

LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Wednesday, November 16, 1988/Kartika
25, 1910 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[*Translation*]

Water Pollution In Rajasthan

32. SHRI SHANKAR LAL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the dyeing and printing factories in Pali, Jodhpur and Balotra cities in Rajasthan have posed a serious problem of water pollution because of discharge of the effluents in the river causing damage to thousands of bighas of land and affecting the irrigation wells as well as posing a danger to the life of the people on account of spread of dreadful diseases; and

(b) if so, the steps proposed to be taken by Government to solve this problem?

[*English*]

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z.R. ANSARI): (a) Yes, Sir. Water in the wells adjacent to the river bed of Pali and Jodhpur has been found to be polluted and water used from these wells for irrigation purposes has affected the

agricultural land nearby. The effluents from dyeing and printing industries in Balotra also have been found to be polluted. Consumption of such water is likely to have ill effects.

(b) The action taken by the Government include the following:

- (i) The Ministry of Environment & Forests have directed closure of four units in Pali under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
- (ii) The State Government have decided not to allow any new dyeing and printing unit in Pali, Jodhpur and Balotra.
- (iii) The Association for dyeing and printing units at Pali have been requested to take over the Combined Effluent Treatment Plant which was set up by the Rajasthan State Industrial Development and Investment Corporation (RIICO) for a cluster of units. Individual units situated at different places in Pali city or its neighbouring places will have to establish pollution control devices on their own.

SHRI SHANKAR LAL: Mr. Speaker Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether it is true that the Rajasthan Government has admitted the fact that in Pali alone, fertility of thousand bighas of agricultural land has been destroyed? The findings of a research carried out by Dr. M.M. Mohnot, Head of Zoology Department of Jodhpur University, say that this water could lead to dreaded diseases like cancer. In the light of this

information, why did the Government allow 750 factories to come up in Pali? The Common Effluent Plant installed over there has been non-functional for the past four years. The effluent from these factories is discharged into the river. Consequently, land and irrigation wells belonging to farmers in 40 villages under Pali and Rohit Panchayat Samities have been destroyed. Does the Government have any scheme for the payment of compensation to the affected farmers. After the Act came into being in 1975, 750 factories have been set up in the State. The Water Pollution Act stipulates that a factory can be set up only after obtaining a N.O.C. So, how could so many factories have come up? What is the Government going to do about the Treatment Plant which is lying closed for the past four years? What steps Government is taking to provide relief to the farmers?

SHRI Z.R. ANSARI: Sir, it is true that as a result of water pollution in Pali, Jodhpur and Balotra, even the ground water has been contaminated. Therefore, the Government has asked people in certain areas of Pali and Jodhpur not to use that water for drinking and irrigation purposes. Thorough study has been conducted to find out the extent to which the water of the wells has been contaminated due to discharge of effluents in the river. Notices have been issued making it compulsory to instal pollution control devices failing which the Government would be compelled to close the factory under the Environment Protection Act passed by Parliament.

As to the question of the Common Tubewell Treatment Plant, it had been set up by RIICO. There are many dyeing and printing units in the small-scale industry sector. In fact they should be called tiny industries. It is not possible for these units to instal a treatment plant on their own. Hence RIICO had installed this common treatment plant. But the question is that the running cost of the plant is exorbitant, at Rs. 35,000 to Rs. 40,000 per day, and, as such, the industries should share the burden. The plant is lying closed as nobody is prepared to bear its

running cost. Now the Government has come to the conclusion that the State Industries Association should be asked to run the plant. Some steps are, perhaps, being taken in this direction.

SHRI SHANKAR LAL: This treatment plant has been lying closed for the past four years. The hon. Minister says that efforts are being made. Will the Government give a fixed date from which the plant would be re-activated? Half of the 750 factories are covered by this Treatment Plant. What is being done for the rest of the factories which are operating on agricultural land? What is the Government doing for farmers who are incurring losses? The Government is the landholder and the farmer is an account-holder who pays rent to the Government. So how is Government going to make good the losses suffered by the farmers and what kind of relief is being provided to them?

SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT: That is a very important question.

SHRI Z.R. ANSARI: There are two questions. The first relates to the Common Treatment Plant lying closed for four years. I admit that it is true. The problem with the plant is, who is to bear its running cost. Through the State Government, the Small-scale Sector Industries Association has been asked to take-up this matter and raise the necessary finances to run the plant. Another problem is that industries in Pali are of a particular type and they discharge an alkali effluent. If some alkali-based industries had also been set up, they could have used this effluent and the pollution would have been neutralised to a considerable extent.

So far as its running is concerned, it is the responsibility of the industry and not of the Government. This Effluent Plant was set up by RIICO. The Government has to see whether the plant is controlling pollution properly or not. If there is any pollution in spite of the functioning of the Effluent Treatment Plant, the only choice before the Government is to issue a closure notice to that

industrial undertaking. The second question relates to payment of compensation to farmers. It is true that this approval has led to destruction of fertility of land. After the study, it was found that farmers had suffered losses. But according to the law, there is no provision for payment of compensation. This is a civil matter to be decided by a civil court. Alternatively, the State Government should try to find a way to arrange compensation.

SHRI VIRDHI CHANDER JAIN: Mr. Speaker Sir, the hon. Minister visited Pali in connection with the Common Effluent Treatment Plant. I also went there and saw for myself that the plant is of no use. The entrepreneurs of Pali, Jodhpur and other areas also want Treatment Plants to be installed as it is very necessary to do so. But it has been seen that neither the Central Government nor the State Governments are extending their co-operation.

The type of Treatment Plants and the contribution of the Central and State Government has not been clearly defined. The government should evolve a scheme for the installation of Treatment Plants in such a way that existence of industries is not threatened and pollution is also controlled. May I know from the hon. Minister what is being done in this direction? The hon. Minister has given a very unsatisfactory reply regarding the payment of compensation to the farmers. They must get compensation because they suffer heavy losses in the destruction of their crops. May I know from the hon. Minister the Government's viewpoint on this issue?

SHRI Z.R. ANSARI: Sir, I start my reply with the point related to the payment of compensation to farmers. I agree that farmers should certainly be compensated for the losses suffered by them due to the damage caused to their lands and crops. But the question is from which source they should get it. The Government is helpless, because it does not have any machinery through which it can arrange compensation. The farmers have a right to compensation. The second question relates to the Common

Effluent Treatment Plants.

MR. SPEAKER: Whom should they turn to in such a situation? You have to find a way out for that.

[English]

SHRI Z.R. ANSARI: I do agree with you that some way should be found out. But my problem is that I am not in a position to make any commitment regarding compensation because I do not have enough powers to decide on that particular issue. There may be some other forum which can decide about this issue.

[Translation]

I was saying that the question is whether the Common Effluent Treatment Plant is defective or not. The plants have been planned by specialists. The only problem is who is to bear the extraordinary running cost of the plants. Three-fourths of the running cost is taken away by the acid used to neutralise the alkali. The daily expenditure on running the plant comes to Rs. 30,000 to Rs. 40,000. The most exorbitant part of the cost is the Rs. 25,000 to Rs. 30,000 worth of acid which is to be added. A solution could be to apply any recovery process at source for the caustic used in the plant. This will result in cutting down the cost of neutralising the effluent from the plant. The problem is that it is not possible for small industrialists to bear the exorbitant running cost of the Common Effluent Treatment Plant.

[English]

Stock of Foodgrains

86. SHRI BRAJAMOHAN MOHANTY: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) the total stock of rice and wheat available with Government agencies as on 31 October, 1988;

(b) whether the stock is adequate to