

SHRI SAMAR GUHA: I wanted to say that what had been said by the honourable Junior Minister when senior colleague is sitting by him in an attitude of stoic silence and indifference, is nothing but hypocrisy galore.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The discussion will continue on the next day.

17.32 hrs.

HALF-AN-HOUR DISCUSSION NARMADA RIVER WATERS ISSUE

MR. CHAIRMAN: We will now take up the Half-an-hour discussion on Narmada River Waters issue. Shri P. M. Mehta.

SHRI P. M. MEHTA (Bhavnagar): Narmada project is a national project. The country should know what is the loss which it suffers in terms of power generation and in terms of food production, which this river causes to the country. The country is losing Rs. 1500 crores every year. I will not deal with all the technical and economic aspects of the projects simply because the scope of the discussion is limited. But I will say that the demand of the people of Gujarat and the Government of Gujarat that 530 feet should be the height of the dam is based on sound techno-economic grounds, considerations and principles. Their demand is that there should be a 530 feet dam; this is based on pure merits. I have raised this discussion to seek some clarification from the hon. Minister. What I want to say is this. I would like to bring to the notice of the honourable House certain major decisions which were taken by the concerned State Governments and the Central Government.

Sir, in regard to the water dispute in the year 1954, the Government of India appointed an expert Committee known as the Khosla Committee in consultation with the Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra Governments. In the year 1955, the Khosla Committee submitted its report and

the Government of Gujarat accepted the recommendations of the Report.

In the year 1958, the Government of Gujarat asked the Central Government to appoint a Tribunal under the Inter-State Water Disputes Act and referred the long pending issue to the Tribunal. In the year 1959, this demand of the Government of Gujarat was accepted by the Central Government and the issue was referred to the Tribunal.

While adjudication proceedings were in progress, all the Four Chief Ministers of the concerned States, that is, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan came to settle their dispute and arrived at an agreement after the Assembly elections of 1972. Because the same ruling party came into power, they came to an understanding an agreement that this dispute should be referred to or should be handed over to the Prime Minister of India. Therefore the dispute is handed over to the Tribunal. At that time hopes were raised that the Prime Minister was performing the stone-laying ceremony on 15th August, 1972.

The settlement of dispute was referred by the Deputy Minister for Irrigation and Power in written answer to Q. No. 316 dated 14th November, 1972. I would like to quote it:

Q. No. 316: to be answered on 14-11-72.

The Deputy Minister of Irrigation and Power, in reply, stated as follows:

"The Chief Ministers/Ministers of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan had discussions on the Narmada dispute from 18th to 22nd July, 1972. They pointed out that, though Narmada is one of the best rivers of the country with a great potential, it has not been developed so far and requested the Government of India to give priority to its development in this decade. The Chief Ministers felt that development of Narmada should no longer be delayed in the best regional and national interests and therefore agreed to the settlement of

[Shri P. M. Mehta]

disputes connected with this river by mutual agreement and with the assistance of the Prime Minister."

The quantity of water available in Narmada for the year is assessed at about 28 million acre feet. The requirements of Rajasthan and Maharashtra for use in their territories were 0.5 and 0.25 million acre feet respectively. The Chief Ministers requested the Prime Minister to adjudicate for the balance of water of 27.25 million acre feet between Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat taking into account the various relevant requirements of both the States. The Chief Ministers have also requested the Prime Minister to fix a suitable time for determination in regard to the height of the Navagam Dam after going into the foundations and the view point of the Chief Ministers where after they would finalise the arrangements for the power generation and its distribution.

Thereafter, the hon. Members of this House and the other House had, from time to time, asked questions and I would like to quote the answers given by the Irrigation Minister in this House and the other House, Sir, on 27th November, 1972 the Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Irrigation and Power, in reply to a question put (Q No 827) in the Rajya Sabha stated as follows:

"(a) and (b): The Chief Ministers of the Four States concerned have agreed that Rajasthan and Maharashtra would have 0.25 million and 0.25 million acre feet respectively of Narmada water for use in their territories and would abide by the decision of the Prime Minister in regard to the allocation of the balance water between Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat, and in regard to the height of the Navagam Dam proposed by the Government of Gujarat. It is expected that the decision would be available by the end of the year."

Thereafter, on 4th December, 1972, while replying to Q. No. 1191 in Rajya Sabha, the Deputy Minister had said:

"The dispute relating to the Narmada waters among the States of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan have been referred to the Narmada Waters Dispute Tribunal in October, 1969, for adjudication. While the adjudication proceedings were in progress, the Chief Ministers of the four States met in July, 1972 and felt that the development of the Narmada basin should no longer be delayed in the best national interest, and agreed to the settlement of the dispute connected with the river by mutual agreement with the assistance of the Prime Minister of India."

At the end, he said:

"It is expected that a decision on two matters would be available in the course of the next two months."

SHRI PILOO MODY (Godhra):
Meanwhile, the Chief Ministers have changed and now the Prime Minister is about to change.

SHRI P. M. MEHTA: In the same way, in reply to Q. No. 4084 in the Lok Sabha, in a written answer, he said:

"The Chief Ministers of the four States concerned have agreed that Rajasthan and Maharashtra would have 0.5 and 0.25 million acre-feet respectively of Narmada waters for use in their territories, and would abide by the decision of the Prime Minister in regard to the allocation of the balance between Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat, and in regard to the height of the Navagam dam proposed by the Government of Gujarat, it is expected that the decision would be available in about two months."

A similar reply was given to Q. 1072 in the Lok Sabha in a written answer.

In the Raya Sabha, in reply to Q. No. 792, the answer was:

"In regard to the Narmada project it is expected that the award of the Prime Minister is likely to be given soon."

This was on 5th March, 1973.

SHRI PILOO MODY: He will give the same reply today also. What do you call this, if not a bunch of lies?

SHRI P. M. MEHTA: I would ask the hon. Minister of Irrigation and Power to clarify the whole position. Firstly, on what ground had the Deputy Minister and the hon. Minister stated in this House and in the other House that a decision would be available in two months or a decision would be available soon?

Most respectfully, I would ask the Minister. Do they attach any value to what they speak in this House? Do they attach any value to the assurances they give or the statements they make in this House? Would the hon. Minister now tell us why the award has not been announced till today? What are the factors coming in the way of the announcement of the award? Is it a fact that political reasons have caused the inordinate delay? Is he aware of the fact that Gujarat is very sensitive on this issue and people there are agitated? Is he aware of the fact that they do not want a decision on political grounds but a decision based on techno-economic justification and considerations? Lastly, would the hon. Minister tell this House when the hon. Prime Minister will be pleased to spell out her award?

श्री हुकूम चन्द कछवाय : (मुरैना)

समाप्त जी, यह जो योजना नवागाव की बनने वाली है इस में 3 लाख एकड़ भूमि समाप्त होने वाली है, और सरकार एक तरफ कहती है कि जो उपजाऊ जमीन है उसको किसी तरह समाप्त न किया जाय, लेकिन दूसरी

तरफ ऐसे काम करती है जिस में उपजाऊ जमीन पानी में बर्बाद की जाती है। आप भूज का सक्ट है, ऐसे समय में इतना अधिक भूमि पानी में जायेगी इसका विशेष ध्यान रखा जाय। इसी के साथ साथ 2 लाख कामतकार उजड़ जायेंगे, बेघरवार हो जायेंगे और 300 गांव बर्बाद हो जायेंगे जिन से अच्छे पक्के मकान बने हुए हैं, काफी पैसा लोगों का उन में लगा हुआ है। बहुत से वास्तुकारों ने सरकार से बर्जा लेकर मकान बनाये हैं। जब यह बाध बन कर तैयार हो जायेगा तो इसका जो लाभ है वह 90 प्रतिशत गुजरात को मिलेगा, और मध्य प्रदेश को केवल 10 प्रतिशत लाभ ही मिलेगा। इस लिए मध्य प्रदेश के हितों का ध्यान रखा जाय। जो बाध बनाने जा रहे हैं वह 530 फीट ऊंचा बनाने जा रहे हैं। मध्य प्रदेश सरकार ने सिफारिश की है कि इस बाध का 350 फीट ऊंचा रखा जाय तो जमीन भी इसमें इतनी नहीं जायेगी, लोग बर्बाद भी नहीं होंगे और गांव भी नहीं उजड़ेंगे। मध्य प्रदेश सरकार उसके साथ-साथ 3 और छोटे छोटे बाध बनाने जा रही है जिस में करोड़ों रुपया खर्च होगा। अगर इस बाध को 530 फीट ऊंचा बनाया गया तो मध्य प्रदेश सरकार जो तीन छोटे बाध बनायेगी वह भी टूट जायेंगे। मतलब यह की उन का कोई उपयोग नहीं होने वाला है। इस लिए तीन बाध बने, तीन लाख एकड़ जमीन बचे और गांव भी बचे जाए इस का ध्यान रखते हुए मध्य प्रदेश सरकार को सिफारिश को मान लिया जाय तो अच्छा होगा।

इस बाध का झगडा पिछले कुछ दिनों से है, इस लिए गुजरात, मध्यप्रदेश राजस्थान और महागुट्ट सरकार के प्रतिनिधि बैठकर निर्णय करें कि क्या करना है। सारा निर्णय आपने प्रधान मंत्री पर छोड़ दिया है। उन पर पहले ही इतना काम है, ऊपर में यह काम भी दे रहे हैं। आप चारों सरकारों मिल कर कह दो कि आपस में फैमला कर

[श्री हुकम चन्द कछवाय]

कि कम से कम किस किस को कितना लाभ मिलना चाहिए। प्रधान मंत्री से पिछली बार कुछ लोग मिले थे जिन की जमीन जाने वाली है। उन्होंने आश्वासन भी दिया। लेकिन आज तक कोई निर्णय इसके बारे में नही हुआ। इस लिए जल्दी निर्णय हो और इस काम को प्रारम्भ किया जाये। लेकिन लोगों का हित किस में है यह भी ध्यान रखा जाय। हम कहते हैं अधिक जमीन को उपजाऊ बनाया जाये, लेकिन दूसरी और आप उपजाऊ जमीन को उजाड़ना चाहते हैं। इन बातों का ध्यान रखते हुए मंत्री जी जवाब दें और आश्वासन दे कि शीघ्र से शीघ्र बीच में पड़ कर समझौता करायेंगे यह मामला प्रधान मंत्री को मत सौंपिये। वह काफी बजन से दबी जा रही है सारा देश परेशान है आप चारो मुख्य मंत्रियों को बुला कर निर्णय कर दे।

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri P. G. Mavalankar.

SHRI P. G. MAVALANKAR (Ahmedabad): Mr. Chairman, Sir, this half-an-hour discussion has been necessitated by the simple fact that the Minister of Irrigation and Power has throughout, on the question of the Narmada waters dispute, been evading an answer and we wish, therefore, at least in this particular half-an-hour discussion that the Minister will be specific and give us the necessary details and tell us why it has been delayed and tell us, which is more important, when the award will come.

Sir, if you will recall the latest occasion, as recent as the 31st July, last, my hon. friend, Shri Prasannabhai Mehta, and I had asked a question and when we asked 'Are not the people of Gujarat and elsewhere agitated over this matter he merely replied to the effect that "Some MPs have made some enquiries about this." (Interruptions) Then, on the last occasion, he also answered in a very general, vague way, saying that there are problems. Of course, there are problems,

and because there are problems the matter has been referred to the Prime Minister and if the Prime Minister has not solved the problems let the matter go back to the tribunal. Now, between the tribunal and the Prime Minister, the whole country, and particularly the four States are going to be kept under suspense, and who are suffering? Not only the people of these States are suffering but the whole nation is suffering. Crores of rupees worth of production through irrigation and water facilities are being lost because of the fact that nothing is being settled. This habit of not taking any decision and going on postponing it is wrong. This is the first part of my question, namely, how long this Government will delay such matters of importance, such matters of national urgency, where they should give topmost priority, or rather, should give immediate and active consideration, what to talk of priority.

I say that the utilisation of Narmada waters is a vital matter. It is a national project of great importance, of great promise and potentiality. In view of the drought-affected and drought-prone areas in Western and Central India, I would like to tell the Minister that an immediate, amicable settlement of this problem is all the more urgent. People everywhere are getting restive and restless over this long silence and the inexplicable delay on the part of the Prime Minister in giving her award.

What is more important is that the monsoon has already set and the Narmada has for yet another year become turbulent and is in spate. A tremendous loss of land, people, and cattle is taking place. Dislocation of traffic has also taken place. The people's patience should not be tried and tested any longer, but a definite time limit is required. So the conclusion of this part of the question is, is this delay not really unjustifiable and unpardonable? Is it not a fact that the dispute was referred to the tribunal and then it was referred to the Prime

Minister so that it could be settled expeditiously and satisfactorily? But we find that instead of doing it expeditiously, the Prime Minister is taking more time. Therefore, I want to ask this. Already, one full year has passed since it was referred to the Prime Minister for her award. When is her award going to be available? Is it not true that people all over Gujarat and elsewhere are suffering? Indeed, as my hon. friend Shri Kachwa has rightly put it, in all the four concerned States, the people are agitated over this point, because this is not a provincial matter. It is a question of national importance and of national urgency and priority. I hope at least here in this discussion, at the end of this discussion, the Minister will come out with a definite statement and will give us an assurance that the matter will be discussed and settled in terms of the national interest without the intervention of political pressures or difficulties, and in the best interest of the development of the country so that the people of this country can be benefited and poverty can be eradicated.

SHRI K. S. CHAVDA (Patan).
Sir, on a point of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No point of order.

SHRI K. S. CHAVDA. This half-an-hour discussion is regarding the Prime Minister's award on the Narmada river waters dispute. So, she should reply to the debate or at least she should have remained present. If it is not possible today, then let her reply tomorrow.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order. The Minister of Irrigation and Power is here.

SHRI K. S. CHAVDA: My question was disallowed merely because of the fact that I asked when the award was expected, the award to be given by the Prime Minister. The question was disallowed because of this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Minister of Irrigation and Power is here and he will reply.

SHRI K. S. CHAVDA: Mainly she has to reply; it was entrusted to her by the four Chief Ministers; the question was addressed only to the Prime Minister and not to Dr. K. L. Rao, the Minister of Irrigation and Power.

श्री हुकम चन्द कच्छवाय : यह मामला प्रधान मंत्री को सौंपा हुआ है। उनको यहाँ रहना चाहिए और जवाब देना चाहिए। मामलों को उनको सौंपे हुए बहुत समय हो गया है।

SHRI PILOO MODY: If it had been left to Dr. Rao, he would have decided long time back.

SHRI K. S. CHAVDA: Dr. Rao will give the same reply. In a country where over 23 crores of people live below the poverty line especially when the Chief Ministers have said that they would abide by the award of the Prime Minister, the Prime Minister must come here and reply to the debate.

SHRI P. M. MEHTA: Today the Chief Ministers of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh met this morning and they discussed this issue. I request the hon. Minister to tell this House the outcome of the discussion.

SHRI PILOO MODY: I am afraid that as the Prime Minister becomes weaker the dam will become lower. So the sooner a decision is given the greater will be the extent to which we can salvage and save this project.

THE MINISTER OF IRRIGATION AND POWER (DR. K. L. RAO): I am thankful to the Members for keeping an even level because I expected much more excitement. Water disputes always lead to a lot of excitement (Interruptions) It is said that the Prime Minister must come here. She is the arbitrator, how can she come here. The very suggestion is wrong.

SHRI K. S. CHAVDA: She should explain why there is the delay.

SHRI PILOO MODY: I am sorry Dr Rao; we do not appreciate the logic of your argument.

SHRI H. M. PATEL (Dhandhuka) If Dr. Rao is going to take up this attitude all that I can say is that this is most deplorable. He should understand the reason why everybody is agitated and he should reply

DR. K. L. RAO: I am trying to give a reply. I heard the hon. Members very patiently. Narmada is one of our important rivers in the country, and it has not been harnessed as yet in the national interest. We are all agreed that the waters in this river must be harnessed at the earliest opportunity and we should not lose any time. I only hope that in the Fifth Plan it will be possible for us to make considerable headway in the harnessing of this noble river.

I must say the circumstances in which the whole problem has arisen Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat came to a head on collision about 10 years ago. We tried our best to get them together for six years, but we could not succeed. Then we referred the matter to a tribunal and after four years the tribunal cannot give a decision even on the amount of water in that river. Therefore, we thought that it would take much more time. So it was decided that we should take this out of the tribunal and I am very glad to state that the Chief Ministers have done a wonderful thing by agreeing on the total quantity of water in the river which is itself very important. More than five years have been taken by the Krishna tribunal to come to the agreed amount of water in the Krishna river. Here a difficulty has been overcome on this account.

Now the question is what should be the height of the dam and what should be the allocation of water. These are apparently two simple questions, which have been referred for arbitration. However, the problem is not so simple. The hon. Member Shri P. M.

Mehta asked why time was extended. It is quite true that we expected that it would be possible for the award to be given much earlier, but complications have arisen. The main complication is the submersion of the territory in another State and the submersion is of a very high order if the dam is to be of particular height and if that height is not adopted there is no use for another State. Therefore there is conflict.

SHRI P. M. MEHTA: From 1972 onwards you have said the something in reply.

SHRI PILOO MODY: Will you allow me to make one constructive suggestion towards the solution of Narmada problem? Let Gujarat decide the height of the dam and let Madhya Pradesh allot the waters.

18 00 hrs

DR. K. L. RAO: There is no use in saying that I am trying to give some explanation. It is a question of submersion of a very large extent of land. In the case of the Pong Dam, we did not arrive at any solution of this question and we rushed and constituted it. The result was we had to stop the work in the middle. The work was completely retarded. Pong Dam presents one of the problems from which we have got to learn a lesson. When we have to spend only Rs 18 crores for compensation we have paid more than Rs 40 crores. Still, the problem is so difficult. For three or four years, it has come in our way and we could not apply our mind to any engineering problem. So, the question of submersion is not so simple. Suppose the Prime Minister gives an award and it is not possible to execute it. What is the use of that award? If the submersion is in the same State, there is no problem. But in this case, the submersion is in the other State and it is of such a very heavy nature. You must recognise the importance of the problem. I fully appreciate that Gujarat has got lots of parched land which have to be

given water and we are quite anxious that Gujarat must get more water. But at the same time, there is no use of rushing. We are trying to find out a solution. The Prime Minister is very patient in this matter. Even today there were discussions with the Chief Minister but the question is not so simple. If it were simple, there would have been no necessity of going on discussing it. Mr. Mavalankar is very angry with me. He is bound to be angry. I can appreciate his excitement. We have heard Mr. Kachwai. Mr. Bade was not given a chance. Otherwise, we would have had fireworks. If Mr. Mehta had suggested a particular height, I would have been happy. But he has pitched the height too high. Naturally Mr. Kachwai is anxious because it involves very heavy submersion. No project can submerge so much of land. That is the main problem. We are fully aware that Narmada waters must be used in Gujarat to as large an extent as possible. At the same time, the other problem of submersion of huge areas of land is there. We are

grateful to the Prime Minister for the extreme patience she is showing over this matter. I have personal experience of Bansagar project over the Sone river. It is a very important project and it will irrigate the worst drought-hit area of the Ganga basin. I have been trying for more than one year, but all sorts of problems and difficulties are arising. If you refer it to a tribunal, it will take 10 years. You should look at it from the practical point of view.

All that I can say is that the problem is receiving the utmost attention, a very practical consideration, and the Award will be given as soon as there is a certain amount of agreement between the various parties concerned.

18.06 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Elenen of the Clock on Monday, August 13, 1973/Saravana 22, 1895 (Saka).