

LOK SABHA

Tuesday, 24th August, 1954.

The Lok Sabha met at a Quarter Past Eight of the Clock

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(See Part I)

9-25 A.M.

STATEMENT RE: FLOODS IN ASSAM, NORTH-BIHAR WEST BENGAL AND UTTAR PRADESH

The Minister of Home Affairs and States (Dr. Katju): It is a matter for deep regret that this year again there have been disastrous floods in the eastern parts of India. Full details about these floods, particularly regarding the extent of damage caused are not yet available, but on the basis of the reports that I have so far received from the State Governments concerned, the position is as follows:—

The worst affected areas are Assam and Bihar where the flood waters have submerged 12,000 and 10,000 square miles respectively. West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh have also suffered heavy damages.

The cause of floods in Assam is stated to be the silting up of the bed of the Brahmaputra which is the main drainage channel. This caused wide-spread floods extending from Sadiya to Dhubri. The first flood occurred in the middle of June and

the second one from early July reaching the peak of its intensity without any appreciable sign of subsidence. In certain areas, the flood levels have crossed the highest recorded flood level of 1931.

Floods in Bihar are mainly due to heavy rains in the Himalayan sub-regions of Nepal and in the Himalaya during the last three weeks of July 1954 which inundated large tracts of Nepal and sent down a large volume of waters into the rivers emanating from Nepal Terai. This combined with local heavy rains in certain parts of the State resulted in floods of very great intensity indeed greater than the floods last year. Gandak and Kosi were in spate and the level of water in these rivers was higher than the recorded high levels reached in 1902 and 1927 respectively. The intensity of floods persisted for about 4 days from 26th to 29th July, 1954 after which the water started receding.

In West Bengal extensive deforestation in Tibet and Bhutan; heavy precipitation of sand and silt in catchment areas of Himalayan rivers and unusual rains that altered the courses of Himalayan rivers, was the cause of floods; while in Uttar Pradesh it was due to the spate in the rivers Rapti, Rohini, Gandak, Ghagra, Ami, Kuanó and Sarju.

In Assam major parts of the districts of Lakhimpur, Sibsagar, Darrang, Nowgong, Kamrup and Goalpara have been affected; while in Bihar the districts worst affected are Purnea, Saharsa, North Monghyr, Darbhanga, Mozzaffarpur and Champaran.

[Dr. Katju]

A total area of over 300 square miles comprising of several towns and villages has been affected in West Bengal; while in Uttar Pradesh the total flood area is estimated to be about 300 square miles comprising of five districts and 2,500 villages.

Fortunately there has not been heavy loss of human life. The number of human lives reported to have been lost so far are 17 in Assam, 29 in Bihar, 9 in West Bengal and one in Uttar Pradesh. No correct reports are available about the loss of cattle in Assam. 60 and 500 heads of cattle are, however, reported to have been lost in Bihar and West Bengal respectively. There has not been any loss of cattle in Uttar Pradesh.

The roads in Assam have been very seriously damaged and would require about Rs. 75.06 lakhs for repairs. There has also been heavy damage to village roads under the local boards and many buildings have been damaged or washed away. Damage to private properties other than crops is estimated to be about Rs. 8 to 10 lakhs. Damages to crops have not yet been estimated.

It has not been possible to judge the extent of damage in Bihar. However, there have been several breaches in railway lines, trunk roads and protective embankments. Damage to the crops is very heavy covering about 12 lakh acres of Bhadai crops and 18 lakh acres of Aghani crops.

In West Bengal as many as 21 roads and bridges have been damaged; railway lines breached at 4 places; 17,000 families have lost their dwelling houses; over 50 thousand acres of paddy land has been damaged. There has also been very heavy loss to timber which has been washed away. Loss of other public and private property may amount, it is estimated, to crores of rupees.

In Uttar Pradesh railway communications were interrupted in Deoria district for a couple of days and two

temporary structures were washed away by floods. The crops have suffered extensively.

Assam Government have sanctioned agricultural loans of Rs. 8,50,000 and gratuitous relief of Rs. 1,18,050 from State revenues and Rs. 1,49,800 from the Governor's Earthquake Relief Fund for gratuitous relief. The relief Committees in collaboration with the District Congress Committees are also rendering help.

In Bihar the State Government are doing their best to render help to sufferers and over 600 relief parties using some 4,000 boats are functioning. All possible medical aid has also been given to flood-affected persons amongst whom food and clothing are also being distributed. Agricultural loans and Natural Calamities loans have also been given.

West Bengal have sanctioned over Rs. 2 lakhs for gratuitous relief in cash; 500 maunds of rice doles; about Rs. 2 lakhs for free housebuilding grants and Rs. 4 lakhs for agricultural loans. In addition they have also distributed cloth, blankets, children's garments, milk powder, multivitamin tablets and other medicines necessary for the relief of affected areas.

Uttar Pradesh Government have spent Rs. 35,000 on gratuitous relief and Rs. 1 lakh on taccavi. Cane Unions have advanced Rs. 1 lakh.

The Government of Assam want a sum of Rs. 90.06 lakhs from the Centre which they propose to spend on gratuitous relief and for repairs of P.W.D. roads/buildings/embankments and village roads, etc. Relief to flood victims will be rendered by them in cash and in kind and also for their rehabilitation.

Bihar have asked for a sum of Rs. 5.48 crores, out of which Rs. 3.42 crores will be as loans and Rs. 2.06 crores will be spent on gratuitous relief as unrecoverable amount. In addition to gratuitous relief, the State Government also propose to organise

hard manual and light manual labour schemes; special medical and veterinary relief; purchase, hire and maintenance of boats and other schemes of relief.

West Bengal want a sum of Rs. 25 lakhs for gratuitous relief and house building purposes. They also require Rs. 1 lakh for repairs of communications.

Uttar Pradesh require a sum of Rs. 25 lakhs of which 50 per cent. is to be treated as loan and 50 per cent. as subsidy. They would spend Rs. 5 lakhs on gratuitous relief and the balance on taccavi loans.

All State Governments have certain flood relief schemes suited to the local needs and conditions of the country which they put into operation as soon as floods start occurring. For example, each flood-affected district is divided into a number of Zones which are placed incharge of Gazetted Officers. Arrangements are also made for storage of foodgrains, etc., at convenient centres from which they can be sent to the flood-affected areas quickly. A large number of Government boats are also kept handy for relief and rescue operations. All arrangements are also made for prevention of epidemics amongst human beings and cattle. Free distribution of food, matches etc., is arranged among needy persons. Services of all categories of Government and public servants in the flood-affected areas are mobilised for the rescue and relief work. Services of Home Guards and Military personnel are also used wherever possible.

Schemes for the prevention of floods as a permanent measure by controlling courses of rivers are under separate consideration as a part of the Five Year Plan. The question of financial assistance asked for by the State Governments is also under urgent consideration. In the meantime, services of experts are being placed at the disposal of the State

Governments where asked for. Arrangements have been made by the Health Ministry to despatch considerable free supplies of milk powder, multivitamin tablets antibiotics and sulphadiazine drugs as also chemicals like D.D.T. to the affected areas. Bleaching powder as asked for has also been supplied to prevent the outbreak of epidemics. A part of these has been given as free gifts by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund and the Indian and League of Red Cross Societies and the rest sent from the Central Medical Stores. 5,000 tons of wheat have been supplied out of the Central stocks to Bihar at concessional rates; while the State Government have also been authorised to issue 5,000 tons of rice at concessional rates out of their stocks. A portion of the subsidy in respect of the latter will be met by the Central Government. 200 tons of rice received as a free gift from Burma have been distributed equally between Bihar and Assam. Requests from other State Governments for medicines, foodgrains and clothing, where received, are also being met.

This, Mr. Speaker, is a note based upon the information which has been received by us up-to-date.

Mr. Speaker: What about the statement proposed to be made by the hon. Minister of Irrigation and Power?

The Minister of Planning and Irrigation and Power (Shri Nanda): Sir, I returned here only last night. If I have additional information to give to the House I will be able to do so in a day or two.

Mr. Speaker: So he will also make a statement. He may take a little more time, but let the statement be fuller.

Shri Nanda: On any additional facts.

Mr. Speaker: So that settles the question.

श्री श्री ७ डी० शास्त्री (साहडोल सिटि) : मंत्री महोदय ने अपने स्टेटमेंट में गौणिक का नाम

[श्री बी० डी० सास्त्री]

लिया है। मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि यह नौगांव विन्च प्रदर्श का है या और कोई है।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : आप पहले वह स्टैमेंट पढ़ लीजिये, उस के बाद सवाल पूछना ही तो पड़ेगा।

I suppose the hon. the Home Minister will supply copies of his statement to the Members, not only to the Office.

Dr. Katju: May I request you to ask the Secretary to do it just now?

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

REPLIES TO MEMORANDA re: DEMANDS FOR GRANTS (RAILWAYS), 1954-55

The Deputy Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Alagesan): I beg to lay on the Table a copy each of certain further statements containing replies to certain memoranda received from members in connection with Demands for Grants (Railways) for 1954-55. [Placed in Library. See No. S-247/54.]

DECLARATION re: ASSIGNMENTS IN INDO-CHINA AND NOTES WITH PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT re: PORTUGUESE POSSESSIONS.

The Deputy Minister of External Affairs (Shri Anil K. Chanda): I beg to lay on the Table a copy of each of the following papers:—

- (i) Declaration by the Government of India accepting assignments in Indo-China. [Placed in Library. See No. S-248/54.]
- (ii) Notes exchanged between the Government of India and the Portuguese Government on the subject of Portuguese possessions in India. [Placed in Library. See No. S-249/54.]

COMPANIES BILL

EXTENSION OF TIME FOR PRESENTATION OF REPORT OF JOINT COMMITTEE.

Shri Pataskar (Jalgaon): I beg to move:

“That the time appointed for the presentation of the Report of the Joint Committee on the Bill to consolidate and amend the law relating to Companies and certain other associations, be extended upto the last day of the first week of the next session.”

Mr. Speaker: The question is:

“That the time appointed for the presentation of the Report of the Joint Committee on the Bill to consolidate and amend the law relating to Companies and certain other associations, be extended upto the last day of the first week of the next session.”

The motion was adopted.

FOOD ADULTERATION BILL—contd.

Mr. Speaker: The House will now proceed with the further consideration of the motion that the Bill to make provision for the prevention of adulteration of food, as reported by the Select Committee, be taken into consideration.

Shri T. K. Chaudhuri (Berhampore): May I ask what happens to item No. 1 in the Supplementary List of Business, regarding the modification of the decision of the Labour Appellate Tribunal?

Mr. Speaker: That will be laid on the Table tomorrow.

Shri Sadhan Gupta (Calcutta-South-East): Yesterday I was developing the point that the Bill, though a very salutary one, could not arouse the general enthusiasm of the country because of the obvious fact that this kind of a Bill would be rendered nugatory by the big interests involved in the production of food. There are many big interests involved in the