

[Shri Swaran Singh]

inform the House that almost all the recommendations of the Shahnawaz Committee were accepted.

Shri Nath Pai: That means the railways are incurable.

श्री कछवाय (देवास) : श्रीमान्, मैं समझता हूँ कि हाउस में इस समय काम नहीं है।

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Order, order.

18-15 hrs.

BAGH RIVER PROJECT*

Shri Balkrishna Wasnik (Gondia): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, we have just now had a very lively discussion and I hope the House will bear with me for a few minutes more.

This discussion arises out of my Unstarred Question answered on the 21st April, 1962. There is a river project on the Bagh River in Gondia Tahsil of Bhandara District of Maharashtra. This project had already received the administrative approval of the Madhya Pradesh Government prior to the re-organisation of States in 1956 and it was also included in the Second Five Year Plan proposal of that State. But it has been found that when the Chief Minister of Maharashtra State inaugurated the work on the pick-up weir in February 1961, the Government of Madhya Pradesh sent a telegram to the Government of Maharashtra requesting that the Government of Maharashtra should not go ahead with the project without that Government's concurrence. Actually, the concurrence of the Madhya Pradesh Government was a mere formality to be observed in an inter-State relations in view of the fact that what the Maharashtra Government, as a successor government to the ex-

Madhya Pradesh Government, had embarked upon was nothing but the fulfilment of the commitment of the ex-Madhya Pradesh Government. But we find that in April 1961 the Madhya Pradesh Government formulated another scheme as an alternative proposal for the construction of the Bagh River project and requested the Government of Maharashtra that the project should be taken up as a joint venture. I cannot understand one thing. This project as it was, was initiated by the ex-Government of Madhya Pradesh. At that time the District of Bhandara in which this project lies was in Madhya Pradesh. The neighbouring district, that is, Drug District, in which some water spreads over was also in Madhya Pradesh. At that time this project was given administrative approval by the Madhya Pradesh Government. What I want to submit is that no material change has been sought by the Government of Maharashtra. Everything is the same except that some technical features have been changed. What is this change that the Government of Maharashtra has sought to do? It is only to revise the project in respect of certain technical features of the dam, the canal, the rates and the crop pattern. So far as submergence is concerned that is virtually unchanged. The FRL having been kept practically the same, instead of a direct canal proposed in the old project the canal in the revised project takes off from a pick-up weir ten miles downstream to reduce relatively idle canal length. So there is practically no change in the submergence of land in the neighbouring district which has now gone in the State of Madhya Pradesh. I do not understand why the Government of Madhya Pradesh should take objection and formulate a new scheme and then come forward with a new proposal and ask the Government of Maharashtra to take up the scheme as a joint venture. Is it because there has been a re-organisation of the States? Is it be-

*Half-an-hour discussion.

cause Bhandara and Drug Districts have been separated from one State? Is it because the benefits which were to be to the people of the old Madhya Pradesh will be going now to the people of the new Maharashtra State? Is it because this scheme does not fall in the new Madhya Pradesh that has been created by States' re-organisation?

Now-a-days we find that this kind of water disputes are coming up everywhere. In the States of Andhra, Maharashtra, Mysore and other States there are so many water disputes coming up as if we are living in different countries.

These inter-State disputes have become a sort of international disputes. We cannot understand this kind of thing going on in this land, when we are living in one country, that a neighbouring State should make some such objection and that an administrative approval which was given six years back should be gone back upon. And today they raise some new points, give some new schemes and delay the whole matter. What is the Central Government doing about this? Am I to understand that whenever a neighbouring State Government wants to make an objection the Central Government will be entertaining that objection and holding up the work?

The Government of Maharashtra have spent about Rs. 55 lakhs on the initial work of the scheme and after spending so much money on that scheme the work has been stopped. And when? When the Chief Minister actually went to the spot and was inaugurating the scheme, the Madhya Pradesh Government sent a telegram to stop the work. And they formulate another scheme after two months. I should give you the information that in August 1960 the Maharashtra Government had approached the Madhya Pradesh Government to give their concurrence, which was as natural as anything. But they did not give their concurrence. They waited for six months, waited for the Chief

Minister to inaugurate the scheme, and then sent a telegram. If this kind of thing goes on, how are we to finish the scheme?

This scheme was included, as a matter of fact, in the Second Plan. Now it is the second year of the Third Plan. Full funds have been allotted for the scheme, and the Planning Commission naturally expects that this scheme should be finished in the Third Plan period, and there should be no spill-over. There is no provision like that. And still in the second year of the Third Plan we see that it has come to nothing. Both the State Governments will be sitting together, the technical experts will be sitting together and discussing things, and the Central Government will be sitting idle, looking to these technical experts and seeing the things.

So I would request the Central Government to devise some way to see that objections raised at such late stages are not entertained, or there should be some machinery to avoid such kinds of disputes. With these words I submit that the Central Government should take some active step in order that this scheme is completed as early as possible and the Planning Commission gives its approval for the execution of this scheme as quickly as possible.

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Irrigation and Power (Shri Alagesan): Sir, I would like to place some facts before this House with regard to this Bagh river project.

The hon. Member who has sponsored this half-an-hour discussion is naturally anxious that this project should be taken up as early as possible and that the State of Maharashtra should be benefited thereby. But, as he himself pointed out in the course of his speech, it is true that this project was taken up by the erstwhile Madhya Pradesh Government. Later on there was the reorganisation of States. Then it was the Maharashtra Government which wanted to go ahead with this project. When the Maharashtra Gov-

[Shri Alagesan]

ernment wanted to go ahead with this project, naturally—I shall give figures later on—naturally, the Government of Madhya Pradesh, in whose area this dam has to be constructed and in whose area lies a large part of the catchment area and in whose area a large portion of land will be submerged, felt agitated. In fact, they are vitally interested, I should say. And so they came forward with a proposal that this should be treated as an inter-State project and that their views also should be taken into consideration. They wrote to us, they wrote to the Maharashtra Government, and came out with alternative proposals. Since the project should be taken up, in their view, as an inter-State one they wanted some benefit to flow out of this project to their areas also which are equally thirsting for irrigation. So it happens that when they came out with their proposals, the matter had to be referred to the Maharashtra Government back. What we did was to ask the Maharashtra Government to send their project report to the Madhya Pradesh Government which they did. After studying the project, the Madhya Pradesh Government have come out with proposals which are being examined by the Central Water and Power Commission.

I might here mention that though this project was included in the Second Plan and then taken to the Third Plan by the Maharashtra Government, it never got the sanction of the Planning Commission or the Ministry here. It was neither cleared by the Ministry here, by the technical experts of the Ministry, nor was it cleared by the Planning Commission. It has not reached that stage when they could go ahead with the prosecution of the work. Perhaps, in their anxiety to serve the people in their area, the Maharashtra Government went ahead and perhaps actually spent some money and also made arrangements to lay the foundation stone, etc. But, we cannot be answerable to what the

Maharashtra Government do though we are bound to take that into consideration. At this stage, we have advised them to come together, to take it up at the technical level with their own engineers, with their own experts and come to some understanding, which, I understand, they propose to do very shortly in this month of June. After they produce some joint scheme which has the approval of both the Governments, it will be time for us to go into it more fully and scrutinise it and then we shall see that no further delay occurs and the scheme is sanctioned as early as possible.

In order to impress upon the hon. Member—I won't say House; there is not much of it left—and you, I may be permitted to give some figures. In this project, there is a dam site and also lower down the stream there is going to be a pick up weir. At the dam site, the total catchment area will be 167 square miles of which 80.6 square miles will be in the Maharashtra State and a little more i.e., 86.4 square miles will be in Madhya Pradesh area. At the pick up weir, it will be 85 square miles in the Maharashtra area and 25 miles in the Madhya Pradesh area. So also, the submergence both at the dam site reservoir and the pick up weir; the total submergence will be 8744 acres of which 4234 acres will lie in the Maharashtra area and a little more than this namely 5509 will lie in Madhya Pradesh. As per scheme of the Maharashtra Government, this project will command an area of slightly more than 1 lakh acres and it will actually irrigate 60,000 acres. As per alternative scheme suggested by the Madhya Pradesh Government, they envisage that 31,600 acres will be irrigated in Maharashtra area and 28,400 acres in the Madhya Pradesh area. My hon. friend asked about the total cost of the scheme. It is just now estimated to cost Rs. 609.77 lakhs. Thus it will be seen that if any project can be described as an inter-state project, this can be described as such by all

canons. We cannot quarrel with the Madhya Pradesh Government, if they want a share in this project. My hon. friend said that inter-state disputes are raised to the level of international disputes. May be. In this case, I am not convinced of that argument. I cannot say that the Madhya Pradesh Government is in the wrong in raising the issue and wanting to have a share in the project. At the same time, we are anxious that there should be no further delay. It is not as if the Central Government is sitting quiet with folded hands. When a dispute arises, it is our duty to bring the parties together so that a smooth settlement is arrived at. And we propose to do that. We shall take up this matter as soon as we get a joint approved

scheme, a scheme which will have the support of both the Governments. As soon as we receive such a scheme, we shall take up this work and see that it is cleared by the Ministry and also by the Planning Commission, so that it can be proceeded with by whatever agency that may be set up in this regard, and the benefits may accrue to the respective areas of the two States.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The discussion is over.

18-31 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till
Eleven of the Clock on Tuesday,
June 19, 1962|Jyaishta 29, 1884
(Saka).*