the hon Members to give their suggestions.

MR. SPEAKER : Motion moved :

"That the statement laid on the Table by the Minister of Irrigation and Power on the 13th November, 1968 regarding flood situation in the country, be taken into consideration."

There are some substitute motions.

Excepting Shri Yashwant Singh Kushwah and Shri Bibhuti Mishra, all others have moved their substitute motions.

SHRI H. N. MUKERJEE (Calcutta North East) : I beg to move :

That for the original motion, the following be substituted, namely :—

"This House, having considered the statement laid on the Table by the Minister of Irrigation and Power on the 13th November, 1968 regarding flood situation in the country, expresses the gravest anxiety at the failure, particularly in West Bengal, of the administrative machinery to tackle with the problem and calls upon the Central Government immediately to begin to implement a full-scale short-term and long-term plan for relief and rehabilitation of the enormous number of sufferers involved in the unprecedented calamity that has taken place." (3)

SHRI SAMAR GUHA (Contai) : I beg to move :

That for the original motion, the following be substituted, namely :—

"This House, having considered the statement laid on the Table by the Minister of Irrigation and Power on the

13th November, 1968 regarding flood situation in the country, expresses serious concern over the failure of the Government to effectively deal with the problems arising out of such natural calamities, particularly in North Bengal, where the administrative machinery grossly neglected its duty to alert the people by giving timely flood warning and undertake immediate measures for rescue and relief after the flood disaster, and where assessment of the colossal disaster was inordinately delayed by the Central Study Team, and urges upon the Government that :

- (a) besides providing relief and rehabilitation facilities to all flood affected areas in the country, North Bengal Flood be regarded as an extraordinary national calamity and thus, a Special Central Fund, without requiring the approval of the Central Study Team, for adequate relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction there, be advanced.
- (b) permanent flood control measures with flood warning system be speedily worked out, particularly in the areas like Midnapur, North Bengal, North Bihar, coastal region of Orissa and Brahmaputra valley which suffer from the furies of floods almost every year;
- (c) Flood Fighting Corps be set up in States, generally vulnerable from recurrence of floods, with Central help; and
- (d) a Central National Fund be constituted for providing speedy help to a State which requires to meet an emergency arising out of flood or similar other natural calamities. (4)

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI (Bhubaneswar) : I beg to move :

That for the original motion, the following be substituted, namely :—

“This House, having considered the statement laid on the Table by the Minister of Irrigation and Power on the 13th November, 1968 regarding flood situation in the country, approves the action taken by the Government in extending and organising relief among the distressed people and recommends that—

- (a) a detailed examination be made immediately, in view of the recent experience, for controlling discharge of flood water to Chilka Lake by the rivers Salia, Malaguni and Kusumi and other small rivers;
- (b) escapes for flood waters be provided at various points in the National Highway No. 5 in Orissa and in the Railway track between Taparg and Chhatrapur;
- (c) assistance be provided in a big way for rebuilding the houses which have collapsed in the coastal districts of Orissa; and
- (d) dredging of the Chulka mouth be undertaken for speedy outflow of flood water into the sea.” (5)

SHRI ABDUL GHANI DAR (Gurgaon) : I beg to move :

That for the original motion, the following be substitute namely :—

“This House, having considered the statement laid on the Table by the Minister of Irrigation and Power on the 13th November, 1968 regarding flood situation in the country expresses the gravest anxiety at the failure of the administrative machinery to tackle with the problem and calls upon the Central Government immediately to begin to implement a full-scale short-term and long-term plan for relief and rehabilitation of the enormous number of sufferers involved in the unprecedented calamity that has taken place and recommends that :—

- (a) suitable funds be made available to construct minor bunds on Yamuna river for hoarding waters for irrigation purposes and the drainage system be improvised so that water from drains may flow easily;
- (b) steps to safeguard the richest cultivable lands be taken in hand; and
- (c) drainage system particularly in District Gurgaon, Haryana, be taken in hand and extensive repairs, etc., be given priority so that unavoidable losses be stopped for ever.” (6)

SHRI N. C. CHATTERJEE (Burdwan) : I beg to move :

That for the original motion, the following be substituted, namely :—

“This House having considered the statement laid on the Table by the Minis-

[Shri N. C. Chatterjee]

ter of Irrigation and Power on the 13th November, 1968 regarding the flood situation in the country, particularly the devastation caused by the land-slide in Darjeeling and Teesta floods in the districts of Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Cooch-Bihar, Maldah and West Dinajpur in West Bengal expresses great concern at the patent failure of the West Bengal State Administration to take proper precautionary measures despite sufficient forewarning about the floods by the irrigation authorities and is of the opinion that a full-scale enquiry be conducted on the Central level to fix the responsibility for this failure, and having regard to the colossal loss of human lives, cattle, property, houses, standing crops and tea plantations in the flood affected districts, recommends that sufficient funds be granted to the State outside normal Plan allocations for the implementation of short-term and long-term rehabilitation measures which have been totally inadequate so far to meet the needs of situation." (7)

SHRI RABI RAY : I beg to move :

That for the original motion, the following be substituted, namely :—

"This House having considered the statement laid on the Table by the Minister of Irrigation and Power on the 13th November, 1968 regarding flood situation in the country, calls upon the Union Government immediately to make enough funds available to the State Government of Orissa so as to start a programme of rehabilitating lakhs of people who have been made homeless by the recent cyclone and floods in Puri, Ganjam and Cuttack districts of Orissa." (8)

SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY : I have also submitted one substitute motion. That is not in the list.

MR. SPEAKER : Your name is not in the list.

Evidently it was received now.

SHRI P. K. DEO (Kalahandi) : I deem it a painful duty to narrate the miseries and sufferings of the people who were hit by

the recent floods and cyclone. Sir, while extending my sympathies to the people of Gujarat, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Assam, Andhra Pradesh and Orissa, who have been subjected to the ravages of the floods, who have lost their dear and near ones and their houses and their worldly belongings and who have been reduced as destitutes, I would like to focus my observations on the unprecedented cyclonic floods which lashed the east coast of this country on the 26th, 27th and 28th of last month and brought in their trail colossal damage to life and property in the coastal districts of my State, particularly, Ganjam, Puri and Cuttack and to the adjacent Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh.

Last year, Orissa was subjected to natural calamities, floods, drought and cyclone which came in their chronological sequence one after the other, and before we recovered from this shock, we had a very bad drought in the month of July and August which delayed our agricultural operations, particularly in paddy cultivation, and brought a complete failure of the earlier variety of paddy. In the last session, this House was seized of this problem of drought. Now, we are faced with the problem of cyclone and flood which were caused by a depression at the Bay of Bengal which came at a speed of 120 kilometres per hour, with a whirlwind and torrential rains. In Berhampur, 244 mm of rainfall was recorded on the 27th and 594 mm on the 28th which had broken all the previous records. It is a misfortune that Orissa in the last two years has been consistently the victim of the vagaries of Nature with all its fury, which had behaved more or less in a very erratic manner like the mood of the Central Government. Heavy downpour accompanied by gale swept over these three districts causing enormous damage to life and property and also disruption in the line of communication, like train, telephone, telegraphs, and roads. Landslides also occurred in several places; the Bodonadi and Risi Kulya in Ganjam, and Prachi, Kedua, Daya, Bhargavi and Kusum in Puri district were in floods; in the flood protection embankments on both sides of these rivers, several breaches were caused and there has been breaches in the saline embankment of the Chilka because of which a large number of villages have

been inundated, submerging the paddy fields. At this time of the year, paddy is in the flowering stage and in the pollination stage, and you can therefore very well imagine the position; when the paddy fields are under six feet of water for two weeks, you can imagine what would be the outturn of paddy. The return will be absolutely zero.

Similarly, coconut plantations and banana gardens in large numbers and betel-vine gardens in thousands have been completely damaged. In Berhampur, Puri, Chhatrapur, and Jagatsinghpur and in many other towns hundreds of *pucca* houses have collapsed including several Government buildings. The roof of the Collectorate and the sub-divisional officers office, the Collector's bungalow, of the high school in Chhatrapur, the district headquarters of the Ganjam district, have been blown off due to the cyclone. Many villages have been marooned. The people, while engaged in sugar-crushing operations, have had to take shelter on tree-tops because of the deluge. Large areas have been littered with carcasses, both human and animal, and it emanated a terrible stink which posed a very big problem for disposal and has become a hazard to public health. Reports of cholera epidemics also have been pouring in from the interior. National highway No. 5 has also suffered from several breaches; large gullies and breaches have been formed in National highway No. 5, connecting Calcutta with Madras, especially on the portion between Jankia and Khurda and Chhatrapur and Berhampur. To fill up these gullies, it has been estimated that earthwork to the tune of Rs. 1.63 crores would be required. Judging from this year's floods, the provision for cross drainage in this National Highway and the railwayline has proved to be inadequate. Provision should be made for more and better cross drainage arrangements. Similarly, the Chilka mouth is also getting silted. That is also responsible for inundation of large areas. It has to be dredged.

The east coast railwayline connecting Calcutta to Madras also has suffered several breaches. Trains are being diverted via Titilagarh and Sambalpur. It will take months before the normal running of trains can be revived. It is very good that the railways immediately rushed with the earth-

work, but whatever earthwork they did, that was again washed away by another cyclone which swept the coastal regions on the 13th and 14th of this month.

The electric transmission line has also snapped at several places and plunged the three districts of Cuttack, Puri and Ganjam in complete darkness. According to the estimate of the Orissa Government, these three districts have been affected. 10 N.A.Os have been affected.

4,808 villages, comprising an area of 2451 sq. miles and a population of 13,47,752 have been affected. As many as 1,58,699 dwelling houses have been completely damaged or collapsed. 4,200 school buildings including 3,482 primary schools, 713 middle and higher elementary schools and 5 colleges have been damaged. Loss of human life is 77 and livestock 22,690. Loss to Government building has been estimated to be Rs. 6.12 crores. 4,88,207 acres of crop have been damaged. 9,861 acres have been sandcast and 2.38 lakh acres have been waterlogged. About 1 lakh fishermen families have been affected. The loss of fishing boats and fishing equipment is estimated to be Rs. 1.60 crores. This is a very conservative estimate and I do not agree with it because reports from the interior are not available. The Orissa Government have been very candid in their footnote which says :

"Full assessment has not yet been possible owing to lack of communications and waterlogging. Hence, the above figures are subject to upward revision."

In the coastal belt, the forest department had made an extensive casurina plantation, all of which has been completely damaged. Short-term measures like giving test relief work to the people, subsidised food to the vulnerable sections of society, fairprice shops, fodder for cattle, agricultural loans, seeds for rabi cultivation, house-building loans, land reclamation loan for shifting sand from sandcast fields, medical aid, etc. have to be undertaken lavishly to bring back the entire community to normal life. It is a gigantic task.

It is gratifying that the Chief Minister, with the other ministers and some high officials, rushed to some of the affected areas and started relief work within their

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limited resources, with the active cooperation of all the political parties. I take my hat off to the political parties and social workers for their sincere cooperation in this regard. It is not possible for the State to meet this challenge of this magnitude with their limited meagre funds. Cyclone and floods have become regular annual features of my State. For the last three years, these natural holocausts have further strained the already strained financial resources of the State.

And Sir, the annual occurrence of the natural catastrophe has furnished the people and has completely broken the economic backbone of the State.

In West Bengal, we find that the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Union Minister of Railways and Union Deputy Minister of Irrigation visited the affected area and the Irrigation Minister made an aerial survey and a high-powered Committee has been appointed to go into that. The total expenditure for this relief work has been fixed at Rs. 10.17 crores by the first team which visited. The second team is yet to visit. I have no grudge about the central assistance to West Bengal however lavish it may be—probably, it would not be adequate, but, to me, it is very lavish when compared to the meagre central assistance given to my State.

With all humility, I beg to submit that it should not be decided keeping an eye on the forthcoming mid-term elections in West Bengal. For God's sake, don't bring politics and make capital out of the miseries of the people. Please do not play with their lives. Though Orissa's case is equally bad if not worse, nobody has yet gone from the Centre though more than three weeks have elapsed. Not even a word of sympathy has gone from the Centre.

Sir, I would request the Prime Minister and the Minister for Irrigation to visit this spot and give central assistance in a big way taking into consideration the natural calamity in my State which has become an annual feature.

Coming to Andhra, the devastation caused to the famous Udyan Vanam which was famous for coconuts and cashew-nut plantations in Srikakulam District has to be seen to be believed. I wish Prof. Ranga would

have been here. This is his constituency. But, Sir, it is the compulsion of duty towards his constituents and his much needed presence there to guide the people at the time of this distress that has prevented him from participating in the debate. Before going there, he apprised the Prime Minister with this letter and I would be failing in my duty if I do not bring in some portions of the letter which should find a place as a record in the proceedings of the House. On the 12th of November, Professor Ranga wrote :

"More than 12 people died during that holocaust either on the sea or in their villages. So many villages are unrecognisable as human habitations...."

"Four lakhs of coconut trees have been felled and one more lakh damaged and kisans have to wait for six to seven years before the saplings, if planted now, can begin to yield any crop. Even the landless poor workers who have one or two coconut trees by the side of their huts have also lost this last insurance against extreme distress.

"During the next six to ten years, these agricultural workers would have no employment since all the varied processing activities, associated with coconut trees, and their products such as the production of coir, ropes, mats etc., would not be available and there is no other employment for them. Their miserable fate can better be imagined than described."

Then, Sir, he has pointed out the callousness complacency on the part of the Andhra Government. He has stated :

"The Collector's estimate comes to more than 11 crores. Peasants have told me that the market value of an acre of coconut garden is as much as twenty-thousand rupees, on the basis of two hundred per tree, with 100 trees per acre."

He has further stated that :

"One of the highest officers observed that he had never seen such scene of devastation. So many coconut fields look like battle-fields with so many tall trees lying down dead; so many bent and dying. It is heart-rending to see this

famous Uddanam Vanam reduced to this scene of utter depression."

He further says :

"Strangely enough, even the Collector waited helplessly until after the local M.L.A.s and Sardar Latchanna and Simma Jagannadham, the Leader and Deputy Leader of Opposition in the Andhra Assembly had visited the villages during the first week."

Towards the end of his long letter he has suggested various measures, both long-term and short-term, which should be taken up immediately. He has suggested :

"The present quantum of Rs. 200 per acre as distress loan is much too meagre, in view of the fact that the cost of cutting, removing the carcasses as it were of the felled coconut trees comes to Rs. 3 to 5 per each and there are 50 to 75 such dead trees in every acre."

This is inadequate. Then he says :

"The housing rehabilitation grant ought to be extended to all villagers irrespective of their economic status, since they have all come to be levelled so low by this cyclone and the minimum should be raised up to Rs. 50 and maximum Rs. 500.

Foodgrains should be supplied freely and for at least the next 2 or 3 months to all the vulnerable sections, such as the old, women, children, through gruel centres etc. and, if possible, through such agencies as Ramakrishna Mission and Annadana Samaj, Visakhapatnam.

Cheap foodgrains stores have to be opened in all the villages under the supervision of the local panchayat and revenue officials.

A moratorium should be declared upon the collections of all arrears of land revenue, taccavi, co-operative and private loans and execution of court decrees for the next 2 or 3 years.

The agricultural workers have to be provided alternative employment in a Labour Rehabilitation spirit during the next 5 or 6 years since during this period there will be no employment on the processing activities connected with the coconut cultivation, cashew processing and

their industrial concern, of this area, by undertaking the construction or repairing of minor irrigation works and roads and culverts. Hence the need for such famine work to serve the double purpose of providing employment here and now and then minimising the severity of famine in future.

Immediate and scrupulously effective steps will have to be taken by Government at the Andhra State and Central levels to obtain six to seven lakhs of coconut seedlings from Godavari district, Kerala, Tanjore, West Bengal and Assam and make them available to these peasants in time for the next sowing season, June 1969, and thus enable them to replant their coconut gardens.

More than anything else, steps have to be taken to improve all the minor irrigation works, whether owned by government or by peasants, improve road communications, develop the revetments on the Bahuda river at Itchapuram and the breakwater areas and along the rural drains-cum-roads—a special feature of this area—and construct culverts and causeways. This should be treated as part of the famine relief works.

I am glad to learn that the Famine Commission-cum-Revenue Board Member has declared that the execution of Gonamarigedda scheme for which estimates have been made years back but which had been so criminally neglected till now, if undertaken, would provide much needed famine relief work for several thousands of workers for at least an year and would also provide irrigation facilities for more than ten thousand acres of land in this irrigationally-neglected area and also flood protection for several villages."

He has made an appeal to the various social welfare, organisations like the Ramakrishna Mission, Annadana Samajam and Marwari Relief Organisations, the CARE, Gandhi Smarak Nidhi to come to the rescue of these sufferers. He has also appealed to the Andhra Government to rise above partisan interests and help the suffering people. Lastly, he has appealed to the Government of India to come to the help of the Andhra Government to face this mighty challenge.

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Finally, I submit Sir, that tackling of the flood and cyclone of this magnitude should be viewed from a national perspective. There should be a national approach to this problem. I am glad that the Government has been thinking on the lines of streamlining the flood forecasting units, establishing well-trained and well-equipped flood fighting forces and proper-coordination between the engineering, revenue and railway authorities on the basis of similar work being done in the Mississippi Valley and seeking U.N.O's help in this regard. But the genuineness of these tall talks would be proved by the spontaneous response of the Centre to the various States regardless of political or partisan considerations.

SHRI C. K. BHATTACHARYYA (Raiganj) : Mr. Speaker, the hon. Minister of Irrigation and Power has given us a statement on floods. Floods have been occurring in different parts of India, beginning from June to August, from Assam up to Gujarat. There have been floods everywhere, even in West Bengal, in that season; even Jalpaiguri, which was affected in October, had had its share of floods in July, August and September. But what happened in the first week of October was no mere flood; it was something more than that.

16.25 Hrs.

I felt a bit sorry and surprised to find that the hon. Minister has included the October happenings in north Bengal under the general category of floods as happening in all the different parts of India. I submit to you that north Bengal should deserve, and should have deserved, a separate treatment by itself, taking into consideration the magnitude of devastation and the complete undoing of all civilised life in that area that has taken place.

SHRI Surendranath Dwivedy (Kendrapara) : It may be Nature's curse because of Naxalbari.

SHRI C. K. BHATTACHARYYA : To describe it as a mere flood is to minimise the magnitude of devastation that has taken place. I wish the hon. Minister had done something else about north Bengal.

Shri Dwivedy says that it is Nature's curse. It is not a mere curse. It was Nature's visitation; it was like a visitation that came upon north Bengal from Darjeeling up to Malda, lesser in the southern

districts but in more extreme form in the northern districts. It happens once in an epoch. As you know, it has happened in history in certain centuries. Such visitations of Nature have come in the form of floods, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, which have completely effaced civilisation, culture, flourishing habitation and spread over them a pall of death to remain like that for centuries together. After that archaeologists come, open these up, come to their findings and try to relate them to history and civilisation in the later period.

What has happened in north Bengal belongs to this type of Nature's visitation, a cataclysm from which, I am afraid, the area will never recover as it was before. If it is saved of this dire fate of going down under the natural catalysm, it will be only for the reason of this modern age and the availability of modern appliances. The bulldozers came in; the army personnel came in and all the other available factors which could remedy the situation came in. That is how the situation is being tackled, but even with all this, I should say, six weeks have passed and very little has been done up till now. This is the position of north Bengal.

How did it happen? As the hon. Minister has put it, there were heavy rains in the Darjeeling hill areas continuously for 52 hours up to 4th October. This huge volume of water descended like a deluge with landslides, timber, boulders, which were heavier than one tonne, and found its first resting place in Jalpaiguri and Cooch-Behar. The hon. Minister has stated that the waters of Teesta rose 60 feet, more than 60 feet, above the high danger level. You can imagine what it leads to. When this came at the dead of night, the people in the entire area, towns and villages, were sleeping in full sense of security. They suddenly found themselves under this huge column of water. It was something like, what I may call, "*pralaya payodhi jale.*" The entire Jalpaiguri area found itself under this "*pralaya payodhi jale.*" People scrambled for life. Some could save themselves; others perished under the water and the silt. There was no means available by which they could have themselves. This sudden onrush of icy cold water in a sweeping current carried away sons from their mothers, snatched away wives from

their husbands, killed children before the eyes of their parents who saw that helplessly. When I speak of this snatching away of wives from husbands, I should refer to Geeta Bagchi's case. This lady and her husband, who I know is an employee of the Government in Delhi, had two children. They had taken their children to safety to a higher place somehow. Then the husband and wife clasping each other were trying to proceed and a huge column of water, as high as 16 ft., fell upon them. The wife was separated from husband; the husband was flung to one side and wife was flung to another side and carried away. Later information from Pakistan brought out to us that she was found in Pakistan. Uptill now, Pakistan authorities have not restored her to the Government of India.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : I have drawn the attention of the Prime Minister also.

SHRI C. K. BHATTACHARYYA : This is the position in which Jalpaiguri and its surrounding areas found themselves in the night of 4-5th, that is early morning of 5th.

Now, I should tell the House that all this happened within a short period of 20 minutes, between 3 A.M. and 3.20 A.M. The water was coming from the upstream and covered the town and its surroundings just within 20 minutes. Nothing could be done; nothing could be saved. While saying so, I should refer to the lapse of administration before it and the collapse of administration after it. The gauge-reader at Teesta Bazar upstream was sending messages after messages to the administrative authorities of Jalpaiguri that such a huge column of water was coming. Even on the 4th morning, a message was sent and later in the day a message was sent that the Teesta level had crossed the extreme danger level of 683—Dr. Rao will be able to know what it means—and was rapidly rising still. Even then, no step was taken. If the people of the town were simply told that such a danger was coming, they could have taken any step to save themselves. But nothing was done.

Mr. S. N. Ray, the ex-Chief Secretary of the West Bengal Government who was appointed by the Government of West Bengal to go into this matter has accused both the administrative authorities and irri-

gation authorities. Dr. Rao has stated in the statement that none of these authorities had an idea of the danger that should have been apprehended in Jalpaiguri. That is the position.

After the floods also, the entire administration collapsed, both civil and military. There was no administration for four or five days. Jalpaiguri and its surroundings were left at God's mercy. The people who had not perished in Jalpaiguri would have perished afterwards only for want of drinking water. There was no drinking water anywhere in the town and its surroundings. They were saved, not by the Government, not by any governmental agency, not by the army or civil authorities, but by the public of Siliguri. Youngsters of Siliguri requisitioned buses and trucks and carried drums of drinking water to Jalpaiguri and distributed to the people there. They saved Jalpaiguri for the first four days. Then, the governmental authorities and the army authorities came into action, Dr. Rao, in his statement, has also quoted.

Mr. S. N. Ray's comment that the investigation should be made why the army authorities delayed so much in affording relief to the town and its surrounding areas. I do not know whether that has been done. That was the position in Jalpaiguri.

Afterwards, most of the water descended to West Dinajpur and Malda till it reached the Ganga. The devastation, of course, was of a lesser magnitude in both these districts.

The clearing of dead bodies and carcasses was a problem. Even after 15th October, I can say that though the town had been cleared of dead bodies but the outskirts of the town were covered with carcasses. The speech was so infuse that when I went there I could proceed with great difficulty and I had to come back. I doubt very much whether the carcass had been removed. Many carcasses may have been left to be absorbed in the earth itself.

After saying this, I shall go to the matter of relief. Of course, there is the failure of the flood control system, the failure of the flood forecasting system the failure of the Government to act up to the recommendations of committee after committee from 1954 uptill now, and these may be taken

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up by my other friends. I shall only go to the question of relief.

As I have already stated, six weeks have passed and the relief has not been much. The entire area very near the Jaldakka Power Station had their power supplied by that Station and that Power Station has failed. Today Jalpaiguri is supplied power by a separate generator that has been set up there, but the other parts have not got their power restored till now; the people there are living in darkness.

My suggestion is that the North Bengal disaster should be treated as a special case and a separate agency should be set up to take up the work of relief and reconstruction in those five districts of North Bengal. This cannot be done piece-meal; there must be one integrated plan and programme. The work in North Bengal should be regarded as a restoration of the *status quo* and not as part of the development under the Fourth Five-Year Plan.

On October 27, the Governor asked for Rs. 40 crores. He made a public statement. This should be available for relief and reconstruction work. The rules which regulate Central aid to the States for relief and reconstruction should be relaxed in the case of North Bengal.

One particular point that should be taken care of is that large areas between Katambari and Domohani have been completely wiped out and about 15,000 people are living on embankments, on fields under temporary, improvised sheds in this cold winter. Nothing has been done uptill now to rehabilitate them. Unless those people are rehabilitated immediately, many of them will die . . .

MR. SPEAKER : The hon. Member may try to conclude.

SHRI C. K. BHATTACHARYYA : I have just two or three more suggestions. That is all.

The river, Teesta, should be made to flow in its old channels. The breached embankment at Kathambari should be reconstructed at its original site.

Refugee settlement at Duare has been ruined. They should be helped to re-settle themselves again.

Kalimpong is still isolated. Only a jeep track is being attempted by the Army, but that has not been available to the public. At other places, roads, jeep tracks, mule tracks and village roads have all been ruined. They should be restored. About 200 bridges built in the last 50 years have been washed away; they have to be quickly restored. The metre gauge railway lines have been restored, but the broad gauge line have not been. The telegraph lines should be restored. The agriculturists should be provided with loans, implements and seeds; even now some seeds given in time may help them to raise some produce on their lands. The land has been made barren. The silt usually fertilises, but this silt which carried sand and gravel with it has practically left over the land a thick layer of that type and the land is difficult to cultivate now. They should be helped. Loans should be given to small traders and businessmen to supply daily necessities of life. House-building loan should be given and it should be done without much insistence on official formalities. Schools have to be reconstructed. The primary schools and high schools have all been ruined. They should be reconstructed, and students and teachers should be given help. Hospitals and health centres should be opened. In short, everything should be done to reconstruct life and civilization in the entire areas. That is the problem involved.

MR. SPEAKER : Shri N. C. Chatterjee.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : Sir, this debate concerns various relief and financial measures due to flood control. I would submit, Sir, either the Finance Minister or the Deputy Finance Minister should be present. How can Dr. K. L. Rao commit Government for this ?

MR. SPEAKER : He is in charge of flood control.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : He can give a good idea about the construction and all that, but not about financial measures and expenditure. The Finance Minister should be there.

MR. SPEAKER : Dr. K. L. Rao is there. I would request the hon. Member to resume his seat.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : He is not in charge of money . . .

MR. SPEAKER : Somebody wrote to me that the Prime Minister must also be here....

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : This is a national calamity. The Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister went there, had talks with prominent persons and they are callously behaving when the debate is taking place here.

MR. SPEAKER : You can say all these things when your chance comes.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : rose—

MR. SPEAKER : I can take it that you have finished your speech and your time is over.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : No, No.

MR. SPEAKER : SHRI N. C. Chatterjee.

SHRI N. C. CHATEERJEE (Burdwan) : Sir, we will be failing in our duty if we merely look upon the miserable situation in North Bengal as a natural calamity. We shall also not be doing our duty if we are blind to the human failings also in this matter. I am sorry, to say, had the local administration been less inefficient there would not have been this kind of horror, this kind of deaths, this kind of tragedy. It is the duty of the officials locally posted to give warning to the people of Jalpaiguri and if they had given the warning in time—which is possible under the circumstances—this terrible loss of human lives as well as loss of so many things would not have taken place and would have been avoided to some extent. At least the damage would not have been so extensive. Warnings were not given by the district administration. This has been practically admitted in the report of Shri S. N. Ray, the former Chief Secretary. The port authorities gave a warning to the State administration of the danger of this river sweeping a cross the plains. I am told, Sir, one member of Parliament, in the Rajya Sabha, who is resident of Jalpaiguri (who is a tea planter) had visited the place at about 4 p.m. on October 4 and informed the local administration that there was this on-rushing of water. But nothing was done. No warning was given. Not only nothing was done by these people but these people were busy sending their own families—people who ought to have

done their duty. They did not do their duty. On the other hand they were sending their families away. It is these people who forced this havoc in this manner. The deluge came in the early hours, at about 3 a.m. on October, 5, when the people of Jalpaiguri town were still sleeping. The West Bengal Commissioner has himself admitted that some of them, who are living in the ground floor, would have been drowned. The hospital nurses did their duties magnificently to render help to the persons involved in the tragedy. We were told that 47 prisoners in the jails were drowned but the official record is that they had all run away and not drowned. Between October 5 to October 10, there was no administration as my hon. friend pointed out, in the entire. Those who managed to survive were completely isolated and they suffered for about 72 hours without any food, drinking water. We should express our gratitude to the people of Siliguri for the prompt assistance they rendered. Ultimately officials reached Jalpaiguri on the 11th and started relief measures, but till then these suffering persons managed to survive only on unofficial help from Siliguri. Only on October 12, the corpses which were strewn all round, were sought to be removed. They were under five feet or more of silt. The influx of water in the Teesta has been so heavy. We think there was some defect in building the Teesta bridge itself and something should be done to look into the matter. We have asked for the appointment of a co-ordinate committee not only for relief and rehabilitation but for doing something with regard to the Teesta bridge.

As a matter of fact, the Master Plan for North Bengal was submitted by the West Bengal Government in 1962. It was prepared in consultation with experts of the Geological Survey of India. That should be properly checked. As a matter of fact, there was some defect; the narrowed the width of the bridge from about two miles to half a mile. That led to the trouble being greater, to the onrush of the water being so heavy resulting in the ensuing damage being so colossal.

The State Government submitted a comprehensive plan for flood control, irrigation

[Shri N. C. Chatterjee]

and other things. That would have cost Rs. 200 crores. It was a fairly well-considered scheme. But nothing was done about it. I want to remind the Minister and also the entire Cabinet that the North Bengal tea estates give the Central Government a foreign exchange of Rs. 100 crores annually. So even an expenditure of Rs. 200 crores on this scheme would not be too much. Implementation of the Master Plan for North Bengal is the main permanent solution for the people of that area.

When I went to the Prime Minister—I went to her twice—we had a discussion with her. First of all, we demanded Rs. 45 crores. The second time we met her, there were some friends from Jalpaiguri; we explained the difficulty and wanted Rs. 50 crores. There was no difficulty created. I remember her language. She said, 'Resources would not stand in the way of the rehabilitation of these unfortunate people; resources will not create any difficulty'. That was the language she used. Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri is here; he was with me; he will bear me out. She said, 'You need not be afraid of that. Whatever has got to be done has got to be done'. I said that relief is not the main thing; relief is only just to keep the people affected alive, but the main problem is rehabilitation and at least Rs. 50 crores ought to be spent. She said that 'resources will not stand in the way'. That was her language.

But today I find that some committee which went from this place have said that Rs. 39 crores would be too much. Their attitude is so bad and so unsympathetic. They wanted to cut it down when the State Government wanted only Rs. 39.5 crores or some such figure. When the Prime Minister says that there ought to be no difficulty created to deal with this colossal havoc and tragedy, this is the difficulty created.

I am sorry to say when this terrible tragedy took place, the Governor of West Bengal, Shri Dharmavira, was himself camping in Darjeeling. Darjeeling had been subjected to landslides. You will be amazed to know that he did not know of the magnitude of the tragedy; he did not even have a rough idea of what happened even in Jalpaiguri. The local administration did not

even tell him that or he did not do his duty. Whatever it is, for some days he did not know until he came down later. Even when he was camping a few miles away, he did not know or was not informed as to the extent of the havoc that happened and the tragedy that took place.

We are really asking for two things. Do not go on dilly-dallying or shilly-shallying for money, whether it is Rs. 39.5 crores or Rs. 50 crores, with regard to this colossal tragedy. Secondly, have a proper, coordinated plan to save this area. It is not that this was not known at all. As a matter of fact, when the Teesta bridge was made some people foresaw the trouble. They pointed out that we were making it too small, we should make it wider as British tried to do. In our time we made it much smaller, leading to the onrush of the water being more extensive and terrific. That has led to this terrible havoc. Therefore, that should be looked into, and that can be done only if a proper committee is appointed.

SHRI BISWANARAYAN SHASTRI (Lakhimpur) : I am glad that the Minister for flood control and irrigation has placed this statement on the Table of the House, on flood situation in the country the third in the series, which gives a complete picture of the devastation caused by the floods from Assam to Gujarat, from Rajasthan to Orissa.

Floods in this country are not a new thing, but the floods of this year are quite unprecedented, created havoc all over the country, and the people have suffered immensely. So far as my State of Assam is concerned, it has experienced floods twice during the current year. The first one occurred in June and July and the second one in October and it took a toll of human lives, cattle head and other things. The Prime Minister was pleased to visit the area and grant relief to the people. It was good, but floods are a perennial thing and a great problem for the State of Assam. If measures are not taken on a national basis, if permanent measures are not taken, then piecemeal work and granting of relief will not help the people.

In 1954 there were heavy floods in Assam, and after that a national policy on floods was declared by the Government of

India to be implemented in three phases, namely, the immediate, the short-term and the long-term measures. According to the statement of the Union Minister of Irrigation and Power dated 3rd September, 1954, the immediate phase was devoted to intensive investigation and collection of data. In this phase it was envisaged that a comprehensive plan would be drawn up and designs and estimates prepared for short term measures of flood control. Some measures such as revetments, construction of spurs and embankments were to be adopted immediately at selected sites. Those short-term and immediate measures were taken, but what about the long-term measures ?

The long-term measures were proposed in this way. The third phase would relate to selected long-term measures such as construction of storage reservoirs on tributaries of certain rivers and dams and additional embankments, wherever necessary, but since 1954 till today no storage reservoir, no dam, nothing of the sort has been constructed in Assam though it was declared as a national policy on flood control in 1954. It is a sorry state of affairs.

A comprehensive outline plan on flood control in Assam was drawn up and finalised in 1965 on the basis of the recommendations of the high level committee on floods constituted by the Government of India. That master plan envisaged a total outlay of more than Rs. 300 crores, but up till now, including the present year's grants, only Rs. 26 crores have been given to the Government of Assam for flood control measures. Such a piecemeal action, instead of doing good to the people, increases their suffering, because it is well known and stands to common sense that if an embankment is constructed not fully but only in part, the water goes but in that direction and submerges vast areas and causes damages to the crops and other things. Therefore I urge upon the Government of India to pay their attention fully to this national problem, particularly my State and the rest of the country on a national basis. If this problem is not tackled on a national basis, it will be impossible on the part of any State to cope up with this national calamity. Floods, drought, erosion and cyclone are the national calamities which cause immense misery to the people. But there is upto now no such national policy to fight these national calamities. Only when something

occurs in a certain part of the country, relief is given and some *ex-gratia* grant is given. Instead of giving relief and cash the Government should take up precautionary and preventive measures.

So far as the precautionary measures are concerned, the Departments do not give much help to the people. Sir, we have the Meteorological Department which has miserably failed. No doubt these Departments have provided service to the technicians and scientists but could not be of any help to the public. Happenings in Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling and Kurseong is the best examples of the efficiency of this Department. In this connection, though a bit irrelevant, I want to mention that on 28th October an IAC air flight took off from Calcutta from Gauhati. This flight was involved in a cyclone near Calcutta and could not land there and went back to Gauhati. On inquiry, it was informally informed that there was no weather forecast and the radar reading was misleading. Therefore with great difficulty the aircraft returned to Gauhati and landed there. This is also one of the instances as to how our scientists and the Department are working for the benefit of the people, for the benefit of the country and all round good of the people.

So far as the preventive measures are concerned, Government should form a firm national policy and have a major department or Commission to tackle this problem permanently for all times to come. Otherwise, if a cyclone takes place, we rush the relief and if a flood takes place in Assam or West Bengal some relief is granted and there is also a quarrel between centre and states regarding the amount sanctioned for the relief measures. This is not helpful to the people and the country's economy will go down from bad to worse.

In the State of Assam during these 14 years the total damages caused by the flood is to the tune of more than Rs. 107 crores which his calculated at the rate of more than Rs. 7 crores a year which means about 1/15th of the total revenue earning of the State. If the State has to bear the entire burden, its economy will go down to a ruinous position. So is the case with regard to the rest of India. The total estimate of India. The total estimate of loss and damage by flood and cyclone during this year is about Rs. 170 crores. This is not a small amount. We are now trying

[Shri Biswanarayan Shastri]

for self-sufficiency in food front and other spheres. If the paddy and other crops are damaged in this way by floods and cyclone, all the attempts for self-sufficiency in the food front will be futile. Last but not the least, I urge upon the Government to take measures for the construction of dams and for taking other flood control measures in the State of Assam. We are hearing about the construction of Barak Dam project. There is the Kopili river project also. Year after year this is mentioned and a plea put forward that the dam cannot be constructed. There is landslide and or there is something else. If the multipurpose project cannot be constructed, a dam for the flood control can be constructed. And that phase should be taken up immediately. I urge upon the Minister of Irrigation and Power who has visited that place more than once and knows all things personally, to take up measures and not to place all things into the cold storage.

With these words, I thank you, Sir, for the opportunity you have given me to speak on the flood situation in the country.

17 Hrs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS rose—

MR. SPEAKER : There will be no time-limit but those who come from the flood-affected areas can speak with greater authority. Only those who went there and saw it can speak with authority. Yes, Shri Jagannath Rao Joshi.

श्री जगन्नाथ राव जोशी (भोपाल)
अध्यक्ष महोदय, बाढ़ के विषय में पिछले सत्र में भी हम लोगों ने विचार किया था। उस समय गुजरात, राजस्थान, और महाराष्ट्र बाढ़ग्रस्त क्षेत्र थे। उसके पश्चात् आज हम उड़ीसा, बिहार और बंगाल के क्षेत्र में जो बाढ़ आ गई उस पर विचार कर रहे हैं। यह जो मदन के पटल पर रखा गया है उसमें इस बात को स्वीकार किया गया है कि 20 साल में इस साल जैसी बाढ़ आई वैसी बाढ़ कभी नहीं आई थी। दि फ्लड्स वेयर अनप्रेसिडेंटेड। किन्तु अपने देश के अन्दर जो बाढ़ आती है वह एक ही तरह की नहीं है। काश्मीर में कभी-कभी क्लाउड बस्ट के कारण

बाढ़ आती है। राजस्थान में घघर के कारण बाढ़ आ गई। महाराष्ट्र में तापी गिरना के कारण और गुजरात में नर्मदा और ताप्ती के कारण बाढ़ आ गई। इधर केरल और मैसूर में सी-ईरोज़न जो होता चला जा रहा है उस के कारण भी उत्तर केरल इस साल अफेक्टेड रहा है और जो जलपाईगुड़ी में हुआ वह तो भयानक ही है। इस का और भी एक कारण पिछले कुछ सालों से जो हो रहा है वह शासन योजना के नाम पर जो बांध बनवा रहा है उनके टूटने के कारण भी यह बाढ़ आ रही है। जैसे पूना में पानक्षेत्र बांध टूटने के कारण और उत्तर प्रदेश में नानक सागर बांध टूटने के कारण बाढ़ आ गई थी। इसलिए जब बाढ़ पर विचार करेंगे तो इसको तीन हिस्सों में बांटा जा सकता है। एक तो बाढ़ पूर्व, दूसरा बाढ़ के समय और तीसरा बाढ़ के बाद, इन तीनों का विचार होना बहुत आवश्यक है। जब हम यह विचार करेंगे तो देखेंगे कि बाढ़ के पूर्व जो एक चेतवनी जनता को मिलनी चाहिए वह कहीं भी नहीं मिली। यानी इसमें एक बिल्कुल समानता दिखाई देती है। पानक्षेत्र का जो बांध टूट गया, 12 जुलाई 1961 के दिन का जो अखबार है उसको निकाल कर देखें तो उसमें बैनर है कि बाढ़ को कोई खतरा नहीं। मतलब कि वहां का अधिकारी कोई ठीक सूचना उन लोगों को नहीं दे पाया। सूरत में मैं स्वयं गया था और वहां के लोगों ने सबूत भी दिया कि सूरत के कनेक्टर को 36 घंटे पहले, नदी का पानी बढ़ रहा है यह सूचना मिली हुई थी। हर 20 मिनट में एक फुट पानी बढ़ रहा है यह सूचना 4 तारीख शाम को 5 बजे मिल गई थी। प्रत्यक्ष बाढ़ का पानी सूरत के अन्दर घुस गया। 6 तारीख दोपहर 11 बजे, तब तक कोई भी कार्यवाही वहां नहीं की गई थी। मैं स्वयं जलपाईगुड़ी गया था और मैं सिलिगुड़ी किशनगंज पहुंच गया था। वहां देखा कि 4 तारीख को नदी का पानी आया। 5 तारीख को पूरा गांव पानी में रहा। 60 हजार का सारा शहर शमशान जैसा बन गया

था। 6 तारीख शाम को मैं पहुंचा और एक वकील से जब मैंने पूछा कि

"What is the local administration doing? Is it functioning?" The vakil replied, "Mr. Jagannath Rao Joshi, the administration does not function normally, and in an emergency it fails."

जलपाईगुड़ी में एक सेफ्टी माचिस भी नहीं थी। केवल पेय जल का पानी ही नहीं, कहां क्या-क्या हुआ है यह देखने के लिए, सेफ्टी माचिस तक सिलीगुड़ी में ले जानी पड़ी। यह हालत हर जगह होती है जबकि बाढ़ आती है।

इसकी सूचना अगर पहले से मिल जाय तो जनता कुछ न कुछ बचाव कर सकती है। सूरत में मैंने स्वयं एक कारखाना देखा। तीस-तीस हजार की मशीनें लगी हुई, सब 24 घंटे पानी के अन्दर रहीं। उन्होंने कहा कि मेरी स्वयं की हानि 51 लाख रुपये से ज्यादा हुई है। उन्होंने कहा कि मुझे थोड़ा पहले सूचना हो जाती तो यहां जो कपड़ा होता है उसको कहीं न कहीं ऊपर रखवा देता। किन्तु कहीं कुछ नहीं हो सका। जब पानी आता है तो एकदम सिर के ऊपर से ही चला जाता है। पूना में मुझसे एक आदमी ने कहा कि यह शासन भी अल्लाह जैसा है कि देता नहीं, देता नहीं और जब देने लगता है तो छप्पर फाड़ कर देता है। जब पानी आता है तो घर बहा कर चला जाता है, खेतों को उजाड़ कर चला जाता है। एक तरफ जब हम पानी की समस्या को डिस्कस करते हैं, पानी के बंटवारे में जब एकता नहीं हो पाती ऐसी स्थिति में बाढ़ पूर्व की कोई बात करें, तो उसकी जानकारी, उसकी सूचना जिन-जिन क्षेत्रों को मिलनी चाहिए, वह भी हम नहीं दे पाते। यह सूचना उनको पहले से मिलनी चाहिए।

17.05 Hrs.

[SHRI R. D. BHANDARE in the chair.]

फिर दूसरा सवाल आता है बाढ़ के समय हम क्या करें? सूरत में मैंने एक बुजुर्ग आदमी से पूछा तो उन्होंने कहा कि सूरत में बाढ़ कोई

नई चीज नहीं है। किन्तु जब अंग्रेज कलेक्टर रहता था तब बाढ़ आती थी, पीपुल वेयर मैरुन्ड, तो कलेक्टर स्वयं एक छोटी-सी नाव में बैठ कर वहां तक पहुंचता था और लोगों को राहत पहुंचाता था जबकि इस साल बिहार में क्या हुआ? बिहार में बाढ़ आ रही थी, कई घंटों से आ रही थी, सूचना मिल रही थी लेकिन वहां के राज्यपाल महोदय, बताने के बाद भी और लोगों के कहने के बाद भी बाढ़-ग्रस्त क्षेत्र का दौरा करने के लिए नहीं गए। लोगों को यह बात बहुत चुभती है कि एक पराया अंग्रेज कलेक्टर जब छोटी-सी नाव में बैठ कर लोगों से मिलने के लिए स्वयं अपनी जान खतरे में डाल कर जाता है तो आज आजादी के बाद जबकि अपना राज है, हमारे राज्यपाल कहने पर भी नहीं जाते और इतने ही नहीं, हमारे बड़े-बड़े लोग भी जाते हैं तो हैलीकोप्टर में बैठ कर ऊपर-ऊपर चले जाते हैं; लोगों को यह बात चुभती है। सर्वस्व हारा हो कर लोग चाहते हैं कि हमारा कोई आदमी आए, हम को गले मिलाए, हमारे आंसू पोंछे, ऐसी सूरत में हम हवाई जहाज में ऊपर ही ऊपर से घूमते रहें तो जनता इसको बिल्कुल पसन्द नहीं करेगा।

जलपाईगुड़ी में जो हानि हुई, यह जो सदन के पटल पर वक्तव्य रखा है, इस में एक चीज नहीं है। वहां सेना की दो कम्पनियां गायब हैं। कहां तक वहां हानि हुई है इसका अन्दाजा नहीं है। यहां जो हानि के आंकड़े दिए हैं यह बहुत कम है। बंगाल प्रदेश कांग्रेस के सदस्य स्वयं मिस्टर सेन ने स्वीकार किया कि कई हजार लोग इसमें मरे हैं।

एक माननीय सदस्य : 20 हजार आदमी मरे हैं। 20 हजार उन्होंने बताया।

श्री जगन्नाथ राव जोशी : इस में 1754 दिया हुआ है। जब स्वयं सेन महोदय कहते हैं कि 20-25 हजार आदमी मर गए, तो उससे यह मालूम हो जाता है कि हानि के जो आंकड़े दिए हैं जहां पर, चाहे रुपये

[श्री अगन्नाथ राव जोशी] :

पैसे की हो चाहे जान की हो, यह हानि के आंकड़े बहुत कम हैं।

तो प्रत्यक्ष भी जब बाढ़ आ जाती है तब उसका मुकाबला करने के लिए सरकार के पास कोई साधन नहीं है। मैंने सूरत में पूछा कि जैसे फायर फाइटर होते हैं फायर कंट्रोल के लिए, ऐसे ही फ्लड कंट्रोल के लिए कोई साधन हैं या नहीं, तो उन्होंने कहा कि इसके लिए कोई साधन नहीं हैं। जहां स्वाभाविक रूप से बाढ़ आती है, जैसे ब्रह्म-पुत्र की बाढ़ कोई नई नहीं है, कोसी की बाढ़ कोई नई नहीं है, नर्मदा की और ताप्ती की बाढ़ कोई नई नहीं है, जहां-जहां यह बाढ़ आती है वहां लोगों को अपने सहारे छोड़ देना या भगवान के सहारे छोड़ देना ठीक नहीं है। इन स्थानों पर बाढ़ का मुकाबला करने के लिए भी नगरपालिका या कारपोरेशन के पास साधन होना चाहिए। लेकिन वह भी कहीं नहीं रहा। सूरत में अहमदाबाद और बाम्बे दोनों तरफ का रास्ता टूट गया था। मुझको स्वयं पैदल चल कर जाना पड़ा। मैं किशनगंज से सिलीगुड़ी पहुंच भी नहीं पाया इस समय रेलवे मंत्री महोदय यहां नहीं हैं, मैं उन्हें भी एक बात बताना चाहता था। मैं स्वयं जिस गाड़ी से जा रहा था, मालदा से निकल गया, 4 तारीख को यह गाड़ी रुक गई और कोई भी ऐसी स्थिति में वहां नहीं था जो बता सकता कि इस गाड़ी का अब क्या होगा? आगे जायेगी या पीछे जायेगी? 36 घंटे बैठने के बाद भी स्टेशन का अधिकारी नहीं बता सका कि गाड़ी आगे कब जायेगी। यहां हमें किसी को कुछ पता नहीं और वहां सिलीगुड़ी में कार्यकर्ता पूछ रहे थे कि गाड़ी कहाँ खड़ी है, कब आयेगी? वहां का स्टेशन मास्टर उनको कुछ नहीं बता सका कि गाड़ी कब आयेगी। इधर किशनगंज का स्टेशन मास्टर कहता था कि गाड़ी कब जायेगी यह मुझे पता नहीं। रेलवे मंत्री या शासन के जो दूसरे अंग हैं उनसे मैं यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि उस समय कोई राजनीति

बीच में आकर खड़ी नहीं हो सकती। उस समय सब को साथ लेना पड़ता है और मुझे बड़ा आश्चर्य और आनन्द भी हुआ जब मैं वहां गया सिलीगुड़ी में तो वहां हमारे सारे कार्यकर्ता कोई भी वहां का कार्यक्रम न रखते हुए, सब जलपाईगुड़ी पहुंचे हुए थे। किन्तु मुझे आश्चर्य इस बात का हुआ कि सिलीगुड़ी स्वयं एक ब्राडकास्टिंग स्टेशन है किन्तु 5 तारीख को पूरा जलपाईगुड़ी पानी में रहा, न 5 तारीख को उमकी खबर दी गई, न 6 की सुबह दी गई, न 6 की रात को दी गई, न 7 को सुबह दी गई। आल इंडिया रेडियो का जहां केन्द्र है तथा सिलीगुड़ी जलपाईगुड़ी से 29-30 मील के फामले पर है, कोई सूचना प्रसारित नहीं हुई। ता० 6 की सुबह से ट्रकों पर लोगों को ले जाया जाता था, उनको राहत का सामान पहुंचाया जाता था, क्या सिलीगुड़ी केन्द्र से यह सूचना नहीं दी जा सकती थी। ता० 7 सुबह को मैंने स्वयं देखा कि कोई सूचना सिलीगुड़ी केन्द्र से नहीं दी गई। आज रेडियो हमारे हाथ में एक ऐसा साधन है जिसके द्वारा लोगों को सूचना पहुंचाई जा सकती थी, लेकिन वह भी हम लोगों ने नहीं किया।

अब प्रश्न आता है—बाढ़ के बाद क्या करें? यह बहुत महत्व का काम होता है, क्योंकि उस समय सारा जीवन ध्वस्त हुआ होता है। जैसे नारियल का वर्णन किया, हवा का झोंका आया नारियल के सारे पेड़ जो तम्बू की तरह खड़े होते हैं, कहीं-कहीं धराशायी हो जाते हैं। दो साल पहले माननीय मंत्री का पता होगा—रत्नागिरी क्षेत्र में मैंने स्वयं देखा—एक-एक घर में जितने पेड़ थे सब धराशायी हो गये थे। उस समय मेरे एक मित्र ने कहा—बाप की कमाई खत्म हो गई, अब आगे आपकी कमाई चालू होगी। कहीं बाढ़ के रूप में, कहीं सूखे के रूप में या किसी और रूप में जब भी कोई संकट आता है, संकटों का सामना करने के लिये जो योजना चाहिये, वह योजना आज के शासन के पास नहीं है। ता० 5, 6, 7 से लेकर 10 तक

जैसा अभी हमारे माननीय सदस्यों ने कहा— कोई भी एडमिनिस्ट्रेशन वहां पर फंक्शन नहीं कर रहा था। जैसे मेरे साम्यवादी मित्र कहते हैं—विद्वारंग अबे आफ दी स्टेट इन-वैस्ट बंगाल—कम से कम जलपाईगुडी में वैसा ही हुआ—व्यावहारिक रूप में वहां पर कोई स्टेट फंक्शन ही नहीं कर रही थी, वहां पर कोई स्टेट नहीं थी, जनता और सरकार सो रही थी। सरकार को सचेत हो कर ऐसे समय पर आगे आना चाहिये था, लेकिन वैसा नहीं हुआ।

बाढ़ के बाद सब से पहली चीज जो सामने आती है—वह है एपिडैमिक। उसको रोकने के लिये दवाइयों की जरूरत होती है, किसान के सामने समस्या आती है—बीज की और तीमरी सामान्य आर्दामियों के सामने समस्या आती है—घर की, घर को फिर से खड़ा किया जाय। इमके लिये पैसा, राहत और बीज की व्यवस्था करना बहुत जरूरी हो जाता है। यह काम बहुत महत्व का काम हो जाता है। यह काम बहुत महत्व का काम हो जाता है, इस दृष्टि से यहां हानि के जो आंकड़े दिये हुए हैं और शासन जो प्रत्यक्ष देता है—उममें बहुत बड़ा अन्तर है। यह देख कर ऐसा लगता है कि वास्तव में बाढ़ के कारण जब इनने कराड़ की हानि होती है तो कम-से-कम में डा० के० एल० राव साहब से प्रार्थना करना चाहता हूँ, जब कि वे स्वयं इम तन्त्र के जानकार हैं, इस विषय के विशेषज्ञ हैं, कम से कम उन के कार्यकाल में भारत के अन्दर बाढ़ पर नियन्त्रण करने की दृष्टि से स्थायी रूप से योजना बनाना बहुत आवश्यक है।

इस सभा पटल पर जो चीज रखी है, उस के आखिर में उन्होंने कहा है कि राज्य स्तर पर एक कमेटी बनी हुई है, मैं कहना चाहता हूँ कि राज्य स्तर की समिति काम नहीं कर सकेगी, इस के लिये केन्द्र स्तर पर समिति का गठन करना होगा। आज काश्मीर से लेकर केरल तक बाढ़ किस-किस रूप में आती है—इस दृष्टि से आपको सारा अन्दाजा लगाना होगा और कुछ मौखिक कदम उठाने

होंगे। इसी दृष्टि से मैं भी कुछ महत्व के सुझाव आपके सामने रख रहा हूँ। 20 साल पहले ऐसी बाढ़ें नहीं आती थीं, आज क्यों आती हैं? इसका मूल कारण यह है कि पिछले 20 सालों से अन्धाधुंध हमें बन की हानि करते चले जा रहे हैं। एफारेस्टेशन का नारा दिया जाता है, किन्तु कटे हुए पेड़ के स्थान पर दूसरा पौधा नहीं लगाया जाता। इसके कारण भयानक सायल-इरोजन होता चला जा रहा है, इसी के कारण नदियों का धरातल दिन-प्रति-दिन बढ़ता चला जा रहा है। 70 करोड़ रुपये की हानि शासन ने स्वीकार की है, परन्तु वास्तव में पता नहीं कितनी हानि हुई होगी। यदि सरकार बिधायक रूप में पैसा खर्च कर के पेड़ों को लगाये, ड्रेजिंग कर के नदियों को गहराई तक लाया जाय तो आगे चल कर ऐसी बाढ़ न आये ऐसा हो सकता है।

कोसी और ब्रह्मपुत्र का जो मामला है, उसके बारे में स्वयं डा० के० एल० राव ने कहा है। किन्तु बिहार की जनता आज बहुत तड़पती है। वहां पर बार बार यही कहा जाता है कि कोसी हमारे प्रदेश में बहती है, यदि वह अन्य किसी प्रदेश में बहती होती तो इसके संकटों के पूर्व ही इस का कोई इन्तजाम हो गया होता। बिहार की जनता के मन में यह जो भाव है, इस भाव को निकालने की कोशिश यह शासन करें—यही मैं चाहता हूँ।

दूसरी बात—वहां बन हानि के कारण सायल-इरोजन हुआ है, वहां हम यदि कोई रास्ते बनाते हैं, कोई रेलवे लाइन ले जाते हैं, उस समय स्वाभाविक रूप से पानी का बहाव कहां है—इस का बिलकुल विचार नहीं करते हुए, जैसे एक दूसरे का कोई कोआरडिनेशन नहीं है, काम करते चले जाते हैं, जिसके कारण पानी रुका रहता है और फिर उस का भयंकर परिणाम निकलता है। मैंगलांग हावर् प्रोजेक्ट के बारे में जो सूचना आपने दी है, उस में आपने स्वयं बताया है कि मैंगलांग हावर् प्रोजेक्ट के लिये जो वैकमपाड़ी कैनाल

[श्री जगन्नाथ राव जोशी]

बनाई है, उस के कारण फ्लड आ गया, पानी खड़ा रहा और उस के बाद सैकड़ों एकड़ भूमि में हानि हुई यानी मंगलोर हार्वर प्रोजेक्ट के लिये कैनाल बनाते समय ध्यान नहीं रखा गया, लेकिन जब वह सारा पानी समुद्र में जाये, इस दृष्टि से एक जगह तोड़ा गया तब उम पानी में रिसेशन हुआ। जो भी रास्ते हम बनायें—पी० डब्लू० डी० की दृष्टि से या रेलवे की दृष्टि से—उस समय कल्वर्ट्स की व्यवस्था, नैसर्गिक बहाव को चैनलाइज करने का प्रयत्न करना आवश्यक है।

तीसरी बात—यहां पर पानी के मामले बहुत ही गड़बड़ी में पड़े हुए हैं। कृष्णा, नर्मदा और तापी पर जो बांध बनने चाहिये, वे बिना झगड़े के बनने चाहिये। हमने यहां पर कानून पास किया है कि ऐसे जल-विवादों को जल्द से जल्द हल किया जाय। यदि वास्तव में हम जल्द से जल्द बांध बना दें तो बाढ़ के पानी को रोकने का बहुत अच्छा तरीका निकल सकता है। इसी संदर्भ में एक और सूचना भी मुझे देनी है। यह एक बहुत पुरानी बात है—गंगा और कावेरी को जोड़ने की योजना। मैं समझता हूँ कि इसका नजरअन्दाज नहीं करना चाहिये—जब-जब ऐसा प्रवाह आयेगा, बाढ़ आयेगी, उम पानी को उधर चैनलाइज किया जा सकता है। यदि हम उस पानी को उधर छोड़ने की व्यवस्था करें तो बाढ़ के पानी पर नियन्त्रण रखने की व्यवस्था हो सकती है।

अब जलपाईगुड़ी के बारे में एक बात और कह कर समाप्त करता हूँ। मुझे वहां पर लोग यह कहते सुनाई दिये कि इस साल तीस्ता में जो इतनी भयानक बाढ़ आई है, यह कोई देवी प्रकोप होगा, ऐसी बात नहीं है। इसके पीछे और भी कारण हो सकता है। लोगों के मनों में यह शंका भरी हुई है—वे समझते हैं कि चीनियों ने सिक्किम, भूटान की ओर पहाड़ों के दरों में पानी को तालाबों के रूप में रोका और उम को जान-बूझ कर

बांध तोड़ कर छोड़ा होगा, जिसके कारण इतनी भयंकर बाढ़ आई। मैं चाहता हूँ कि इस समस्या पर भी शासन ध्यान दे तथा इसकी जांच करे कि यह बात कहां तक सही है। आखिर यहां प्रजातन्त्र होने के नाते उस के प्रतिनिधि के रूप में उसकी भावनाओं को प्रकट करने के लिये हम यहां पर आये हैं—यह भावना गलत है या सही है, शासन गहराई से विचार कर के स्थिति को स्पष्ट करे। मैं चाहता हूँ कि शासन एक स्थायी आयोग कि नियुक्ति करे जो इस बात का अध्ययन करे कि बाढ़ कैसे-कैसे आती है, इस सारी समस्या पर पूर्णरूप से विचार कर के बाढ़ को एक दम काबू में लाने की दृष्टि से शीघ्र कदम उठाये जायें—यहीं मेरी शासन से प्रार्थना है।

श्री यमुना प्रसाद मंडल (दमस्तीपुर) : सभापति महोदय, आज हम लोग एक बड़ी समस्या पर विचार कर रहे हैं, जिसकी सूचना हमें 1954 में ही मिली थी। बंगाल में 1950 में ही यह कहा जाने लगा था कि जलपाईगुड़ी और तीस्ता बाजार धरने वाले नहीं हैं। शायद प्रकृति के यह महान प्रकोप के कारण बंगाल, बिहार, असम, गुजरात और सब से पीछे उड़ीसा को यह दर्दिन देखना पड़ा। किमी भी राज्य सरकार के काबू के बाहर है कि वह इतनी बड़ी विपत्ति का सामना कर सके। विशेषकर बंगाल की जो क्षति हुई है, उस की एक बहुत सुन्दर तस्वीर "दि डैल्यूज" नाम बुकलेट में हमारे श्री अतुल्य घोष जी ने दी है और इस बुकलेट में आखिर में उन्होंने कहा है कि एक खास एजेन्सी चाहिये जो प्रकृति के इस महान् चैलेन्ज का मुकाबला कर सके।

सभापति जी, मैं दारबन्द क्षेत्र से आता हूँ, जिसका क्रेवट फार्म दरभंगा क्षेत्र है। उसमें एक बड़ी खतरनाक नदी कोसी बहती है, जो सारी आफ-बिहार कहलाती थी। 1954 के बाद काफ़ी प्रयत्न करने के बाद उसमें कुछ सुधार लाये गये और दरभंगा

मुजफ्फरपुर, पूर्णिया के करीब 50 लाख लोगों को उससे कुछ राहत मिली, मगर एका-एक जब अमम और बंगाल में बाढ़ आई उमी का हिस्मा टम क्षेत्र में पड़ने के कारण एकाएक चौथी अक्टूबर रात्रि में इतनी बाढ़ आई कि करीब बिहार में 34 लाख लोग उसकी चपेट में आ गये। ये सारे आंकड़े डा० राव, सिचाई मंत्री ने प्रेजेंट किये हैं।

लेकिन क्षति इससे ज्यादा होगी। इस आंकड़े में कहीं-कहीं कहा गया है कि अक्टूबर में आई बाढ़ों से हुई क्षति का असेसमेंट हो रहा है। कितने घर गिरे, इसके आंकड़े अभी तक एकत्रित नहीं किए जा सके हैं, शायद सरकारी मशीनरी ग्लिफ के कार्यों में व्यस्त है। या फिर जितने घर गिरे हैं वे सब "जीरो" लगने लायक हो गए इसी लिए यह कह दिया गया कि असेसमेंट किया जा रहा है। इतनी बड़ी भारत सरकार और उसके पास यदि मामूली आंकड़े भी न हों, तो फिर हम क्या समझें? यही समझें कि विपत्ति बहुत बड़ी है और सारे लोग ग्लिफ के काम में लगे हुए हैं।

1954, के बाद भी कोसी योजना के सम्बन्ध में डलवा, गोपालपुर, कुणौली और अन्य स्थानों पर कटावों के द्वारा कोसी ने सूचना दी थी कि अगर आप नहीं सुधारते हैं और इसको ठीक से कन्ट्रोल नहीं करेंगे तो फिर बुरे दिन देखने पड़ेंगे। फिर वही हुआ। करीब दो लाख लोग बर्बाद हो गए, करीब तीन सौ गांव खत्म हो गए। चौथी अक्टूबर को बारह बजे रात में बाढ़ के कारण हजारों पशु खत्म हो गये। मानव तो किसी प्रकार तैर कर अपने को बचा सके। मैंने एक अफसर से पूछा कि यह हजारों पशुओं की लाशें कैसी हैं, तो उसने कहा कि शायद यह ऊपर से वह कर आई हैं। मैंने कहा ब्यंग में कि आप ठीक कहते हैं क्योंकि इस के ऊपर नेताल की मुहर लगी हुई है। अगर आप यह कहें कि यह प्राकृतिक प्रकोप है जो कि अचानक आया है और कोई मनुष्य इसका मुकाबला नहीं कर सकता, तो यह बात सही होगी। लेकिन इस तरह से लोगों को बरगलाना कि यह

लाशें दूसरी जगह से बह कर आई हैं कितनी गन्दी बात है? मुझे इस से बड़ा "शाक" लगा और मैं हैरत में पड़ गया। सन 1954 में भयंकर बाढ़ के बाद कहा गया कि कोटार डैम बनेगा। मैंने सोचा कि इसमें कठिनाइयां हैं क्योंकि इंटरनेशनल ऐग््रीमेंट की जरूरत होगी। मित्र देश नेपाल की मित्रता के नाते वेस्टर्न कोसी कैनाल का काम हुआ तो क्या कोटार डैम का प्रारम्भ नहीं हो सकता था? बिहार सरकार के बूते के बाहर यह बात है। केन्द्र का ही यह धर्म है कि जहां जहां अचानक विपत्ति आती है, हजारों लोग मरते हैं, वहां पर अपनी ओर से सारी सहायता के कार्य करें। राश्यों के ऊपर छोड़ने से काम नहीं हो सकता है।

एक कंवर सेन कमेटी बनी थी। कंवरसेन साहब बड़े इंजीनियर हैं। वे इस समय साउथ ईस्ट एशिया में एक बड़ी कमेटी में काम कर रहे हैं। उन्होंने कहा था कि डगमारा बैराज होना चाहिये। मगर शायद हाइड्रो-एलेक्ट्रिक स्टेशन, पूना ने इसकी मुखालिफत की। उसके बाद कन्वेंसीयन साहब और दुसरे बड़े टेक्नीशियन्स और इंजीनियर्स ने कहा कि नहीं, यह सही है इससे कोसी को नियंत्रित किया जा सकता है। लेकिन उसके संबंध में भी अभी तक कुछ नहीं हुआ। मैं डाक्टर राव सिचाई मंत्री से कहूंगा कि इन वानिग्स के बाद भी आप चुप रहे यह ठीक बात नहीं है। मैं एक साधारण सुझाव देना चाहता हूं। यह जो पश्चिमी तटबंध और पूर्वी तटबंध हैं इनको रिटायर्ड बन्ध समझे और आप असली बन्ध उसके भीतर में 3 मील पश्चिम से और दो मील पूरब से ला कर बनाएं। उसका नतीजा यह होगा कि बहुत सी जमीन निकलेगी। लोगों को काफी जमीन मिल सकेगी। यह जो अभी एग्जिस्टिंग एम्बैंकमेंट्स हैं, वेस्टर्न एम्बैंकमेंट्स 75 मील के और पूर्वी एम्बैंकमेंट्स 75 मील के (ब्यबचाल)

मैं बुनियादी बात पर आ रहा हूं। चार जिलों-दरभंगा, पूर्णिया, मुंयेर और सहरसा

[श्री यमुना प्रसाद मंडल]

में चौतीस लाख आदमी अफेक्टेड हैं। जब बन्ध बन रहा था तब कहा गया था कि लैंड फार लैंड, हाउस फार हाउस लेकिन आज तक कुछ नहीं किया गया। मैं कहूंगा कि गुजरात बाढ़ के संबंध में, जहां तक मुझे याद है, उस समय कहा गया था कि एक नेशनल फ्लड कमीशन की नियुक्ति होगी। उसमें गंगा और कोसी को भी शामिल किया जाय। गंगा की बाढ़ में 500 मील लेफ्ट हैंड साइड में लोग तबाह हो जाते हैं। उन के हजारों मकान गिर जाते हैं। सन् 48 में गंगा में भयंकर बाढ़ आई थी। हजारों लोग बेघरबार हो गये थे। मुजफ्फरपुर और दरभंगा का दक्षिणी हिस्सा खत्म हो गया था। उसके लिए मैंने कहा था कि आप कुछ कीजिए। लेकिन शायद आज तक कुछ नहीं हो रहा है। दरभंगा जिले में बरुआ बांध (पटौरी अंचल में) दरभंगा जिले की गंगा भी बाढ़ से बचाने वाले खटाई में पड़े हैं। अगर मैं पुनर्वास की बात कहूँ तो आपको आश्चर्य होगा। उस के बड़े छराब हल्स बने हैं। श्री गुणानन्द ठाकुर, एम० पी० रिहैबिलिटेशन कमेटी में थे। वहां पर करीब एक करोड़ रुपये काम में नहीं लाया जा सका। रिहैबिलिटेशन कानून में इस तरह के लैकुना है जिनकी वजह से कुछ नहीं किया जा सका। जहां तक लैंड फार लैंड की बात है, मैं कहूंगा कि बाहर रिबर बेड में जो जमीनें हैं वह लैंडलेस लेबरर्स और हरिजनों को दी जानी चाहिए न कि उन उम्मीदारों को जिन के पास पहले से ही काफी जमीनें हैं। जमीन की वहां पर कोई कमी नहीं है: दोनों तटबंधों के भीतर जो लैंडलेस लेबरर्स और हरिजनों की जमीनें बली गई हैं उन के लिए आप वहीं नजदीक में ही जमीन पा सकते हैं। पूरव की ओर घिमड़ा और उधर नदियां हैं जहां आप सैकड़ों एकड़ जमीन पा सकते हैं। लेकिन जब आप सेटिलमेंट आफिसर सहरसा जिला से कहेंगे तभी कुछ होगा। अगर यह काम नहीं होता तो फिर और कोई उपाय नहीं है।

जहां तक एलाटमेंट का सम्बन्ध है मैं बताऊंगा कि अगर केन्द्रीय सरकार के द्वारा यह एलाटमेंट का कार्य नहीं होगा तो फिर कुछ नहीं हो सकता वहां पर एक इंच सड़क नहीं है। गौर मनोहर पट्टी अस्पताल को छोड़कर और दुसरा अस्पताल नहीं है। मैंने इस संबंध में बिहार के मुख्य सचिव से बात की तो उन्होंने तुरंत कहा कि मोबाइल डिस्पेंसरीज खुलेंगी, यह होगा, वह होगा। लेकिन पता नहीं कुछ हो सका या नहीं हो सका। खुशी की बात है कि अभी जब डा० राम मुभग सिंह वहां गए थे तो किसानों ने आकर उनके समाने अपनी दर्दभरी विनती रखी। उन्होंने कहा कि मैं केन्द्रीय सरकार से कहूंगा ताकि कुछ हजार अच्छी गायें मुफ्त में मिल जायें। लेकिन उन्होंने रेल से ले जाने की अड़चन भी बताई। तो मेरा कहना यह है कि जो गरीब बेचारे बेघरवार हैं उन के लिए क्या होगा? मेरा यह सुझाव है कि एक परमानेंट पार्लियामेंटी कमीशन का निर्माण किया जाय। (अवधान) उन्होंने खुद रिपोर्ट में कहा कि वाटर लागिंग से कमला बालान और भुतही बालान की इससे भी बदतर हालत है। कोसी की सतह ऊंची हो जाती है तो फिर जितनी नदियां हैं वे भीतर जा नहीं सकती हैं और इधर वाटर लगूड क्षेत्र को भी वही हालत हो सकती है जैसी कि उधर है। इसलिए मैं आग्रह करूंगा कि इस का आप पूरा उपाय करें। अभी मैं डा० कर्ण सिंह से भी फ्लड फोरकास्टिंग स्टेशन की बात की थी (अवधान) अगर आप लोगों के दुखों को सुनाने के लिए भी हम लोगों को थोड़ा समय नहीं दे सकते हैं तो मैं अपना स्थान ग्रहण करता हूँ।

SHRI S. KANDAPPAN (Mettur) : Mr. Chairman, from my State of Tamilnad we have no complaint to make against floods. We would be most happy if our expert Minister here—I am told he is an expert in the field—can, by some ingenuity, divert the floods to our territory.

Unfortunately, the calamitous floods that have occurred in various parts of our coun-

try are causing a grave concern to us, and the poor industrial development and the recession that we have already been passing through, are aggravated by this kind of calamities that have been frequently occurring in the past few months.

I did not have the occasion to visit any of the inundated areas. But from what I have seen in the newspaper reports and also from the various speeches that have been made by the hon. members in this House, I feel that the situation is really very alarming.

But what I am really concerned about is this....

श्री रवि राय : सभापतिजी मोरारजी भाई
खुद रहते तो अच्छा होता-क्योंकि उनसे भी
सम्बन्ध है ।

MR. CHAIRMAN: Every word and every sentence will be conveyed.

SHRI S. KANDAPPAN: Sir, this is not the first occasion when we are discussing floods and flood situation in the country on the floor of this House. For the past 3 or 4 months we have been discussing this issue of flood and drought repeatedly; I think we have done it almost 3 or 4 times in this House and the speeches were of the same type or nature and probably the reply would also be of the same kind. That is what I feel very much concerned about, Sir.

I have gone through the statement made by the Minister very carefully. Except on certain items where collection of data and some analysis were made nothing satisfactory is to be found in the statement. This is an index on the front page where the 'rainfall characteristics' are indicated. In the first chapter the rainfall characteristics have been very brilliantly analysed. I have no hesitation to complement the Minister for that. Then there is the chapter on 'Flood situation in the States'. That is also given rather fairly enough. But then when we come to the chapter 'Damage due to floods', here, I should say, according to the various representatives from the States, there is a little under-estimation. Regarding the last chapter 'Statement of flood damages', here also, the damages is a little under-estimated. But in between there are two chapters 'Central assistance for flood relief' and 'Resume of the 1968 floods and action proposed'. These 2 chapters are most disappointing. It is there

that I would expect the hon. Minister to indicate as to what they have done in the past, what they are doing presently and what they propose to do in the future to prevent such calamities and to attend to the work when flood occurs. Sir, flood is a natural calamity like fire or any other natural calamity. Is there any machinery in the country—when there is flood anywhere, or when there are cyclonic damages—to rush to the spot and immediately doing the work? There is a small indication in the statement that they are going to create such a machinery in future. What have they been doing for all these 20 years? One gets the feeling that it is only this year that we got independence. These floods have been there ever since 1947. For all these 20 years what have they been doing? Have they thought of any long term plan with a proper perspective to see that these kinds of damages and calamities are minimised if not completely arrested and the injuries to people and damage to property are reduced? Sir, on page 18 of the statement, I am sorry to say, the first sentence states like this, under the heading 'Central assistance for flood relief'.

"The responsibility for relief and rehabilitation measures following any natural calamity is primarily that of the State Governments concerned."

Sir, what a ridiculous statement to make! How could you say it is the responsibility of the State Government? It only shows the callous attitude of the centre; for each and every thing they encroach upon the legitimate rights of the States. The Centre does not allow the States even to enjoy the rights which constitutionally belong to the States. But when it is a question of natural calamities, they try to assign nature to the States. They say the citizenship is Indian, the soil is Indian, but they assign nature to the States. What a callous attitude on the part of the Central Government to give expression to such feelings in the face of so many repeated floods in this country? Can the Minister honestly say that it would be possible for any State to cope with the natural calamities of the type occurring in the country today? It is impossible. I am very sorry to say this kind of attitude indicates the mind of Government, their indifference; it shows

[Shri S. Kandappan]
that they have not properly appreciated the magnitude of this problem.

Later they go on to say what they propose to do.

"The floods of 1968 have highlighted the need for accelerating flood control programmes and also immediate implementation of certain measures".

As if the floods of only this year warrant Government thinking on these lines. What about previous floods? There were many. Why did it not occur to Government that this was called for much earlier? It is a very strange thing. Perhaps they thought, as I have already pointed, that it is the responsibility of the State Government.

I do not want to take much much time, but I would be failing in my duty if I do not insist on one point. Even with regard to what we eat, when we eat and how many times per day we could eat, the Centre is issuing directives. I am not just making a funny statement. When we assumed office in Madras after the 1967 elections, our DMK Government, after considering the foodgrains situation, thought fit to remove the control imposed on hotels about serving meals. Previously meals were to be served only once on some days, and on one day they should observe fast. This was some kind of regulation the late Prime Minister, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri, was enforcing. When our Government thought fit to remove the regulations and informed the Centre accordingly, the latter were not happy. They were sorry why our people are eating three times daily. They feared probably that this would enhance the prestige of the DMK Government and it would be damaging to the Congress. Even this kind of attitude is there. But when it is a matter of a serious nature, when natural calamities overtake States, they say without any feeling of shame that it is the responsibility of the State Governments to take proper measures. I take strong objection to this kind of feeling. This is really objectionable. It is really this kind of attitude that has led to the sorry state of affairs we find in the country today.

Shri Joshi referred to afforestation and other things that should have been attended to, like embankments to rivers, streng-

thening them, putting check dams etc. What we have been seeing in the past 20 years is that there are dams without water and water inundating without check dams. Here I am reminded of the great Karikala Chola who lived 2,000 years ago, who put embankments to the Cauvery. Thanks to him we do not find such calamitous flood situation on the banks of the Cauvery. I think in the middle ages many kings might have done it in a small way; but after independence, I do not think Government can claim anywhere, either in Assam or in Bihar or in UP where they are trying with the Gandak project, Kosi project or some other major project, where the meandering and changing nature of the river constitutes a great problem, that they have succeeded in putting embankments. These are all basic issues. If they cannot tackle them seriously, I am afraid this is going to remain a perpetual problem with us. It is going to live with us. So, the Government, instead of repeating platitudes, should honestly attempt to solve the problem. That is my request, and I hope that at least in the face of the present crisis, the Government would rise to the occasion and do something about it.

One last word about forecasting of the weather. Day before yesterday I happened to be in Madras. There appeared a news item that the next day, that is yesterday, would be a fair weather day in Madras. So, believing that forecast, yesterday being Sunday, people took a walk on the beach early in the morning, but suddenly at about 6.30 or 7.00 O' Clock there was a down pour and a lot of people got drenched and many people immediately phoned the press people and complained about it. Yesterday evening some papers carried this news item that people were cheated by the weather forecast. I wonder whether it is an impossible thing to correctly forecast the weather, cyclones and such other things. I think things can be improved, and I hope the Minister would attend to this.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE (Kanpur):
That was under Dr. Karan Singh.

SHRI S. KANDAPPAN: At least rain comes under him. He can as an engineer try to do something about it.

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI (Bhubaneswar) : The havoc caused by floods and cyclones in the three coastal districts of Puri, Ganjam and Cuttack in Orissa; in North Bengal and Bihar is colossal, and the House is aware that Rajasthan is in the grip of deadly famine today due to drought. This year's crop was the best in Orissa in many years and with another 15 days respite the crops would have been harvested and the granaries would have been full, but the hopes were shattered by the floods, cyclones and heavy rain on 26th, 27th and 28th October and again on 13th and 14th of this month.

In brief it can be said that all public institutions which were built in the three districts of Puri, Ganjam and Cuttack, all the bridges, culverts, P.W.D. roads, village roads, national highways, railway lines, irrigation projects and saline embankments and everything that was built during the last 20 years since independence, has been completely damaged or washed away. Therefore, the entire area has to be built anew.

On our return from the affected areas, some of us on this side met the Food Minister Shri Jagjwan Ram, and the Minister of State Shri Shinde, who were so helpful to us, the Irrigation Minister Dr. Rao and also the Prime Minister. We impressed upon them the sufferings of the people. Two hundred tons of wheat were immediately rushed to be distributed among the affected people, and I know that another 1,000 tons of wheat had been asked for to be rushed immediately to Orissa. Besides this, Rs. 50 lakhs has been given. But this is nothing, we need much more because the entire area has to be built anew. But I will be failing in my duty if I do not say that even after four or five days of the devastation, even one kilo of rice or *chura* could not reach Balagan, which is only a distance of 42 miles from Khurda, the subdivisional headquarters. We have tried our best and impressed upon the Central Government that the entire area has to be built anew, that it needs crores and crores of rupees and that human suffering cannot be measured in terms of money. If it is measured in terms of money, I can venture to say that more than Rs. 25 crores worth property have been lost, and Rs. 9 crores

worth of paddy crops above is lost. Even today if you see the national highway No. 5, it was breached at more than 14 points and on account of the breaches in the railway line the northern part of Orissa remains cut off from the southern part of the State for the last 24 days. Communications must be restored immediately. It has not been repaired yet. Whatever repair was made, it was washed away in the rains of 13th and 14th of this month. 20 years of labour has been lost in three days' havoc unleashed by nature and hundreds and thousands of people have been rendered homeless and they have lost everything, their belongings and even cash. So, the task before the country and this Government is stupendous. Sand and silt have to be cleared from the lands. People have to be fed. Children have to be taken care of. Students have lost their text books and all other reading material. They have to be assisted. For providing shelter homes have to be rebuilt and they must be rebuilt speedily as the winter is at the doors.

In the process of reconstruction of the entire area, the people can be provided with work and employment so that they can earn their living because the dole is not enough. They should be provided with work so that they can earn their living.

Hundreds of villages in Parikud and Malud islands and hundreds of villages in the vicinity of Chilka lake are still under water for the last 15 to 20 days. 60,000 fishermen depend on Chilka lake for their livelihood. The daily catch of fish from Chilka lake comes to about 1 lakh of rupees. For the last 20-22 days they have not been able to go for fishing and you imagine what an amount of loss it is. Hundreds of boats have been lost. Fishing nets have also been lost. The problem is of a great magnitude and it must be faced boldly and squarely.

When the railway employees in the Railway colony at Kalupada Ghat were marooned and did not get any foodstuff for 4 days, the Divisional Superintendent of Khurda instead of trying to conduct and rush foodstuffs to them was frantically telephoning the State Government officers 'Please reserve a seat for me so that I can have an aerial survey.' This is the condition there and the Divisional Superintendent

[Shri Chintamani Panigrahi]

ent instead of helping the people was interested in having an aerial survey. I am glad that the Railway authorities have put in 8000 workers working in three shift basis for restoring the railway track. I am glad also that immediately after 28th on the 29th they started the work and that here is something the State Government can learn from the Railway authorities. The railway authorities should engage the local workers in this work so that they get gainful employment. I am sorry, to say that out of 8000 workers who are working in three shifts 500 only belong to that area. The restoration work should be completed immediately. I should submit that the railway authorities should engage the local workers in that area. Therefore, I would request the hon. Minister and the Government here and the Railway Board that they should issue specific instructions to the railway authorities there so that the local workers who have lost everything may be taken in that work there, in order that they can get work and earn something during the period of distress.

I again would like to bring to the notice of the Government that they must make further efforts in this direction. The Ministry of Labour also is concerned with this. Hundreds of workers who are serving in the Orissa Textile Mills belong to these villages which have been submerged or which have suffered. These villages have been devastated, and they have applied for loan from the provident fund but they are not getting the money. I therefore request that the Commissioner for Employees' Provident Fund should come to their help at this time and write to the Regional Director so that things may be expedited and they can get help.

Similarly, the Ministry of Steel can also come to the rescue here. In the Hindustan Steel, hundreds of workers there come from this area and other parts of the State which have been affected, and they have asked for loans, and assistance, to build up their houses, and I hope the Ministry of Steel and also the management of Hindustan Steel will come to the rescue of those workers who need help at this hour of distress.

The repair works should be carried on immediately, because as a result of dislo-

cation the normal life in the state has been paralysed. I again bring to the notice of the Government the difficulties of the employees at the Puri railway colony. Because of the floods, everything has been damaged there, but still, today, no repair work has been done in the Puri railway colony.

I must then bring to the notice of the Government that this year's rain and flood in and around Chilka lake have brought in a new feature. The big rivers may be dammed and dams have been constructed over the Maharadi. But this year's floods have shown that you cannot overlook small rivers. Just as you cannot overlook small men, you cannot ignore small rivers too. You will find that small rivers like the Salia, Malaguni, Kansari, Sapua and Kusumi can flood the entire area within 48 hours and wash miles of railway line away, as has happened this year. Therefore, I urge upon the Minister of Irrigation and Power to look to this aspect. You have appointed a special team to look into the flood problem of the eastern rivers. In that terms of reference, please include the rivers which drain into the Chilka lake, because it is a new feature which has come to light this year.

17.52 Hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER *in the Chair.*]

There was a proposal to build the Salia dam. The construction of this dam started in the year 1962. It is now 1968. At that point of Salia, this year, the discharge of flood water was 60,000 cusecs, while the normal discharge of water from Salia is 14,000 to 15,000 cusecs. The dam could have been constructed by now. I have enquired into this matter, and I learnt that 33,000 cusecs of flood water could have been prevented, and thus the entire area could have been saved from the damage caused by the outflow of this heavy discharge of flood waters. Similarly, there was a proposal to have a dam, an anicut, over the river Malaguni. For the last 15 years it is pending. I would request the hon. Minister of Irrigation and Power to go to these areas and find out ways and means to improve the area and to do something to train these rivers so

that these rivers which drain into the Chilka lake can be dammed somewhere; storage dams can be built all along these rivers at the higher points so that they can provide water for irrigation of vast areas there. You will be surprised to know that these areas which were flooded this year, for the last three years consecutively were under the grip of a drought. Therefore, it is extremely necessary that this should be done.

I would bring to the notice of the hon. Minister that during the drought in Bihar, at least 20,000 tubewells could be sunk and energised. I would request him to sanction at least 2,000 tubewells in these areas in Orissa and then I hope the State Government could be persuaded to supply electricity so that all these tubewells could be energised. Immediate assistance is necessary for helping the farmers for growing Rabi crops. With storage dams dotted here and there and with 2000 tubewells energised, I hope the face of the entire area will be changed and there will be no such problem in future.

There was a proposal before Government that all the villages situated in low-lying areas should be shifted to places of higher altitude. I have gone to these villages. At least 20 of them are prepared to shift if they are given land in higher altitude. If the hon. minister places sufficient funds at the hands of the State Government, we shall persuade the State Government to take the necessary action. Those who want to shift to places of higher altitudes can be provided with funds to construct their houses. I hope the Central Government will give the necessary funds.

There have been floods in North Bengal, Orissa, Bihar, Assam and so on. More than 1 crore of people have been affected. The Government of India should set up a special rehabilitation agency, so that they can coordinate the rehabilitation measures for the entire area and find out ways and means to help the people in distress, so that such a calamity will never occur again.

SHRI H. N. MUKHERJEE (Calcutta North East): Sir, large tracts of our country have been stricken by visitation of a magnitude almost unprecedented and

particularly in North Bengal, there have been landslides and a deluge—not a mere flood, but something like a tidal wave, which gripped Jalpaiguri and other places. Our stockintrade in Parliament is words, but words cannot give a picture or any idea of the gruesome grimness and the poignant pathos of the scenes which have been witnessed there. I shall make no attempt to describe them.

In North Bengal, the affected area constitutes a corridor between Pakistan and Nepal, linking the rest of India with Assam, NEFA, Nagaland and Manipur. Therefore, this is of major strategic importance. This area of nearly 2000 sq. miles was for a fortnight or more virtually cut off from the rest of India. The total death toll was estimated by the reputable journal, *Economic and Political Weekly* of Bombay, as being around 20,000. 10 per cent of the tea gardens in Darjeeling had suffered. In Jalpaiguri the damage to this dollar-earning commodity has not yet been assessed.

We have been told by members who have had themselves experience of the horror how Jalpaiguri had a hideous experience, sudden rush of water sweeping away everything man, women and children, their houses and all, leaving not a pole standing. Such things happened that a Char area, a sandy stretch on the outskirts of Jalpaiguri called Paharpur on the river near the town, where 5000 refugees were living was simply washed and does not exist any longer. The total number of fatalities would not be known till there is a comparison made with census figures and electoral rolls. For 72 hours, Jalpaiguri and its environments were in a different planet. This was nature's fury; But can we just think of it as nature's fury, what is called an act of God, where man has no hand? Actually the failure of the administration is the most important feature, which requires to be highlighted, not merely petitions to Government to do this or that. This Government, at least in North Bengal, collapsed. Even the Governor of West Bengal, Mr. Dharma Vira, had to say that it had totally collapsed. We have noticed the heroism of the common people. Railway employees have given their lives in the Darjeeling-Himalayan stretch; so also

[Shri H. N. Mukherjee]

the people of Siliguri and several other places—I need not name them—we have seen that sort of thing. We have seen also how the efforts of the people of Siliguri who went forward to assist Jalpaiguri when nothing was being done by officialdom, how those efforts were disrupted by the officials who were in that place. The collapse of the rotten administration which is run in the name of Delhi in West Bengal, that is the most important feature about it, and this collapse has been illustrated—my hon. friend, Dr. Rao might be laughing—this collapse has been illustrated in the complete inefficiency at every level of the administration.

18 Hrs.

The flood warning came, but it was not communicated. Dr. Rao himself had suspected it and the S. N. Roy Report confirms it. There should have been a judicial probe, but the Chief Secretary gives a report which, luckily, says—he is constrained to say—that the flood warning had come, but it had not been communicated. About the guilty men, a couple of officers have been transferred, but the Deputy Commissioner of Jaipalguri rules the roost even now and not a hair of his head has been touched. This is the kind of thing that is going on when in fact the order of the boot should have been given to him.

The S. N. Roy Report says that the army has failed. It is not the fault of the army. The army people had suffered in Sikkim and other places. We do not even know the kind of suffering which the army personnel had to undergo. Even the co-ordination between the army and the civilian administration was just not there. This is about the local people.

My hon. friend ever here had referred to the All India Radio. AIR has a kind of station at Siliguri and it said nothing about it; it was silent about the disaster and the world heard of the tragedy through scanty reports from local correspondents. And when the AIR finally came up with a brief report, it played down the havoc; it emphasized restoration of electricity, air dropping of supplies and taking over by the army of relief operations, all of which would

have come as news to the people of Jalpaiguri if they had been in a position to listen to AIR. Actually, till the 12th of October, there was no air dropping of supplies. Incidentally, air dropping of food packets took place in such a fashion that a child was killed and 8 other people were injured and an inquiry has had to be instituted. That is about the All India Radio.

About the other levels, my hon. friend, the Minister, Dr. K. L. Rao, an engineer himself, he left for the United States immediately after the deluge for attending a seminar. I am sorry to have to say that knowledge acquired at this time of life is not going to be of much assistance to the cause of my country.

Then, in West Bengal, the Secretary of the Irrigation Department, one A. K. Mazumdar, IAS, along with another engineer stayed on in Calcutta, never went to North Bengal and managed to go to Yugoslavia. His Wilayati trip at public expense could not be postponed. Could you imagine the Secretary of the Irrigation Department running about Calcutta, doing *tayari* for a trip to Yugoslavia, which could very well have been postponed? But he did not do it.

About the Governor himself, he was in Darjeeling and he did not come down. He was busy no doubt; he had to help stranded foreign tourists and their dogs with transport to come down from the hills. But he did not come down till the 10th. I have been told on very credible authority that on the 6th of October a direct telephone message had been received from Siliguri by Mr. Dharama Vira. He received it himself and in that he has told about the calamity. That same evening there was a dinner, possibly dance also, in Raj Bhavan, Darjeeling. He came down only when the Deputy Prime Minister chose to descend on Jalpaiguri. His second visit was when he had to accompany Shri Jagjivan Ram and the third and last visit was when he had to accompany the Prime Minister. Never did he go of his own. He spent most of his time in Darjeeling, arranging cocktail parties. Doing what else? Having a helicopter, he could have gone in 20 minutes' time from Darjeeling to Jalpaiguri. But he did not do it. And what did he do? I am told—I cannot vouch for it myself, but I am

told—that during this period he insisted on preparing and ceremoniously opening a golf course in Darjeeling at a cost of Rs. 80,000 and throwing a lunch in honour of his Indian and foreign friends who played golf on the heights of Darjeeling.

This is the kind of thing he did. I do not have to argue the case against Shri Dharma Vira. I have said this before in this House in another context. Dharma Vira should go if there is any morality left in this Government. That sanctimonious person, who happens to be the Deputy Prime Minister, came and went away. If there is any morality in this administration, Dharma Vira should go.

What did our Gandhian Deputy Prime Minister do? Fresh from his annual American pilgrimage, he was the first VIP to descend on north Bengal. The people imagined in their innocence that this Gandhian had really come to share their agony to a certain extent. He might have viewed Jalpaiguri from a helicopter, but he chose to come down to tread the soil of Jalpaiguri. So they wanted him to walk only along a part of the silt-covered town. Then Morarji bhai's bluff was called and the virtuous man had to scamper to safety and a sumptuous lunch somewhere near at Bagdogra. Perhaps, since the Kantilal story is making the rounds of India, Morarjibhai's motto is: If you are shoulder deep in the mud, you do not have to walk on it; you are already down there.

It was a well-known Bengali tea-gardener, a Congress champion, whom Shri Bhattacharyya knows very well, and no Naxalbari Communist, who asked Shri Morarji Desai, "What about relief?" He asked it with tears in his eyes because he was overwrought. With his unflappable crudity the Deputy Prime Minister called him a mad man. It is on record; it is in the papers.

AN HON. MEMBER : Chuck him out.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU (Deamond Hartric) : Resign.

SHRI H. N. MUKERJEE : This is the kind of thing which happens. I ask this House not to look upon this debate as an occasion when we petition for one item of relief here and one item of relief there. This is an occasion which is showing up the

utter collapse of the demoralised and degenerated administration which is here.

The Prime Minister's visit was somewhat delayed because she was busy purveying the message of India to Latin American dictators. When she went, some time had passed in the mean time, the first shock was over and the calamity had become an occasion for another bout of factional feuds inside the Congress. Not all Congressmen in West Bengal were unhappy to learn of Morarjibhai being chased out of Jalpaiguri. Those who were sad were hoping that the Prime Minister would also get the same treatment. Shri Atulya Ghosh found himself too ill to meet the Prime Minister in north Bengal.

The Prime Minister, I must say, personally tried to behave in a braver fashion. After all, she is Jawaharlal Nehru's daughter. She tried to address the audience. She got up a ladder or something, but the police around her, more loyalist than the king, without any provocation beat its own officers and made a lathi charge whose memory would stink just as much as the stench of human and animal carcass that pervaded Jalpaiguri at that time.

These are lapses which have happened. Testimony from every quarter, even from Congress quarters—I am glad at the speech which Chapalbabu made; it is a very honest to goodness speech—testimony from every quarter is that relief is being distorted. Official relief is being channelled through Congress and its auxiliaries. Shri Dharma Vira is avidly helping in this game of politicking. Demands for all-party relief committees are encountering cold response. The misfortunes of north Bengal have come handy to the quarrelling mandarins of the Congress Party in that State and the tasks of relief and rehabilitation are relegated to the background. This perverse politicking is to be discovered in Atulya Babu's latest performance. He gives a manifesto. The great man is deeply disturbed; he is crying himself hoarse.... (Interruption). I am quoting from the *Amrit Bazar Patrika*. I can quote from the *Hindustan Standard*. Both these Calcutta papers are reporting how the great man is crying himself hoarse for the rehabilitation of the floodhit people. God bless him; let his efforts succeed. Let at least relief and rehabilitation go there.

[Shri H. N. Mukerjee]

He is saying these things with a firm voice. The Congress leader said :—

“Let them not forget that north Bengal is passing through the biggest disaster of its history. I want to see planning and implementation to go together.”

He says :—

“Nothing has been done so far.”

He is telling the truth partly because of the kind of politicking which is going on inside West Bengal. He is angry for his own reasons and in his own way. But the people are angry in a different fashion and more deeply. Therefore, I would say, since the Government is there, it has its duty which it cannot escape.

Firstly, start and complete in as quick a time as possible all the inquiries necessitated into the lapses of officials, into the technological problems involved, into the calamity that happened, into the tasks to be done quickly. Secondly, begin the job of taming the Teesta which is at bottom a defence problem and take immediate steps for proper strengthening of the Teesta embankment in Jalpaiguri town. Thirdly, despite all the glib talk about money being no matter, a firm promise that has been made so far as far the relief and rehabilitation goes—long term talk is very easy, Rs. 50 crores or any number of crores might be mentioned—is of Rs. 1 crore by the Centre. The way in which the Government give relief was reported by *Hindustan Standard* of Calcutta on the 25th October when it said, “Not a piece of clothing has yet been distributed” from bulging Government stocks. Fourthly, the question of landslides in the Himalayan areas requires special investigation about which some idea has to be given by the Minister. Fifthly, as part of the processes of reconstruction—I am very happy my friend Shri C. K. Bhattacharyya mentioned it—educational facilities should be considered to be a major part of reconstruction of broken lives. All libraries have gone; all schools have gone; all books have gone. Sixthly, hereafter, a reasonable percentage of the national income should be earmarked for flood control works throughout the country. Let there be, with an Engineer Minister at the head of things, no tinkering any longer in the way in which

the flood control operations do. For example, the operations which the D.V.C. was scheduled to undertake have all been distorted because of the inter-State rivalries and the unseemly politicking that the Central Government has carried on.

I am amazed the Prime Minister is not here—she may be busy meeting the dignitaries; God knows what she is doing—and the Deputy Prime Minister made a visitation for a short while and went away. There is little human interest in something which has happened in this country of an unprecedented character. The Congress Party—I am not exonerating any party—in fact, all parties and their leadership will have to be answerable to the people. I do find there is the callousness overspread in the political scene and that callousness is symbolised most of all by the fact that in Goa, of all places, the All-India Congress committee, at its meeting, discussed, of all problems, prohibition and came to a decision the point of which is very well known to all of us. Not one man took cudgles in his hands to say something of what happened in the country which enables us to come together. I do not understand the kind of politics which these gentlemen have on the Treasury Benches. I could have understood their fighting a political battle. But they could have got an advantageous position in a political battle if they had behaved in a way in which they should have done. (*Interruptions*). I am not yielding to interruptions which have nothing to do with what I am saying. I make this very serious point that here are our political leaderships in different parties, mainly in the Congress, which does not know how to appeal to the people, which does not know how to take politics to a very high level, which does not know how to mobilise the whole country for national integration. I know the kind of noise the people can make. It is very easy to make counter-noise of that sort. This is a kind of thing that is happening.

We should take a lead from China of all countries. This is what they have done. The Yellow River, once the scourge of China has been turned into its opposite and the huge San Men Hsia dam where a miracle has taken place. We get what? We get speeches; we get statements; we get promises and we get things never to be done. It is a sad picture which this country

has today, the floods and the deluge which has taken place particularly in West Bengal and in other areas and the kind of problems which have been the result of it. Something has happened which has shown us the character of this administration which has collapsed automatically in its own ugly way because it cannot carry the job of ruling the country. That is a writing on the wall and that is why we ask the Government, because it is the Government, because the people must make it answerable to them, to take long-term and short-term measures in this regard. We know at the same time that notice has been served on Government not only by our long-suffering people but also by nature which, by its fury, has shown how utterly incapable and inefficient and callous this administration happens to be.

SHRI K. NARAYANA RAO (Bobbili) : We have just heard Prof. Mukerjee. The occasion is a very solemn one and every one of us in this country, irrespective of party politics, is deeply concerned about the flood situation and the cyclone situation in the country. But I was rather disappointed to find Prof. Mukerjee spending most of his speech on things other than the issues before the House. He has taken this opportunity to throw all his anger against the Congress Party. I wish we do not make use of such occasions for political controversies.

I do not say anything about the flood situation in the various parts of the country; this has been very ably presented by the other hon. members and I share in their concern and I associate myself with the sentiments expressed.

So far as I am concerned, I come from Srikakulam district. The cyclone which hit Orissa also hit the three taluks of Srikakulam District, i.e., Itchapuram, Sompeta and Tekkali as part and parcel of the great tragedy that took place in Orissa in the last week of last month. My friend, Shri Deo, has presented a rather vivid picture about the degree of distress which had overtaken the entire area. When the cyclone took place last month, I happened to be here. But we have been informed by the Press and the All India Radio that only Orissa was affected, and there has been no whisper, and nor even a murmur, about the areas affected in Andhra Pradesh. I do not say

this because I am an Andhra. I share in the sufferings of the entire country. But what I want to say is this. Though this particular area was small, the intensity with which nature has inflicted the damages was really beyond comprehension unless one visited that place. Prof. Ranga visited those areas a day before I did, and he calculated the loss as about Rs. 60 crores. Even officially the loss is estimated by the Andhra Pradesh Government as about Rs. 11 crores.

In this connection I have to mention that Shri Deo has passed uncharitable comments and remarks about the Andhra Pradesh Government. He said that the Andhra Pradesh Government did not attend to the problem immediately. I differ from him in this regard. In fact, what happened? For four to five days nobody knew about the cyclonic conditions there because every communication was disrupted; trees were lying on the roads and nobody could know what had happened in those remote areas; many trees had fallen down and it took four days to clear the roads and communicate through jeep. Thereafter, the district authorities visited those places and actually funds, allotted for drought, were immediately diverted for this purpose, to attend to this problem.

As was pointed out, it is not possible for the Andhra Government to attend to this in a single-handed manner. Let me briefly mention what had actually happened. Actually thousands of acres of coconut trees had fallen; thousands of acres of cashew trees had fallen; thousands of acres of jack-fruit trees had fallen. So far as these particular areas are concerned, those people earn their livelihood purely from those particular things. So, the impact of this distress will be there for at least ten years to come because it takes at least eight years for coconut trees to start yielding; for them to reach their full growth, it takes about 12 years. It takes about 12 years for the coconut plants to grow and the labour classes are put to difficulties if they are destroyed. So far as the landowning classes are concerned they can draw from their reserves. But so far as the labour classes are concerned there is going to be total distress. They cannot get any other alternative employment. If

[Shri K. Narayana Rao]

the fields of coconuts or cashewnuts are destroyed where can they go? A person used to get Rs. 6 per day to pluck one thousand coconuts. He used to make out a living by plucking the leaves of the coconut trees and the coir. Because of the loss of these things the lives of these people have come to a standstill. In this context, we have made representations to the Andhra Government. Of course, the Andhra Government is concerned about all these things. Dr. K. L. Rao has been frank enough to say that the details are being awaited. We hope that the Andhra Government will send it soon and action will be taken on the report of the Andhra Government. I feel the concern of my hon. friend Shri Kandappan. There cannot be anything like legislative competence with regard to poverty, misery and the like. In the Constitution of India, there is no reference to famine, there is no reference to hunger, there is no reference to cyclone. There is no reference to all these matters in the legislative list. Let us not imitate the time of the Britishers. The Britishers could say that famine is the concern of the local administration. Unless somebody dies the Britisher could say that no relief could be given. What I would like to bring out to the attention of the hon. Finance Minister is this : This is not a peculiar preserve of any Government—whether Centre or States. They have got to cooperate and pool their resources together. It is my request that they should be more liberal in this respect. It is not merely grant of loan to State Governments that will solve the problem. The entire cost of relief works should be also shared by the Centre. From generation to generation we have been passing through floods and cyclones on the one side and draughts on the other. What I would submit is this : we are dealing with the situation in a half-hearted manner. Government gives some relief here and some remission there. That will not solve the problem. Here I wish to submit one suggestion. Let these natural calamities be the concern of the nation. Let there be a national levy to fight out natural calamities which may be part of income-tax or land revenue or sales-tax or some other tax. It may be collected and earmarked for relief works during the

time of these natural calamities. It is not that Government should take action only when they receive some petition as Shri H. N. Mukherjee pointed out. Government should not wait for some persons to come for help to give its pittance. As a self-respecting nation, as a self-respecting individual, the affected person should have the right to get the help and the relief as a matter of right. The kind of relief, by way of giving 100 rupees here or 5 rupees there will not solve the problem. This levy could be worked out without any difficulty. The levy can be collected on land revenue or income tax or sales tax or such other things, may be a rupee per acre or half a rupee per acre. In this way collection could be made easier. Whenever there is a natural calamity—whether it is West Bengal or Bihar or Andhra Pradesh—the nation will bear it from the fund earmarked for this purpose. I submit that Government should take note of these proposals and in this way, even if we cannot immediately control the floods, at least we can control the incidence of flood and other natural calamities and see that the miseries of the people are removed within as short a period of time as possible.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU (Diamond Harbour) : Sir, what we find today is the same old saga, the same old tale of continuous failure of the last 21 years on the part of the Government and the bureaucrats. I am talking about the disaster in North Bengal. If proper steps had been taken in time these 20,000 lives would have been saved. Perhaps much of it could have been saved. If proper steps had been taken, the loss of people due to landslides from Darjeeling district could have been saved. Three Units of the Army were washed away. The Defence Minister has not even bothered to come to the House and tell us. What is he hiding from us, the people's representatives ?

The damage in North Bengal is no less than Rs. 50 crores. I will tell you how during the last 21 years the Government in power here and in Bengal had disregarded and neglected everything. I shall draw attention to the Mansingh Flood Inquiry Commission Report of 1959. This was a government-appointed body. What did they say and what precautions did Government

take consequent on their report and recommendation, except that of sending the Report into cold storage? I shall quote from page 21 of the Report in reference to West Bengal :

"The floods in the area are further accentuated by the deplorable condition of the drainage channels which delays recession and prolongs submersion. The obvious remedies would appear to be to control erosion in the upper catchments of the rivers and improve the drainage channels. But unfortunately, these have not received the amount of attention they deserve."

This is the gold medal that Government wear on their chest.

Now I come to page 43 where the Commission says: "The loss of over 10,000 sq. miles of forest from the tract within a century and the continual short erosion from over 1100 sq. miles of idle land must surely be having a very serious effect on the water-regime and the sediment burden of rivers. Besides, it may be noted that even the existing forests contain numerous blanks. Such forests are not effective water and soil conserving agents."

What have Government done during the past 20 years? They have formed commissions and committees spending people's money and put their reports and recommendations in cold storage! Then I turn to page 75 :

"In the affected areas within the basin of this river the most important need is improvement of the drainage channels. With the experience which has been gained from the floods of 1956 and 1959, the Committee is of the opinion that the drainage index for design of drainage schemes should not be less than 3/4 inch per day.."

I will not go into further details. This Government and their predecessors have been so callous and negligent about these things. They had formed a Committee which they called the North Bengal Flood Control Advisory Committee. Shri S. N. Ray, the man who was entrusted with the job of giving a conducted report is a former bureaucrat and Chief Secretary to West Bengal, who has held some sort of assignment here and there in government bodies. whose wife had become a Congress MP..

SHRI JUGAL MONDAL : He is jealous that his wife could not become an MP.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU : If you cannot give me protection, Sir, you must give me time.

Shri Ray says on page 21 of his report, that the North Bengal Flood Control Advisory Committee, much to his regret, never met after its last meeting on 8 November 1966. They formed a Committee; they did not even think of devoting that much of time and energy and attention to convene meetings and advise appropriate bodies to execute the works. Now they come out with very high-sounding words of sympathy. We are not interested in these things, in these hopes which these people are apt to give.

Another point is about siltation. Siltation is a very important thing. This is what is said about the Teesta :

"I discussed with Supdtg. Engineer... the siltation of the bed of the river Teesta during each flood season. I gathered from him that every year about two to three inches of silt was deposited on the bed of the river downstream...."

"I then mentioned that considering how much silt is seen deposited near the embankment after each flood session, it appeared to me that the height of the construction required raising after every two or three years."

What did they do? Dr. Rao, you are an eminent engineer. Can't you control the chaps who work under you? What do they get paid for from the people's money? I want an explanation from you. You owe the people an explanation.

About wrong calculation of flood discharge, Mr. S. N. Roy has said :

"The estimated flood discharge at Jalpaiguri was 7 lakh cusecs as against designed discharge of 5 lakhs provided at the railway and road bridges at Jalpaiguri."

There again, you have to tell us what your engineers were doing.

They had a *nam-ke-vaste* flood warning system, incomplete, inadequate, ineffective and isolated. It never said for whom it

[Shri Jyotirmoy Basu]

was meant, and even the top bureaucrat—where is Mr. Chavan by the way, the upholder of democracy, the head policeman?—the Deputy Commissioner, the District Magistrate—in Moghul days they used to be called subedars—did not know that any such booklet ever existed in his office, namely the flood control instructions. He has never seen one. Who is responsible for this ignorance of these highly paid bureaucrats who are so apt to go and beat up people at the slightest opportunity? We want an explanation from the Government as to why it is that Deputy Commissioners are not made to sign and say that they have read the necessary documents when they take over charge? What have you learnt? How do you run the administration? You are all no good for this. In the army, in the olden days, if we went to a regiment, pamphlets were given to us, and we read them and signed and gave a certificate that we had seen and noted the instructions and that we would be held responsible for their enforcement. This man has been sitting there for a couple of years. What has he been doing? Horse-riding in Darjeeling and running cocktail parties.

Mr. B. C. Ghosh, a Congressman, says :

“The North Bengal Flood Control Advisory Committee, now defunct, repeatedly requested the strengthening of the protection works already done and for protecting further vulnerable points, but nothing was done.”

This is what happened before the havoc. The Divisional Commissioner, a man who was really thrown out of Calcutta on charges of corruption, who was not accepted by the United Front Finance Minister, was found an asylum and he was pushed to Jalpaiguri. What did he do? When this flood comes, the small man in the Government, who gets beaten up when he wants an extra increment of Rs. 5, sends his reading of the height of the water of the flood. He has been doing his duty till the last, and there is a list of persons to whom this intimation should be given, Teesta Bazaar—Annexure A. At the top of the list is this bureaucrat—Deputy Commissioner, Jalpaiguri, by phone. This Deputy Commissioner got information, definite and convincing information, that the destruction had started. He

got it from Teesta Bazaar, Government's own source; the police sends it from the Teesta Bazaar police station or outpost, and he got the news from the nearby B.D.O. and also from the Manager of Raipur Tea Estate, but nothing was done.

Mr. S. N. Roy has gone on to say at page 11 :

“The officers depended on the Irrigation Department Officers to tell them that the messages, particularly the second message, meant that there was danger of breaches....”

He expected that the Irrigation Department engineer, whose sole job was to look after the river, carry out repairs, keep men and materials and transport ready to do the job, to come and pull him by the ear and say, “Wake up, Deputy Commissioner, the flood is coming, please pass on the warning to the people”. What did he do? He did nothing at all. The message stopped coming after some time in the evening, because the men doing the gauge reading could not stay there any longer. Did this highly paid government servant ever care to enquire why the messages stopped coming? No. Nothing was done. If I were the Deputy Commissioner I would have convened a hurried meeting of the citizens, told them what was happening, asked them to look after themselves and do whatever could be done from government sources. He did not go to the irrigation department to seek their advice. The engineer's job is not to go and tell people over the amplifiers. Their job is to repair and keep the water under control as far as possible. What were these bureaucrats doing? nothing at all. No evacuation was planned. Men and material and transport of the Irrigation Department really required at that time was readily available. Nobody paid any attention. I have even heard that these bureaucrats snatched away the transport from the Irrigation officials. They are modest engineers. They do their job. But these bureaucrat officials would not allow them to function. So the disaster came. Had they been a little useful, most of the human lives, cattle valuable, movables could have been saved. Instead what has happened? People in that region were almost mental cases. They have lost everything. The Government has no interest in the matter.

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Neither the bureaucrats who get their salary cheques on the first of the month have any interest. What happened after that? The Government ordered an inquiry. We call this a conducted inquiry. The report of the inquiry actually has not revealed the seriousness of the whole happening. After all he is an old bureaucrat. He cannot go and write much against his own colleagues. The report is very silent about the Governor. The warning message came to the Writers' Building also. What were the people in the Writers' Building doing, for example, the Chief Secretary? We say that the Governor, Mr. Chavan's emissary, has no right to stay in Bengal. He should be recalled and impeached. Mr. S. N. Roy, on his part, what did he do? He met all Congressmen—Mr. K. N. Das Gupta, Mr. P. C. Ghosh, Mr. So-and-so. He had not the time to meet any common man and find out the truth about it. The local administration, as many of the speakers have already said, totally collapsed. It did not exist and the Divisional Commissioner who made good his escape to Siliguri phoned for transport for the rescue of his family. He wanted the Police force to maintain order. Over what? The graveyard. Then who did give the first help? The first help came from the people of Siliguri, mostly students and I am proud to say that many of them came from the Students' Federation. They organised the things and came to the rescue of the people.

AN HON. MEMBER : How do you know that?

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU : I will tell you outside. The Governor who was recessing in Darjeeling—what did he do? It is only a 15 minutes heli-flight. He took 5 clear days to reach Jalpaiguri although the Divisional Commissioner phoned him up on the 6th October telling him as to what has happened. I am told that Mr. Desai spoke to him in Jalpaiguri. We want to know what he said to the Governor. What do they propose to do about him? And the strangest thing is, when the people of Darjeeling were groaning under this pressure, when petrol was in short supply, a car, getting a special permit carried two dogs from Rashtrapati Bhavan to Siliguri. (Interruption) What is he doing now? They are making hay while the sun shines. The Government relief materials are now

finding their way to various Congress organisations. I will cite just one example for your satisfaction. The Women's Co-ordination Council was there. I wrote a letter to the Governor asking him what sort of organisation is this, and he wrote back stating that this is a non-political organisation.

(Interruption)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Order, order.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU : The President of the organisation is Shrimati Renuka Ray, a former Congress M.P. The Vice-President is a sitting Congress Minister here : Shrimati Phulrenu Guha; and the other lady is Mrs. Pratima Bose, who lost in the last elections on a Congress ticket.

SHRI RANJIT SINGH (Khalilabad) : She will lose it again.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU : Yes; she will lose it again no doubt. The Prime Minister said that there would be no politics attached to relief, but alas, it is nothing but politics. Mr. Atulya Ghosh is really making hay while the sun shines. Mr. Jagjivan Ram has stretched the hand of blessing to Mr. Atulya Ghosh. During his last visit there, he promised to give 100 tons of wheat free of cost from the Food Corporation of India and for that he came here and cabled back to the Food Corporation of India to send wheat to Siliguri, and the delivery of that wheat was taken by a former Congress MLA, Mr. Moitra. They can deny these facts if they wish, but these are true.

What is he doing in return? He had assured all protection to the Divisional Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner : all protection till the mid-term polls are over : hands off, bureaucrats.

The role of the army was mentioned; I have just now pointed out to the Deputy Minister who was sitting here. They have made adverse comments saying that the army's role and performance was far below satisfaction. They did not function; they did not move; they did not come forward. And what else now? Even today, medical supplies are going to Siliguri; the boxes are remaining unopened for days and there is more of neglect than help. There is no planning; no budgeting, and till 7th November, when I met Mr. Desai,

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only one crore of rupees was given to West Bengal on account of North Bengal floods whereas we require Rs. 50 crores.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please conclude now.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU : I shall conclude in a minute, Sir. We demand that there should be a high-power enquiry commission which should have a Supreme Court judge, a river technologist and some Parliamentarians;—

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF IRRIGATION AND POWER (SHRI SIDDHESHWAR PRASAD) : And Mr. Jyotirmoy Basu also.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU : Of course, yes; it should include some bridge experts also so that the truth can be established as to whose lapses were those things and how things happened.

Finally, I want to say that the economic rehabilitation is most important. We have a few items and I shall narrate them : gratuitous relief, water-supply, and highly subsidised canteens and cattle loans and loans for the cycle rickshaws. There were 1,300 cycle rickshaws in Jalpaiguri and they have all disappeared. Those rickshaw-walas must be given money to rehabilitate themselves. Then, loans to small traders and shopkeepers should be given; house-building loans also should be given. We want to have a categorical answer from Dr. Rao : whether he is going to recommend to the Government to have a judicial enquiry; secondly, what does he propose to do to stop the recurrence of such things in future, and thirdly, I want an assurance from the Government that they will really meet the requirements where economic rehabilitation is necessary.

SHRI S. M. SOLANKI (Gandhinagar) : Sir, speaking on the motion regarding flood situation in our country, I would say that floods and droughts are two disastrous and ruinous natural calamities in our country. Every year we are facing this colossal calamity, which can be controlled by adopting certain scientific and technical measures by the Government.

The flood situation causes the gravest anxiety in this period of our national progress and advancement in different other

directions. The widespread suffering caused by the floods in our country can never be relieved if something is not done to stop it. It is said that this ruinous calamity can be stopped only by immediate implementation of steps to stop the overflow of waters.

Sometimes West Bengal and Bihar and sometimes Rajasthan, Kerala, Orissa and Gujarat suffer from these devastations. If I have got some money in my pocket and somebody steals it, if I borrow some money from the others and put it in my pocket, what is the gain? In the same way we are getting money by taxes and paying in this way to meet these calamities. If we postpone the implementation of the flood relief measures and wait thinking that floods will not occur in future, it is wrong. So long as there is a certain quantity of water upon this earth, heavy rain and floods are bound to occur in this world to a greater or lesser degree.

The floods of 1968 have ruined human lives, cattle, houses, crops and industries by their overflow and have caused disastrous damage and colossal loss in all respect. This year, Gujarat, West Bengal, Assam, Bihar, Rajasthan, Orissa and Kerala are the worst sufferers to witness heavy floods. These unprecedented floods have caused heavy damage and serious dislocation of communications and other minor industries. In Gujarat, some 59255 houses were ruined, 35440 cattle were lost and 341 human lives were lost due to floods this year. Many families of the landless labourers are starving. They have lost their houses and jobs. Thousands of Harijans are homeless. The aid sanctioned is not sufficient for all these things.

Many Harijan families have lost their lives. It is impossible to find out the boundaries of fields and whole villages have been destroyed. We cannot find out the places where the villages were situated. We have seen in the newspapers that dead bodies were found from the branches of trees and thousands of bodies were floating in the sea. Really it was a horrible and terrible scene. It is a tragedy that the Central Government have not taken immediate measures to stop this calamity. Roads were devastated and trains were stopped for more than a month.

The northern parts of Gujarat have witnessed drought and the southern parts

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have witnessed heavy floods. This flood situation has been caused by Narmada, Tapi and other parallel rivers in south Gujarat. The heavy overflow of the rivers and the flow of sea backwater created this colossal disaster in Gujarat. I want to suggest that a big wall should be constructed near Surat on the banks of Tapi.

This House is aware of the fact that our Government have not taken satisfactory action so far as flood control measures are concerned. They have adopted a deplorable attitude towards the Narmada project and the construction of the proposed dam over Narmada river. I must firmly say that our Central Government has totally ignored this matter. It is not a matter of private concern; it is a matter which has to be looked from the national point of view.

I do not understand what was the meaning of appointing a Committee to survey and finalise the Narmada Project for its implementation? Is it not as clear as crystal that the Central Government is under the pressure of some States like Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra? Is it not a fact that the Central Government can constitutionally over-power the States? If the Central Government is anxious to construct the Narmada dam, where is the hitch and where the shoe pinches?

The land of Madhya Pradesh is situated in the centre of India. India has so many pradeshes like West, South, North, Himachal, Assam and so on. India is not a part of Madhya Pradesh, but Madhya Pradesh is a part of India. Therefore, I must say that the Union Government have no reasons to doubt their ownership of this property.

If such a big democratic government will fear and keep mum before the attitude of some States, remember, Sir, that a lamentable day will come and nobody will put hand on our head. I, therefore, request the Government to be firm and resolute and free from doubt and fear.

The flood of 1968 has opened the eyes of our hon. Minister and the government and have highlighted the need for accelerating the flood control programme and also immediate implementation of certain measures. Our hon. Minister says in his statement :

"A priority list of works has been prepared. This includes the proposals for raising and strengthening of the embankments in Assam, construction of detention dams in Assam and Barak Valleys, improvement of drainage in South Bengal, special works indicated earlier for Western Kosi embankment and Tista, provision of embankments on the Tapi river down-stream of Ukai and anti-erosion measures along the Brahmaputra Ganga and other rivers."

I want the hon. Minister to tell us why the Union Government have ignored the Narmada Project. According to the Khosla Committee Report, the Narmada Project should be taken up because it will also help the prevention of floods. Government should understand that if the Narmada Project is undertaken and the dam is constructed, the difficulties faced by Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra would be over.

The Narmada Project is necessary to avoid the calamities and difficulties and the consequent suffering to the people due to floods in Gujarat. This time Gujarat is suffering not only from floods but also from drought. If you construct this dam on Narmada, the people of Gujarat can be saved from all those difficulties. If you construct that dam not only Gujarat will take advantage of it but even States like Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh will get the benefits of it. This is the main point to which I want to draw the attention of the Central Government and I hope work on this project would be taken up very soon.

It is a matter for rejoice that our hon. Minister brought to the notice of U Thant, Secretary-General of the UNO, for the exchange of experience and remedial measures adopted in the various countries of the world in respect of flood control on rivers. Our Minister is going abroad because he wants to get particulars about certain other measures from other parts of the world. In my view, we should first tackle the projects which are on hand and then think of other projects. So many projects are pending still. Government has ignored all such projects. They are getting information from other countries. So, first of all, let us complete what is in our hand and what is before us. I must

[Shri S. M. Solanki]

say that the Narmada Project is the only remedy to save Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh from these horrible and terrible difficulties.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA (Contai) : Sir, God alone knows why Nature is so angry with the eastern region of India in causing cyclic disaster of floods, cyclone and drought. Just a few months back, in the months of July and August, West Bengal had suffered from 65 lakhs of people of West Bengal covering 14 out of the 18 districts of the State. Soon after, the same thing happened in north Bengal which, if I describe by the word 'flood', will be a misnomer. What happened in north Bengal can only be described in terms of the mythological concept of a deluge or *pralaya*. The wrath of Nemesis was as if unleashed in terrible fury at the dead of night on the unaware people sleeping in their beds. 15 to 20 feet tidal-bore type floods swept away within 5 to 10 minutes at a terrific speed lakhs of people.

I have seen the scene after the flood. I do not know in what harrowing terms one could describe the scene after the flood. Calamity catastrophe, havoc, disaster, devastation—no word is apt to depict the colossal destruction wrought upon the land, life and property of the people of north Bengal. Bustees after bustees were wiped out in the hilly areas of Darjeeling and Kalimpong. From Sevoke bridge down to Domohani and the riverbed sides of Tista were razed to the ground. Practically an area covering over 70 miles in length was rendered completely desolate. Only some bamboo trees and remnants of forests remained as witness of once a habitation of over thousands of people. Miles after miles of cultivable lands were buried under several feet deep layers of silt. The town of Jalpaiguri was battered and blasted at terrific speed by the furious flood waters with innumerable logs and huge trees like massive boulders, from the uprooted forest. It left the city half buried like the historic city of Pompei under massive silt and debris of logs of the uprooted forest.

This is just a glimpse of the grisly scene that Nemesis wrought on the people of north Bengal. But I am today really sur-

prised and constrained to find that what should be described and viewed as a massive national calamity and what should have been taken by this House as a great national issue, the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister who count in the Cabinet and two of whom visited north Bengal and made many promises, none of them is here even to share the miseries, the woes, the worries, the anxieties of the people who are living almost in a nightmarish condition in north Bengal today.

I am further constrained to remark about the report made by Dr. K. L. Rao, who is otherwise a very good man. Either he failed to grasp the immensity of the disaster in north Bengal or he has somehow been persuaded by the Government to underrate the disaster and the devastation that has been caused there only to provide an escape for sharing the responsibility for relief and rehabilitation on a massive scale in north Bengal.

I am also sorry to say that his report is full of contradictions. I do not want to quote from it but he has failed, as I have already said, in grasping the immensity of the problem.

He has also made another factual mistake in saying what the embankment was first breached at Domohani. That is not true. I do not know whether he has visited the place. It was at Kathambadi when the embankment was first breached.

As I have already said, it is a special case, it is an extra-ordinary calamity, which should have been viewed in that light. It should have been made a national issue, a special national issue, without mixing it up with the floods of the other States which, I am sure, also deserve discussion in this House. Today, only north Bengal and north Bengal alone should have been discussed in a special way and under special conditions. A very extra-ordinary national disaster, national calamity, should have drawn the attention of the highest national forum of our country.

The authorities miserably failed. Mr. S. N. Ray has categorically stated that. The authorities in Jalpaiguri and Siliguri miserably failed to heed the flood warnings. My

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report is not on the basis of the report of Mr. S. N. Ray. I went straight to Sevak bridge and Teesta bridge area. I met the person who is a gauge observer there. He was, from time to time, for the last 12 hours, almost every hour, sending warnings and the last report he sent was at 4 P.M. But that report could not be radioed back due to immersion of the bridge and also the telephonic line collapsed.

I have another report that one Congress MLC at about 1 A.M. on 5th, before Domahani embankment yielded to the pressure of flood waters, was on telephonic line with the D.C. I had a personal talk with him at Dohamani when he was just having a telephonic talk and requested him to give warning. Even he did not care.

It is not correct that the military was not alerted. On 4th night, in Moinagudi area—I have also the names of those military persons who went there—I have a report that a fleet of military persons with a few boats were in the heart of the city of Jalpaiguri, at about 2 A.M. that night. Just a telephonic message from the D.C. could have given a siren warning and that would have saved many mothers, many fathers, many wives and many children. Today, if you go there, you will find hundreds of children, hundreds of women, having lost all their relations and awaiting shelter in the home of the Government.

How did it happen then after that devastation, for four days there was no Government? Siliguri, only 20 miles away from Jalpaiguri, remains completely unaffected. The non-official persons were rushing relief and other things. Could not any of the important officers of Government go to Siliguri and telephone to Mr. Dharma Vira in Darjeeling? Even the Governor, it is reported, was not informed of the disaster in Darjeeling till 9th of October. What happened in Siliguri where there is a radio station? Why did that radio station broadcast about the calamity? Why did Siliguri administration not rush with the relief and rescue equipments to Jalpaiguri just 20 miles away?

Again, all of us know that in the strategic area of north Bengal, we have a huge defence establishment. The defence personnel also sent wireless messages from

their gauge observer, as the civil authorities received. The military also deployed some squads. Why did the military not come forward immediately and in a massive way? Only after the 9th day the military came into operation.

Again, the S.D.O., Siliguri, was not only shameless but was also cruel and committed a barbarous act. The people of Siliguri, the common people of Siliguri, mobilised all their transport, cars and everything because there were breaches and everything was being washed away; they were even carrying on their shoulders food, drinking water and other requirements. On the third day, the S.D.O. issued an order to stop all this non-official relief being sent to Jalpaiguri when no alternative arrangement for relief was there. I would request the Home Minister—he is not here—to make an inquiry. It has been stated that one Congress boss instructed him to do so. I am not sure. This is the report. Mr. S. N. Ray's report has already justified the complaints of the people about the negligence on the part of the civil authorities. Just transferring those officers will not do. I should say that it would be some sort of a connivance with the guilty officers if they are just transferred and no further action is taken. Those officers should be suspended immediately and a thorough judicial inquiry should be instituted.

Another point is this. All of us know that North Bengal is the most strategic area from the standpoint of defence of our northern and north-eastern region. Why did the military fail? Why are they not discharging their duties? This has to be inquired into by the Defence Minister. Before I come to the other points I talk about this because national defence is the most important point. Roads, bridges, national highways, communication and transport facilities stand in a dangerously disrupted condition. Kalimpong is broken off. Where is Kalimpong? It is just below the Nathu La Pass. I would request Dr. Rao to inform the Defence Minister that Defence should take note of it and make speedy arrangements for the restoration of communications and transport and also for the reconstruction of bridges, national highways and roads which are absolutely necessary for military logistics.. (Interruptions)

[Shri Samar Guha]

I am sorry to remark that the West Bengal Government have circulated a leaflet in which it has been stated that the number of loss of human lives is 2,704. I do not find much pleasure in quoting persons and yet, I have to do that. Shri P. C. Sen is not a rumour-monger; after visiting those areas, he made a public statement that nearly 20,000 lives had been lost. Shri Atulya Ghosh, after visiting Jalpaiguri, said that in Jalpaiguri alone—he made a public statement—10,000 lives had been lost. The State Government agencies were collecting the dead bodies and it is only on the basis of the dead bodies that were collected by the Government agencies that this has been given. Again, here they have not quoted the number of those missing which has been recorded by the Government and which is almost three times the number of persons who died. 'Missing' is lost for ever; they will never see the light of the day; hundreds of dead bodies have been lying buried under the silt and thousands of them have been washed away to Pakistan. Only a fresh census, a limited census in that area, give the real figure of the loss of human lives. About the cattle population, I do not know how they have arrived at the figure of the cattle population. The cattle population was totally lost. A cow or a bull or a buffalo is a curio in those flood affected areas now. This figure should also be not as it is stated in this report. What are the rehabilitation measures to be taken now? The rehabilitation measures to be taken now are the following; namely, reconstruction and repair of over 1½ lakhs houses, reclamation of cultivable lands covering an area of nearly 20,000 sq. miles buried under silt, reconstruction of innumerable educational and other Government and non-official buildings and bazaars, rehabilitation of trade, business, and house-hold equipments, education by giving tuition fees and books, reconstruction of roads, bridges and embankments, resettling uprooted villagers over a few lakhs in number, replenishing of cattle population, giving gratuitous relief and making provision for test relief work for nearly 8 lakhs of population, providing homes for children and women who lost all their relations and restoration of power and water supply. And last but not the least, the morale of the people who suffered this terrible shock. But unfortunately,

what would be the morale now, Sir? Not even the Prime Minister or the Deputy Prime Minister or the Home Minister is here in this House to listen to this Debate when such an important discussion is taking place.

In this connection I wish to refer to what my hon. friend, Shri Hiren Mukherjee said about politiking. No political party is free from the sins of politiking. The congress party shares these sins much more than the other parties. I would appeal to all the political parties, in the name of the poor who suffered this terrible disaster in North Bengal to leave aside politics and whether he be a congressman, a PSP, a communist or SSP, to join hands in demanding at least 50 crores of rupees that will be necessary for the relief and rehabilitation work in North Bengal to meet the challenge of the disaster there. There should be a united front of all the political parties for the benefit of the people of North Bengal.

Whenever the Central Government comes across any disaster they choose to send a study team. Now, I know the position in respect of Midnapore, how this study team behaved. These study teams have not only become fussy but frosty too. These study teams have gone there after 35 days of disaster. They asked the West Bengal Government to spend the money from their funds for development works to be taken up in the fourth five-year plan. When the State Government decided to restore Tista river to its original course, the study team raised objections although they could not provide any fund for the rehabilitation of the inhabitants of the Tista bed. The West Bengal Government advanced some loans to a private company, private electric company, to restore power, and even to that the study team objected. The State Government wanted 39 crores, although our estimate is at least 50 crores. But even to that the study team objected. The disaster in West Bengal should be treated as a special national disaster and a special national fund should be provided for the relief and rehabilitation work there. These are my concrete suggestions:

First, immediate enquiry should be made to ascertain the cause of the sudden and unprecedented flood in North Bengal. Here I wish to bring to the attention of Dr. K. L.

Rao that as hour to hour reports showed, the water was rising gradually. But at the dead of night, it rose to the level of more than 60 feet. How could it happen? It is not an ordinary thing, not the usual type of flood due to excessive rainfall. There must have been some burst of a forest lake or some catchment of water in some hilly areas. That has to be inquired into. A study should be conducted for complete flood control measures, construction of embankments etc. before the next monsoon sets in; otherwise, the Jalpaiguri and adjacent areas will be exposed to flood devastation again in the coming year. Secondly, the North Bengal floods should be considered as a national calamity and a Special National Fund should be provided to the State. Thirdly, a special Rehabilitation Body should be set up under the control of the State Government with the Governor as President, with representatives from all political parties, relief organisations and humanitarian organisations to tackle the problem of relief and rehabilitation. Fourthly, spans should be expanded in each of the railway and other high-way bridges. Fifthly, more outlets for rain water should be constructed in the roads covering the vulnerable areas. Sixthly, North Bihar, Assam and Midnapur flood control measures should have top priority for implementation. Seventhly, independent flood control

systems for watch and warning in Assam, N. Bengal, Midnapur, N. Bihar and coastal belt of Orissa should be set up immediately. Eighthly, a flood fighting corps with a fleet of rescue boats and other engineering equipment should be set up in vulnerable areas of Assam, N. Bengal, Midnapur, Coastal belt of Orissa and N. Bihar. Lastly, a Special Fund should be created by the Centre for giving immediate help to the States which face calamities like floods, drought and cyclone—as the States are unable to provide matching grants as demanded by the Central Government—without waiting for the delaying system of sanctioning such fund through a Central study team.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : I have to accommodate the SSP, some Independents and one or two members from the Congress benches. Keeping in view the time that would be required for this and for the Minister's reply, I suggest that we fix up some other time to complete the debate.

The House stands adjourned till 11 A.M. tomorrow.

19.17 HRS.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till eleven of the clock on Tuesday, November 19, 1968/Kartika 28, 1890 (Saka).