

'h' of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act and can be given or dispensed to a patient only on the basis of Doctor's prescription. It cannot be procured by a patient straight from the retail stores.

Sethusamudaram Canal Project

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*356. SHRI N. DENNIS :
DR. V. RAJESHWARAN :

Will the Minister of TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to have a second look at the Sethusamudram canal project in Tamil Nadu in view of the prevailing circumstances in the region ; and

(b) if, so, whether the scheme is proposed to be examined by a new committee of experts ?

THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT (SHRI BANSI LAL) : (a) and (b) No decision as yet has been taken by Govt, on the report of the committee of experts.

SHRI N. DENNIS : This very important project is kept pending on the shelf gathering dust for the past 125 years, since its first proposal in 1860. It was the answer that no decision is taken by the Government. If the feasibility of the scheme and its utility has been testified by several Committee Reports. Now, ships sailing from the West Coast to the East Coast take circuitous route around Sri Lanka. This project is to deepen the shallow Palk Straits lying between India and Sri Lanka. Implementation of this project would shorten the distance, save time and cost, accelerate the improvements of the ports in the South and stimulate economic and industrial development of this region which is a backward area.

So may I know whether the Government would consider the great importance involved in the project and take immediate decision for its early implementation ?

SHRI BANSI LAL : Sir, the decision will be taken as soon as the consultations are over.

SHRI N. DENNIS : This project has vital national, strategic, security and defence importance. A situation may arise when Indian ships may find it difficult to sail from west coast to east coast. Moreover, the Indian ships now have to go round Sri Lanka and Trincomallee. Trincomallee is known as the Eye of the Indian Ocean, where as many as 800 war ships could be hidden unnoticed, which will be a risk at the time of tension in this area. Moreover, because of the tense situation and changed circumstances in that area, this project has to be considered very seriously for implementation.

MR. SPEAKER : Please put the question.

SHRI N. DENNIS : The implementation of this project is necessary. May I know from the hon. Minister whether immediate steps would be taken for the implementation of the project by taking into consideration the national importance involved.

SHRI BANSI LAL : The national importance in this case is disputed. There are views in this case. As soon as the consultation with all the Ministries concerned are over, we will take a decision.

SHRI P. KOLANDAIVELU : Even while Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was the Prime Minister, he had promised to take up this project ; and after Mr. Nehru, Mrs. Indira Gandhi was there ; and after her, our young dynamic Prime Minister has come. May I know from the hon. Minister—I want a categorical answer from the Minister of Transport—whether he is going to take up this project or not, because it is pending for more than 25 years, It is not a recent programme. It is pending for the last 25 years. Even while I was a Minister in Tamil Nadu, I pressed for it. Even then, you are now saying that an expert committee is going into it ; and you are giving the very same answer. I want a categorical reply.

SHRI BANSI LAL : We are still considering it.

MR. SPEAKER : The hon. Member is

not satisfied with consistency. The Minister's reply is categorically consistent.

Now next question No. 357: Mrs Geeta Mukherji and Mr Gurudas Kamat are not there. Question 358 Dr Chandra Shekhar Tripathi is also not there. Now Mr Raghuma Reddy—Question No. 359.

Cancer due to genetic disorders and environmental pollution

*359. SHRI M. RAGHUMA REDDY : Will the minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the press report appearing in the 'Times of India' dated 21 August, 1985 wherein it has been stated that genetic disorders and environmental pollution together with certain yet unknown causes can make children susceptible to cancer; and

(b) if so, what steps have been taken by the Government to avoid such threat?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Research in cancer is carried on by the Indian Council of Medical Research and the Regional Cancer Centres in the country. Control of Environmental pollution is being coordinated by the Ministry of Environment. To facilitate treatment of cancer, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare have been sanctioning Central assistance to various institutions @ Rs. 50,000/- per centre for setting up of Early Cancer Detection Centres; and in the Seventh Five Year Plan stress is being laid on the imparting of education regarding prevention of this disease.

SHRI M. RAGHUMA REDDY : Cancer is one of the dangerous diseases. I want to know from the hon. Minister how many research centres were established during the 6th five year plan, and how many they are going to establish during the 7th Plan.

SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR : As part of the Cancer Control Programme, we have already set up nine regional Cancer Centres. Three of them were set up in the 5th Plan itself, and six of them afterwards. We do not have any programme at the moment to increase the number of these centres.

PROF. P. J. KURIEN : Are these centres well equipped?

SHRI M. RAGHUMA REDDY : I have yet to put the second supplementary.

PROF. P. J. KURIEN : I am only helping the hon. Member.

MR. SPEAKER : Unsolicited?

SHRI M. RAGHUMA REDDY : Is the government having any proposal to establish a centre in each district headquarters because in rural area, it is very difficult to detect early stages of cancer? The rural poor people are not in a position to go to the State Capitals or Delhi. Is such a proposal there with the government with special request from Andhra Pradesh?

SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR : The hon. member would be interested to know that out of Rs. 20 crores set apart for the cancer control programme in the Seventh Plan, Rs. 18.7 crores are proposed to be distributed to the nine centres already in the country. We have plans in addition to these regional cancer centres for medical college and non-medical college institutions being given teletherapy facilities subject to availability of funds. We are going to give assistance for setting up cobalt therapy units to more centres. We have a central assistance scheme for cancer detection centre under which Rs. 50,000/- are given for setting up of ECD Centre. There are each for hospital tumour registries, 27 early detection centres in the country established with assistance from MOH and with WHO assistance. There are 25 post-partem tests pap-smear centres under the Department of Family Welfare, 6 national cancer registries under ICMR.

SHRI M. RAGHUMA REDDY : My request is whether you are going to estab-