

(Shri K. R. Ganesh)

Sir, I beg to move † :

"That the Bill to authorise payment and appropriation of certain sums from and out of the Consolidated Fund of the State of Punjab for the services of the financial year 1971-72, be taken into consideration."

श्री मान सिंह भीरा (भटिंडा) : में बोलना चाहता हूँ। मुझे मौका दिया जाए।

MR. CHAIRMAN : The question is :

"That the Bill to authorise payment and appropriation of certain sums from and out of the Consolidated Fund of the State of Punjab for the services of the financial year 1971-72, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted

श्री रामाबक्षार सास्त्री (पटना) : मेरा प्वाइंट ऑफ ऑर्डर ...

MR. CHAIRMAN : The question is :

"The clauses 2 and 3, the Schedule Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Title stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clauses 2 and 3, the Schedule, Clause 1 the Enacting Formula and the Title were added to the Bill.

SHRI K. R. GANESH : I beg to move :

"That the Bill be passed."

MR. CHAIRMAN : The question is :

"That the Bill be passed."

The motion was adopted.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now, we take up the Half-an-hour discussion.

श्री रामाबक्षार सास्त्री : मेरा प्वाइंट ऑफ ऑर्डर है। ये बोलना चाहते थे इनको मौका नहीं दिया गया है।

समावृत्ति बहोदय : सब को मौका मिल गया है। इस बिल को राज्य सभा में जाना था जापकी पार्टी को मौका मिल चुका है।

श्री मान सिंह भीरा : तब तो एम पीज मुनाइटीड हैं मुलाजिमों को इंडेरिन रिस्की देने के बारे में। इसका जबाब नहीं दिया गया है। इस पर मैं बोलना चाहता था।

17.34 hrs.

HALF AN-HOUR DISCUSSION

R.R. RURAL ELECTRIFICATION DURING FOURTH PLAN

SHRI G. K. CHANDRAPPAN (Telloberry): Sir, I have raised this discussion with a view to bring out certain important problems which were not properly answered when the question was asked in this House on 8th June on rural electrification during the Fourth Five Year Plan. Now there is no dispute about the fact that rural electrification should be given proper attention and proper funds should also be allotted for electrifying the villages. The Government have come forward with enormous statistics to prove how far they have been successful in rural electrification

In this connection, I wish to point out two facts. The first is this. The *per capita* consumption of electricity in our country is 83 k. w. whereas in the other under-developed countries, according to the Report presented by Government this year, it ranges from 250 k. w. to 2000 and odd k. w. From this we can understand how backward our country is in the matter of consumption of Electricity:

It is said that in rural areas the quantum of electricity used for agricultural purpose is only 9 per cent. That shows the backwardness in the matter of our rural electrification.

We have electrified so much of villages, said the Minister. The other day he said that 18 per cent of the Indian villages have been electrified during this period. It is a remarkable success, I should say. At the same time, the disparity and the unbalances which we find among States are very glaring.

† Moved with the recommendation of the President.

Here we have a small State Haryana, which has electrified 100 per cent villages in the State.

Haryana is followed by Tamilnadu with 78% villages electrified and Kerala, 76%. Is it not a shameful fact that in the same country we have States like Assam and Orissa where only 2.5% villages are electrified ?

In respect of West Bengal, which is considered to be one of the highly industrialised States, where industry is concentrated, what a pathetic picture the country-side presents ? Only 7.4% of the villages are electrified in West Bengal. Not a different picture is given by Rajasthan also. In Rajasthan the figure is 8.8%.

Now you come to Bihar and U. P. In Bihar the figure is 10.4% whereas in U. P. the figure is 17.7%. All this shows that this rural electrification could not be done in a planned manner by the Government. On the 8th June, while discussion was taking place the Minister said that it was not due to fault of the Centre, but it was due to the fault of the States. But, we are living in a country where we visualise to have planned economic development. How can we assume that the Centre can shirk its responsibility and put it on the shoulders of the State Governments ? To put all the responsibility on the States only is not the correct answer. We have to examine why this should be so, while our Government and Planning Commission have an intense desire to get the country electrified quickly.

We not only visualise that there should be more pumps and irrigation facilities which should be electrically operated, but we do visualise a new country side to be created in this sub-continent ; we do visualise the changing face of rural India, which will have its economic, and social impact on the future development of the country. But we find a sad picture in this regard. You can see that there are States which are producing surplus electricity. The nearby State might not be self-sufficient. Then, what happens ? Due to lack of transmission facilities the surplus electricity cannot be sent to the nearby State. A surplus State like Kerala is using only 50 per cent of the generating capacity in that State. Is it not

a national waste ? It is. But if the other 50 per cent is used to produce electricity, then what will they do with that electricity ? There is no national grid. Iron poles, towers, wires etc., the essential requirement for transmission even to the villages are not available. The hon. Minister said that there would be a national grid, but we may have to wait for another ten years. He also said that 50 per cent of the villages in our country will be electrified in the next ten years, and 1980 will be a bright year for India, and particular so for rural India. But is that not a long period ?

All this is happening because of the lopsided planning. We again depend upon the vagaries of the whether, the climate, the monsoons, the rainfall etc., for the production of electricity.

I was speaking about Kerala. In that State, we have surplus electricity produced. and yet the industries are often affected by shortage of electricity. It happens because we completely depend upon the monsoons and we completely depend upon hydro electric projects. Is it not good to plan for our future ? I think that we are a country having enough coal, and we can use that coal for installing thermal plants and we can produce electricity to help those States which are depending mainly on the monsoons. In such States thermal plants could be installed and more electricity could be produced ; it would be available round the year.

A demand had been put forward before the Central Government by Kerala to take steps to ensure to have enough electricity all round the year, and I do not know whether the Central Government have considered it. They need an atomic power plant for this purpose. I do not know whether Government will consider this case of Kerala

Further, when we go to electrify a village, the limitations of the Central Electricity Act come in. According to the Central Electricity Act, private ownership of land is a problem, and the landowner should allow the Electricity Board to take the electricity line through his property. In my district of Cannanore in Kerala State, there was a plan to electrify the villages on the occasion of the Gandhi Centenary celebrations, but most of our schemes were faced with a serious difficulty because of litigation. Most of the landlords would like to

[Shri C. K. Chandrappan]

get electricity for their domestic consumption and perhaps also for irrigation facilities but they might have some feud with their neighbours and they would not allow the electricity lines to pass through their property to their neighbours. Will Government consider the question of changing this Act which is rather outmoded and which cannot serve the purpose which we would all like it to serve? That Act should be amended.

Then, I come to the question of the finances of the State Electricity Boards. The Five Year Plan says that the financial position of the State Electricity Board is very bad, and the report of the Ministry of Irrigation and Power which has been presented this year also says that all the State Electricity Boards more or less are having a difficult financial situation. I do not know the details of it, but I know one thing which happens as a consequence. When the Electricity Board is asked to electrify a village, they readily come forward. At least in Kerala, I know that they will ask whether we can furnish a minimum guarantee; that is, 25 or 30 people should agree that they would consume the electricity. There is no problem in regard to this agreement. But the problem comes when the Electricity Board for its future planning also charge 6 per cent interest on the poor villagers. You know the villager has an age-old understanding in regard to money-lending, interest etc. He might be having so many idiotic notions also. But to help him out of these things, Government should adopt a more benevolent attitude. Government enable the Electricity Boards to electrify the villages without charging exorbitant rent.

What happens. They are now charging 6 per cent. One expert committee mentioned in the Fourth Plan are visualising the looting of the villagers. It is called the Venkataraman Committee. It visualises that in future investments the Electricity Boards will make, get a return of 11 per cent. I do not know how the poor villager can afford to pay this. If your idea is to give priority to rural electrification to bring its benefit within the reach of the common man, the poor man in the village should not be penalised in this fashion.

SHRI K. SURYANARAYANA (Eluru):

Recently there was a news item appearing in the press saying that the Minister of Irrigation and Power had suggested to the Government and had requested the Prime Minister to allow him to advise the Planning Commission to allot some funds to cover the entire Harijan and Girijan villages for electrification before the end of this year. How far has this scheme been agreed upon and what action has been or is being taken?

Now the Electricity Boards are in deficit. They have no funds. If this matter is raised here, the reply is that it is a State subject. The Centre gives some grants or loans. We are here directly elected by the people. We have got certain responsibilities in this regard to our electorate. When we ask the State Governments, they say the Centre is giving money and we should not ask such questions. At the same time, we find that money allotted by the Centre for the particular purpose of electrification may not be spent for that purpose but diverted to some other purposes. So I would suggest that when the Centre gives a loan or other financial assistance to State Governments for a particular purpose, they should also have some supervision to see that the money is utilised for the purpose for which it was asked and given, and properly utilised at that. I would request the Minister to clarify this point.

SHRI BALATHANDAYUTHAM (Coimbatore): We are not satisfied with our rural electrification as it is. In this background, we find that electricity is being wasted in the cities. What is Government going to do to curb ostentatious use of electricity in the cities, depriving the villages of the same for more useful and productive purposes? Will Government consider going to the aid of the agriculturist by reducing the rate on which electricity is supplied for such purposes as agricultural production? We find that extension of rural electrification only touches a few houses in the villages. Does the Government contemplate really reaching the Harijans and Girijans? If so, will they consider a scheme for even wiring houses and supplying them electricity, charging for both in a moderate way? Will the Government consider taking over the private agencies supplying electricity

that are still in existence particularly in Tamil Nadu because the production is done by Government? Unless you take over, you will not be able to achieve your aim or target. In that respect, will the Centre go to the aid of the States, because the question of compensation comes in taking over the private agencies? In States which have exhausted their capacity for hydro-electric schemes, will the Government consider starting more atomic plants? Finally, are they serious about this national grid?

श्री कमल मिश्र लखनऊ (केसरिया) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, बिहार बिजली के विकास की दृष्टि से बहुत पिछड़ा हुआ है और बिहार में भी उत्तरी बिहार सबसे पिछड़ा हुआ इलाका इस मामले में है। तो ऐसी अवस्था में मैं जानना चाहता हूँ अब कि वह कहते हैं कि पिछड़े इलाकों के लिए विकास की योजना बनाने जा रहे हैं और सहायता करने जा रहे हैं तो चौथी पंच वर्षीय योजना के अन्दर बिहार के उत्तरी इलाके के लिए जो अपने प्रदेश में दक्षिणी बिहार की तुलना में भी बिजली के मामले में बहुत पीछे है, उसको इस योजना के जरिए कुछ फंड देने जा रहे हैं या नहीं जिस से उत्तरी बिहार में बिजलीकरण का काम ग्रामीण क्षेत्र में तेजी से हो सके? साथ ही मुजफ्फरपुर और मोतीहारी के बीच में एक थर्मल पावर स्टेशन का वादा आपने किया है। पार्लियामेंट में कई बार यह सवाल उठा है। क्या आप मोतीहारी और मुजफ्फरपुर के बीच में कोई थर्मल पावर स्टेशन कायम करने जा रहे हैं या नहीं? जब कि आप ने वादा किया है और जब कि आप जानते हैं कि उत्तरी बिहार में बिजली का विकास बहुत धीमी गति से हुआ है तो ऐसी दशा में बरौनी के अलावा वहाँ मुजफ्फरपुर और मोतीहारी के बीच एक थर्मल पावर स्टेशन आप इसके जरिए कायम करने जा रहे हैं या नहीं ताकि उत्तर बिहार में ग्रामीण क्षेत्र के अन्दर जो बिजली का विकास बिल्कुल अवरुद्ध है उसको आगे बढ़ाया जा सके और उत्तर बिहार के अंदर जो अभावपूर्ण है उसे भी विकास हो सके?

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU (Diamond Harbour) : I pointed out the other day that for lack of electricity, particularly in the rural areas, addition of basic wealth is hampered considerably. It should be the Centre's responsibility to finance rural electrification schemes as much as they can. I am told that our electrification specification is much higher than world standards. May I know whether we can do with lower over head clearance for the purpose of reducing expenditure?

There is great disparity in the per head consumption of electricity between State and State. Also there is waste of electricity. Where there is excess production, as Shri Chandrapan has pointed out, the Government has to make some arrangement so that the excess production could be switched over to the neighbouring States. There are backward States, as I pointed out the other day, like Orissa, Assam, West Bengal and Bihar where due to lack of rural electrification, minor irrigation schemes are not being energised and also small and cottage industries are not growing. The allocation for the Fourth Plan is much too little. May I know whether something could be done to enhance the amount that can be spared for rural electrification, because it is the most important thing if you are talking in terms of advancement in fields of economy.

Why is this discrimination between the consumers in industry and consumers in agriculture? You are subsidising and giving electricity at a lower price to people in industry while in the case of agriculturists and rural areas it is not so.

Would you kindly tell us once again, because the other day you said something but it was not quite clear to us. What specific steps are you going to take for helping the backward States like West Bengal, Orissa, Assam and Bihar?(Interruptions).

MR. CHAIRMAN : According to the rules I cannot allow any other Member. The hon. Minister.

THE MINISTER OF IRRIGATION AND POWER (DR. K. L. RAO) : I am thankful to the hon. Member for having another half an hour discussion in such a short time. We had one only last week. That only shows that

[Dr. K. L. Rao]

the hon. Members have such an interest in this matter. It is somewhat strange or a bit interesting that the two States which have advanced mostly in this field, namely Kerala and Tamil Nadu should complain on this score. I can understand Shri Jyotirmoy Bose saying something because he comes from West Bengal with such a low percentage of electrification. In Tamil Nadu about 80%, and in Kerala about 76% of the villages have been electrified and by the end of this Plan they will complete the rural electrification. I do not see the reason why those Members should feel aggrieved in any way unless it be that they want to champion the cause of the whole country. Having finished their State they should now champion the cause of the country.

The hon. Member said that rural electrification was being managed very badly but I should say that it is one of the sectors where we are doing very well. About other sectors we are not able to improve our targets for the Fourth Plan but in the case of rural electrification we are in fact increasing our plan target of electrifying 12.5 lakhs of pump sets to 15 lakhs of pump sets. Likewise in the matter of electrification of villages we are devising so many steps and we are trying to bring about a much better situation in the country. It is unfortunate that there are nine States which are very much below the national average and these nine States have got a population of 300 million people, which is more than 50 per cent of the total population. The hon. Member said that the Centre was responsible for this kind of imbalance. It is not. Once again I repeat that there are some sectors to which the States have to pay attention and this is one of the sectors where the money should be spent by the State Government. Especially the hon. Member coming from Kerala should not ask for any further assistance in this respect because only the other day he was complaining about sea erosion and he wanted some money from the Centre. He says everything should come from the Centre. I quite agree with him that sea erosion must be financed by the Centre and I also said that the Ministry of Irrigation and Power holds strong views on this matter. To say that everything must come from the Centre, weakens the States in respect of other requests. Hon. Members must reserve this for

some attack on some weak points. I should say that neither Tamil Nadu nor Kerala should have any grievance whatsoever in the matter of rural electrification. Shri Jyotirmoy Bose had a much stronger case as Bengal is one of the premier States with high density of population and is suffering from want of electrification. At the time of the last half an hour discussion I made a number of suggestions. I indicated the measures which we are taking to improve rural electrification by means of programmes in Bihar, West Bengal and Orissa. These are the three States which have got a high potential but they are backward. This has come about because of historical reasons and I do not want to go into them. The States did not attach much importance to this sector and I said on the last occasion that the money that was spent by these States was small.

Now of course we are going to take it up seriously. We have in the Rural Electrification Corporation a leverage by which we can try to help the backward States. I pointed out last time that Bengal had provided Rs. 10 crores in their Plan for rural electrification. But this will not take them far. We must make up the backlog. That is why we are now asking the R. E. C. and other financial organisations to raise at least Rs. 20 crores so that we can have a programme at least for Rs. 30 crores. And that is why, we have fixed a target for the pumping sets. For West Bengal, for example, it was 2,200. Now, we have taken it up to 35,000 pumping sets. That is what we have targeted. In fact, one hour back, I was talking to the hon. Minister from West Bengal who was very enthusiastic about rural electrification, and we were discussing what steps we should take practically in order to ensure the rapid examination of these schemes. These schemes must be examined, and rapid steps have to be taken, because we have only three years more and we should make up the backlog, and at least try to have a better picture in West Bengal.

I am one of those who believe that the problems of West Bengal can all be resolved by having electricity and other amenities in the villages, and seeing that the people confine themselves to the villages; if we give them employment, electricity and other amenities,

they will all remain in the villages and be contributing to our national effort, instead of wandering about Calcutta aimlessly. That is my opinion. We are going to make a very good effort in West Bengal in this direction.

About Bihar, my hon. friend has been always arguing very correctly that north Bihar must receive more attention. It is so. In north Bihar, the total power available is 40 megawatts. In the whole of north Bihar, the power is only 35 to 40 megawatts that we are using at the moment, whereas the city of Calcutta alone takes about 550 megawatts. So, you can see how backward north Bihar is and what a small amount of power it has. As I submitted last time, we want to establish a thermal station there. Originally, we wanted to have it Motihari or Muzaffarpur, but unfortunately, the broad gauge line is not extended and the railways have no plan for it. Therefore, we cannot rehandle the coal, and that means unnecessarily increasing the cost of power artificially. We have got to take a final decision. It has been pending for a long time. We hope to take a decision in the course of the next few days on the subject. Once you do that, I am feeling that probably we have to locate this power-house at Samastipur. I will once again contact the railway people and find out whether at least they can take the broad gauge line up to Muzaffarpur. If they are not taking, then there is no option for us except to see that steps are taken to establish the power station at Samastipur. Apart from this the main work to be done is, extending the transmission lines in north Bihar, north Bengal and Orissa. They are having the same type of problem in regard to the inadequacy of lines. For these lines, I requested the Chairman of the REC, and he has accepted as a special case that for these three States loans should be given even for transmission lines. For the other States, we do not give such loans; they are confined only rural electrification.

AN HON. MEMBER : What about Uttar Pradesh ?

DR. K. L. RAO : It is neither there nor here. It is also one of the backward States because it has about the average of India's electrification, about 18 per cent. But in the case of Uttar Pradesh, we have got good

engineers, first-class engineers and we feel they can always take care of themselves. There also, we have already sanctioned a number of schemes ; nearly Rs. 8 crores for the REC, but that is not much for a big State like Uttar Pradesh ; it has to be much more ; it must be nearly double that amount. We are awaiting some more schemes for Uttar Pradesh, but it does not require much effort on the part of the Central Government, because their own engineers will take such steps as are necessary (*Interruption*) There is one more important point. In regard to West Bengal, only two schemes are pending : one in the Sunderbans and the other in Murshidabad. These two schemes are pending. Their Minister today told me that there are many more schemes which they are going to send very shortly ; that they have replied to some of the comments of REC and that they are going to send them back ; so, the process is going on.

Then, hon. Members have raised the question about Harijan villages. I am glad that Mr. Suryanarayana has not raised the question of Andhra Pradesh and Telengana. I was fully prepared for it, but I am very glad that he has not done it. He has taken a national view of the problem of Harijan areas. There are two problems in respect of which we have taken steps. Out of the 1,06,000 villages electrified so far, there are a number of villages where electricity has not been given to Harijan areas, though the main village has been electrified. I have taken up this matter with the Planning Commission. I am very glad that the Planning Commission seem to have decided today that funds must be given to State Electricity Boards to electrify these Harijan areas, provided the running cost and expenditure on account of street lighting etc., is borne by the State Government or the panchayat or the zila parishad. The capital cost will be met by the Government of India.

SHRI K. SURYANARAYANA : Will it be a loan or grant ?

DR. K. L. RAO : Nobody is worried about that. They only want money. So far as the remaining towns and villages are concerned, we had a meeting today about standardisation. As Mr. Bosu mentioned, standardisation is very important. If you standardise, you can

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do it much quicker and more economically. There were two meetings today, and the REC is trying to standardise the various parts to make it uniform. So far as villages to be electrified hereafter are concerned, they must include the electrification of Harijan areas. Otherwise, we are not going to sanction the money. The Chairman of the REC has accepted it.

I thank the hon. members for taking interest in this subject. I only wish more members were present. When it was said that all villages will be electrified by 1981, an hon. member asked, "Why not tomorrow?" Quite true. But the question is one of finding the resources for it. If hon. members continue to take interest in rural electrification, I am sure India will march forward with this vital sector, which is most important to ensure the uniform development of the country.

Mr. Chandrapan said, national grid is a myth. It is not. There is no surplus power in Kerala. I do not know why he said there is.

If Idikki project is not completed by 1973 or 1974, which we are not expecting, Kerala will be a deficit State. We have connected practically every State with the other. But we have not got strong, powerful links. We have got 132 or 220 KV lines. In Calcutta, there was shortage of power recently due to the breakdown of some engines. But though DVC power was available, we could not send power to Calcutta from there because there was no spare cable line. We are thinking of 400 KV lines. It is the aim of the Government and all the people are agreed that we should have an all-India grid. I am sure when we have sufficient number of strong and powerful links, we will have an effective all-India grid.

I once again thank all the hon. members.

18 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Tuesday, June 22, 1971/Asadha 1, 1893 (Saka)