

MR. SPEAKER: Like any other system, it is one of the systems.

SHRI BAPUSAHEB PARULKAR: For what disease is this medicine given, he has not reply to it?

MR. SPEAKER: It is the whole medical system. Suppose it is an Ayurvedic system, for what disease it is, can you answer that?

SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA: I can answer in two sentences.

This system of medicine deals with all the common diseases that are prevalent in the area. But it is particularly well known for treatment of diseases in clinical conditions like arthritis, rheumatic pains and gastrointestinal diseases. If further information is required and if you allow another question, I shall answer.

#### Herbs in Meghalaya

\*1079. SHRI P. A. SANGMA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the plant and large variety of medicinal herbs grown in Meghalaya and particularly the Garo hills;

(b) whether any survey has been conducted so far in this regard;

(c) whether there are any proposals for preservation, growth and expansion of these medicinal plants and their commercial use; and

(d) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR (SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA): (a) Government of India are generally aware of the availability of medicinal herbs in Meghalaya.

(b) No regular survey has been conducted. However, teams have visited Meghalaya to collect certain

herbs required for research studies under the auspices of Central Council for Research in Ayurveda and Siddha.

(c) The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare have no such proposal at present.

(d) Does not arise.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: I am very happy that Government is very much aware of the existence of these medicinal plants and herbs in Meghalaya. But in this context I would like to impress upon the Government that because of the peculiar system of jhum cultivation which is also known as the shifting cultivation in our area, these medicinal plants in Meghalaya particularly in my district, Garo Hills District, have been damaged to such an extent that these plants are becoming completely extinct by this time. Another thing I would like to say is that though the Minister has said that no research work has been done on these plants, I remember that the Regional Research Centre in Jorhat did conduct some sort of a survey on these and they have found that these medicinal plants are really existing there. In view of the danger of their being destroyed by them cultivation and shifting cultivation, I would like to know from the Minister as to how soon the survey will be conducted? What is the report of the team that has visited the place and what are their findings?

SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA: There is a project at the Government Ayurvedic College at Gauhati for carrying out medico-botanical surveys in the forest areas of Assam and the neighbouring States. Under this survey many parts of the State of Meghalaya have been surveyed, and teams have visited these areas and observed about many plants. I do not think it will be your ruling that I should read out the names of the plants

concerned. Therefore, the point is that the Government is aware of the existence of a wide variety of medicinal plants and herbs in this region. Government is concerned about them, studying them, surveying them and protecting them.

Recently, there has also been a decision to set up two regional research centres in that area, that is in the North-eastern zone. One will be located in Assam. This will cover the regions to which the hon. Member referred. The other will be located in Arunachal. These two centres will be conducting a systematic medico-botanical survey.

In answer to the hon. Member's earlier question, I said that no regular survey has been conducted. I did not say that no survey at all has been conducted. It is because the earlier survey as part of the general survey was conducted from elsewhere and was not oriented specifically to the Garo Hills to which the question referred.

Now, the hon. Member has talked of the dangers to these herbs and plants that arise because of the system of jhum cultivation, and he has given valuable information. There is no doubt that the Government must take steps to protect these rare herbs and plants and to ensure their utilisation.

**SHRI P. A. SANGMA:** May I know whether any amount has been sanctioned in this financial year towards surveying these areas?

**SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA:** An amount of Rs. 2.6 lakh has been earmarked for this Centre that I referred to which will be located in Assam for the survey of these areas.

**SHRI BEDABRATA BARUA:** The amount provides shows that there is no research really proposed to be done. The Minister is merely dependent on ayurvedic research. But

it is a medicinal research. I would like to know whether there is a proper research on these herbal plants which are very necessary because all the medical findings today are dependent on herbs? In the monsoon season, the entire area will be full of herbs that could be utilised for human welfare.

**SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA:** The main question was about the survey, and not about medical research. On the question of survey, I answered him that this is what has been done and this is what is proposed to be done. On the general question of research, undoubtedly, that is a major question which has to be tackled in a different manner.

**SHRI D. N. TIWARY:** Still today in the rural areas a far greater number of people are being treated with Ayurvedic Medicine and allopathy has not made its dent in the rural areas as yet. It is so costly that villagers cannot resort to this sort of medicine. We are also sorry for the apathetic way in which Government is proceeding towards Ayurveda.

**MR. SPEAKER:** We are on herbs in Meghalaya and Garo hills.

**SHRI D. N. TIWARY:** So, there should be a proper survey wherever herbs are available so that proper medicine can be produced from them and supplied to the villagers at cheap price. What has the Government done in this matter?

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is a good suggestion.

**SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA:** As you will see, the main question was about the survey in Meghalaya. But, Sir, the Government is well aware of the potentiality of Ayurveda, and the special significance of Ayurveda in dealing with the problem of ensuring medical services and attention to our people in far-flung areas. I

think the House Knows that in recent years more emphasis has been placed on Ayurveda to correct the imbalance that existed earlier. As far as the result is concerned, I do not know who will be able to assess the result in such a short time. It is a question of longer duration, but the orientation is very clear and undeniable.

#### Dhanbad-Sindri Passenger Train

\*1080 SHRI A. K. ROY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether he is aware of the long standing demand for running Dhanbad-Sindri passenger train in Eastern Railway via Pradhan Khunta for which lines are already there; and

(b) whether a study was provided in this direction to consider its viability and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SHEO NARAIN): (a) and (b). A statement is laid on the table of the House.

#### Statement

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The suggestion to introduce a passenger train between Dhanbad and Sindri via Pradhan Khunta has been examined. The section from Pradhan Khunta to Patherdih via Sindri is fit for freight trains only and is primarily intended for movement of coal and raw materials and finished products to and from the fertiliser plant at Sindri. Introduction of passenger trains to Sindri via Pradhan Khunta would involve making the line fit for Passenger carrying trains at an estimated cost of about Rs. 95 lakhs, besides the provision of stations, platforms, and other passenger amenities as well as terminal facilities for servicing and maintenance of passenger rakes. The area through which the railway line from Dhanbad to Sindri via Pradhan Khunta passes is very sparsely populated.

Running of passenger trains, therefore, will only serve the few passengers from/to Sindri and the additional expenditure will not be commercially justified. There are good roads linking Sindri with Dhanbad and roads services are efficient and fast. Passenger trains, if run between Dhanbad and Sindri over the present goods line via Pradhan Khunta, will require a journey time far in excess of the time taken by the road services and therefore are not expected to be popular.

SHRI A. K. ROY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, anybody who has ever travelled on the Dhanbad-Sindri road would shudder to read this statement. However, I am not interested in Supplementary that much as I am interested in having a passenger train. And you know, no Supplementary question can produce a passenger train. It can fetch only a good answer, a nice answer in the negative.

Sir, the entire statement is not based on facts. You will be surprised to know that the economic viability has been questioned in the statement. Sindri is the biggest fertilizer factory having a population of 50,000 and Dhanbad is one of the industrial centres having two lakhs of population and the railway line is already there. Stations are already there and the line passes through a locality with 75,000 people and even after that it is the same answer that this area is sparsely populated. May I know from the Railway Minister what is the criterion of coming or jumping to the conclusion that the economic viability would not be there in running the passenger train in that line and that area is sparsely populated? What is the criterion in deciding and coming to the conclusion like this?

SHRI SHEO NARAIN: Sir, a detailed study has been made in connection with the provision of services between Dhanbad and Sindri via Pradhan Khunta Station but it has not been found feasible for the following reasons: