

LOK SABHA DEBATES

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LOK SABHA

Wednesday, July 9, 1980/Asadha 18,
1902 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the
Clock

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Setting up of Solar Energy Commission

*449. SHRI H. N. NANJE
GOWDA:
SHRI M. RAM GOPAL
REDDY:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to set up Solar Energy Commission on the lines of Electronics Commission;

(b) if so, when and what would be its functions, aims and objects; and

(c) how Government propose to derive maximum benefit out of this organisation?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND SPACE (SHRI VIJAY N. PATIL): (a) Various suggestions including that of setting up a Solar Energy Commission have been mooted from time to time; the question of appropriate institutional arrangements for the successful implementation of solar energy programmes is constantly under Government's review.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

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SHRI NANJE GOWDA: Solar energy is the only eternal resource and the only way to have a permanent arrangement to meet the power shortage in the country and augment our national resources. Therefore I would like to know what definite action Government propose to take for conversion of solar energy into electrical energy at a reasonable cost, whether they plan to have any project in collaboration with any other country for such conversion, and if so, the details thereof.

SHRI VIJAY N. PATIL: There are countries like Japan where research has reached an advanced stage. So, we are taking some help from their research acumen. Secondly, it will require some more time for concrete application of solar energy to practical use because the economics of water heating, the photo electric process etc, are still under process, and it is costly at present for practical use. Scientific co-operation agreements covering solar energy have also been entered into with USA, USSR, France, Germany, Australia and Italy.

SHRI NANJE GOWDA: I wanted to know what definite action Government propose to take in this connection, whether they have allotted any money-because it appears from the press that they are going to spend some money on the conversion of solar energy.

private organisations are working in the field of solar energy utilisation.

SHRI VIJAY N. PATIL: A number of institutions in this country like the Central Buildings Research Institute, the Central Salt, Marine & Mineral Research Institute, NCL and some private organisations are working in the field of solar energy utilization.

PROF. N. G. RANGA: Is there any co-ordination?

SHRI VIJAY N. PATIL: Co-ordination is being effected by the Science Technology Department. There is a committee under the chairmanship of an officer of the Science & Technology Department looking after this.

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI): May I just add because the hon. Member has specifically asked about the amount sanctioned, that we have been sanctioning an increasing amount year by year and it is now proposed to step it up substantially to a total of Rs. 65 crores in the Sixth Five Year Plan?

SHRI M. RAM GOPAL REDDY: In view of the depleting coal and other energy giving items and in view of the fact that sun-shine is available in plenty during most parts of the year, I want to know what are the concrete steps being taken and how much time it will take to complete research and development which is in progress in this regard?

SHRI VIJAY N. PATIL: We have come to the demonstration stage. Some demonstrations are being done at various places in the country. It is a long list. I would read out a few. For water heating, it is being done at the Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd. Factory, Hardwar. In Delhi also, it is being experimented at the Qutab Hotel, New Delhi. Solar drying—1 ton per day paddy dryer at Modern Rice Mills, Annamalai Nagar; 10 ton per day grain dryer at State Seed Farm, Ladhawal, Ludhiana. Distillation plant of 5 thousand litres capacity at Awania village in Gujarat is in operation. About Photovoltaic devices, the solar pumping demonstration units in operation are at Awania village, Gujarat; Tejara village, Rajasthan. Then, Community size bio-gas demonstration projects are at Fateh Singh Ka Purwa, U.P., Karim Nagar, Andhra Pradesh, Gajaria Farm vilage, U.P. and Nainital Kashi Vhawanipur. These are some of the demonstrations that are being conducted at different places.

SHRI K. LAKKAPPA: I appreciate that the hon. Prime Minister has stated that a certain amount has been allocated for the setting up of the Solar Energy Commission. From time to time, various institutions are taking up these experiments. In a developing country like India, with an abundance of natural resources, still there is a shortage of hydro-electric power and even thermal power because of shortage of coal and other things. But here is the survey report which has revealed that by 1985 solar energy could be augmented on a large scale in order to meet the entire situation and the power shortage in the country. Therefore, I would like to know from the hon. Prime Minister whether the Government will create an independent national Solar Energy Commission in order to function independently to coordinate all the efforts in this regard so that we can meet the entire situation and ease the situation of power shortage in the country to accelerate the developmental activities in the country.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: Various ideas have been suggested by people about setting up a Solar Energy Commission. However, we do not think that it is necessary to do so at this moment. We have got a Committee to coordinate all the efforts being made. The Science and Technology Department is taking a direct interest in this. We have had several meetings on this subject. We have spoken to the Planning Commission and various other people concerned. I can assure the hon. Member that there is going to be no slackness in pursuing this programme, not only solar energy but wind energy and any other resource that can be used. In our country, Solar energy is available most of the year. Wind is not so regular. But we are fully alive to the situation. Formerly the use of all these resources was considered too expensive. We had resistance from various bodies, even earlier from the Planning Commission for its development because they felt that it was

so much more expensive. But now as the cost of petrol is going up, people are paying greater attention to other resources.

SHRI NIREN GHOSH: Sun is the source of all energy. Naturally, we should try to draw upon it. With regard to various experiments that are being conducted in various parts of the country which have been referred to, may I know whether there is any indication that solar energy can be developed on a commercial basis so that we can apply it to our daily uses to replace petrol and petroleum products. If so, is the Government thinking of any steps in that direction to make available solar energy for immediate use?

SHRI VIJAY N. PATIL: In the immediate future, solar energy will not replace or provide a large part of bulk power generation. So the question of it replacing petrol or diesel does not arise. Its real use will be on a decentralised basis to provide energy where it is needed, particularly in rural areas for grain drying, water heating, pumping for irrigation purpose etc.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: It is already being used, for instance, for water heating, even in some of the big hotels here, in private places and so on. I am sure that its use will grow.

Collaboration with U.S. Container Manufacturing Firm

*450. **SHRI P. M. SAYEED:** Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether U.S. container manufacturing firm is willing to establish production capacities in India with an assured marketing back up;

(b) if so, whether India has agreed to allow the firm to set up the unit in India;

(c) whether industrial experts have welcomed this proposal; and

(d) if so, to what extent this will be advantageous to India?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (SHRI P. VENKATA REDDY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d). Do not arise.

SHRI P. M. SAYEED: I understand that Indian industrialists are not coming forward because of the procedural delays. So, will the Government simplify the procedure so that the Indian industrialists can have this technology by collaboration?

SHRI P. VENKATA REDDY: Already, concessions have been offered to those manufacturing containers; licences have been issued to so many people, but they have not started it so far. So there is no question of collaboration difficulties. Government have agreed to it, but still they are not in a position to manufacture them.

SHRI P. M. SAYEED: People have not come forward on account of the procedural hurdles that are created. That was my first question; I do not know whether the Minister followed it.

My second question is this: it is reported in the press that an American firm is at present prepared to offer certain container manufacturing technology to India in preference to China, which is very keen to have this technology. Will the Government assure the House that proper evaluation will be done—as the container industry's future does not appear to be good—before any agreement is entered into with this firm by Indian industrialists?

SHRI P. VENKATA REDDY: As I have said earlier, there is no use conferring more concessions on those who have come forward to use the container manufacturing technology in this country. As far as the Indian companies are concerned; the Dalmia Industries Ltd. have submitted an application to the Government seeking collaboration with a U.S. firm, which will be considered.