

[श्री० वी० जी० देशपांडे]

यह कोई सहअस्तित्व का सिद्धान्त नहीं है जिसके अनुसार हम देख रहे हैं कि गोवा में भारतीयों को कुचला जा रहा है और भारत सरकार चुपचाप देख रही है। सहअस्तित्व का यह तो मतलब नहीं समझा जाना चाहिये कि गोवा की स्वाधीनता के लिए संघर्ष न किया जाये और मैं समझता हूँ कि भारत सरकार को इस तरह के संघर्ष से डरना नहीं चाहिये। हम देख रहे हैं कि इसी कारण काश्मीर के विषय में हम अभी इसी प्रकार की बातें कर रहे हैं कि वहाँ पर जनमत होगा और ऐसा मान कर हम काश्मीर के लोगों को दुविधा और बेकार की परेशानी में डाले हुए हैं। देश के आन्तरिक प्रश्नों के सम्बन्ध में भी हम देखते हैं कि निश्चितता का अभाव है और राज्य पुनर्गठन सम्बन्धी सवाल को लेकर हम देख रहे हैं कि सरकार एक दृढ़ता के साथ और निश्चय के साथ व्यवहार नहीं कर रही है और इस विषय में हमें देश को किस प्रकार से चलाना है उसके लिये कोई निश्चित योजना हमारे सामने मौजूद नहीं है और देखने में आया है कि जहाँ के लोगों ने उपद्रव मचाया और लड़ाई दंगा किया उनकी बात तो हम किसी कदर मान लेते हैं और उनकी मांग के औचित्य को स्वीकार कर लेते हैं लेकिन जो लोग लाठी डंडे से नहीं लड़ते और जो अपनी मांग वैधानिक तरीके से असेम्बली और पार्लियामेंट में उठाते हैं, तो कहा जाता है कि उनकी मांग के पीछे जनशक्ति का अभाव है। प्रेसीडेंट का भाषण जो यहाँ पर हुआ, उसके सम्बन्ध में जब मैंने पंडित जी को बतलाया कि मध्य भारत की असेम्बली में लोगों ने उसका विरोध किया तो वे कहने लगे कि विरोध तो किया लेकिन उन्होंने रास्तेपर आकर फाइट नहीं की। They have not come on streets to fight अगर कोई लिखित दावा देता है कि उनका विरोध है तो उस को कोई मानने के लिये तैयार नहीं है। और वास्तविकता से भागने के लिये एक नई कल्पना सरकार के मन में आई है, एक नया नुस्खा उन के मन में आ गया है कि दो भाषाओं का प्रान्त बना दिया जाये तो देश के अन्दर एक राष्ट्र पैदा हो जायेगा। इस कारण किसी प्रान्त की अगर कोई आपत्ति आई तो उसका मुकाबला करने के स्थान पर सोचने लगे कि भाग कर दूसरे रास्ते से जायें तो ठीक होगा। इस तरह की एस्केपिस्ट मेटैलिटी (बचने की प्रवृत्ति) के कारण देशके आन्तरिक प्रश्नों की भी तरफ जिस प्रकार से देखना चाहिये उस प्रकार से वह नहीं देख रहे हैं और देशका हजारों करोड़

रुपया खर्च कर रहे हैं। देश की कार्यक्षमता तथा भ्रष्टाचार के विषय में मैं बहुत ज्यादा बोलना नहीं चाहता। कुछ ऐसी बातें हैं जिन के ऊपर एक पूरा व्याख्यान हो सकता है। पंचवर्षीय योजना को देखिये, कम्युनिटी प्रोजेक्ट (सामुदायिक परियोजना) के विषय में देख लीजिये, डेवेलपमेंट (विकास) के विषय में या जिस प्रकार से योजनायें चल रही हैं, उन को देख लीजिये। मैं तो समझता हूँ कि इस योजना के खर्च का बड़ा भारी हिस्सा प्रत्यक्ष कार्यों में खर्च नहीं हो रहा है। मेरे पास सरकारी रिपोर्ट है, मैं उस में देखता हूँ कि बहुत जगह पर कुर्छे बनने थे। कुर्छे तो बने नहीं लेकिन कुर्छों के लिये पैसा दे दिया गया। यह रिपोर्टें मैं लिखा हुआ है। इस प्रकार से योजनायें चल रही हैं।

दिल्ली के अन्दर पार्लियामेंट की आंखों के सामने जिस प्रकार की बातें चल रही हैं उन को देख कर भी आश्चर्य होता है। मुझे आज ही पता चला कि जर्नलिस्ट्स को यहाँ कमरे दिये जाते हैं। उन में से एक आदमी को यार्क रोड पर एक कमरा दिया गया। उस को लेने के बाद उस ने सबलेट कर दिया। सबलेट करने के बाद उस कमरे के अलावा उस को दूसरी जगह पर कमरा दे दिया गया और यह कमरा दूसरे को दे दिया गया। मुझे यह देख कर अचम्बा हुआ कि जो जर्नलिस्ट राष्ट्र के सामने आते हैं उन के द्वारा यह हो रहा है। चूँकि आज ही यह चीज मेरे सामने आई है, इस लिये मैंने इस को आप के सामने रख दिया। इस बजट के विषय में मुझे इतना ही कहना है कि आज जिस प्रकार से आप काम कर रहे हैं और जिस प्रकार की चीजें हो रही हैं.....

Mr. Speaker: Then hon. Member must conclude now.

श्री वी० जी० देशपांडे : सदन की इच्छा मेरा भाषण सुनने की होते हुए भी समय कम होने के कारण मैं समाप्त करता हूँ।

REPORT OF JAUNDICE ENQUIRY COMMITTEE—Concl'd.

Mr. Speaker: The House will now take up the discussion of the report of the Jaundice Enquiry Committee. Shri Altkar. I will give hon. Members each five minutes.

Shri Altekar (North Satara): Mr. Speaker, in order to appreciate the position, we should have a picture of the water works and the Najafgarh Nalla. The water works are situated on the upstream side of the city and the Najafgarh Nalla joins the Jamuna river at a distance of about 700 ft. below. This Nalla carries all the rain water and a good deal of sullage and sewage and therefore the waters of the Jamuna are contaminated and it is at so near a place which is only 700 feet below from the intake point.

Now, a suggestion that has been made by the Committee is that immediately the flowing in of this filthy water should be stopped from going into the Nalla and its only function should be what was intended by nature that is that should be a natural drainage for rain water for a catchment area of 200 sq. miles. Therefore, I would like to know whether the Health Minister is taking immediate steps to stop filthy water from flowing into the Nalla.

The next point that is suggested is that there should be some arrangement by which the waters of the river will be going towards the pumping point and that as they are receding towards the other shore, immediate steps should be taken after consulting the Director of Research, Water Works at Poona and that this should be immediately done. I understand that he was here a week ago and he gave some suggestions. Then again the Committee suggest that an anicut should be built across the river so that the level of the river water would be raised and that there would be no sort of suction taken from the Najafgarh Nalla because it would then not affect the intake point.

Another point that is suggested by the Committee is that for the growing population of Delhi, there is a necessity for another alternative reservoir and they suggest that it should be from the Hinden river which is about 10 miles from this place and that its waters are in no way contaminated by filthy water and this arrangement should be taken in hand and the idea of developing the station at Okhla should be given up. In order that water should be carried to Delhi over the Jamuna a new bridge that is to be constructed should have provision made to carry two main pipes of 48" diameter so that it will give pure water to Delhi.

These are the most important suggestions that are made and what has to be done immediately is to see that no filthy

water should, at any rate, join the river Jamuna and it is inhuman that human excreta should flow into the river and there should be no idea of diverting the course of the Nalla say about 2,000 feet downstream, because, the water I would be coming towards the bathing ghats and people would be equally affected by it. The first and foremost thing is that the Najafgarh Nalla should in no circumstances carry filthy water in it. That is the most important and immediate step that should be taken and before June 1956. They suggest that the completion of the work of not allowing to discharge any filthy water into that Nalla should be done before the rainy season. If it is not done before the next rainy season, then what would happen is the same old thing will repeat and Delhi would again be exposed to the grave danger. Therefore, what is now to be done is that these important steps that are suggested by the Committee will have to be undertaken. I submit that these things should be taken into consideration immediately and any sort of discharge into that Nalla should be stopped.

It is said that it is not possible to do all these things in a very short time. If it is so, at the rate, separate drains should be there for the water of sullage and sewage, and that these sewage and sullage waters should be given to the fields in Delhi, and that can be done in two places as suggested by the Committee. That is the most important point if this capital city of India is to get pure and fresh water. Every step must be urgently and immediately taken and all other considerations should be laid aside and this should be regarded as the first and foremost problem.

Dr. Suresh Chandra (Aurangabad): Mr. Speaker, I do not want to go into what has been said in this report and also into the recommendations because the recommendations are before the House, and also before the Ministry. I would like to say only certain things. First of all two things come. One, who was responsible for this contamination of water or for making the population of Delhi drink half sewage and half water for several days? The second, what we should do in future.

It has been said here by some hon. Members that it is no use apportioning the blame on officers or on the Ministries. I feel that if one goes through the report, it will be very clear from the report that no officer, neither of the

[Dr. Suresh Chandra]
Health Ministry nor of the Central P.W.D. nor of the Defence Ministry has realised his full responsibility with regard to this matter.

In one place in the report it has been pointed out that Mr. Katwalla should have seen the results of the chemical analysis on the 11th November. Then, it also says that the Committee is constrained to point out that Mr. Katwalla said that his responsibility started only from the time the water reached the intake point and that the maintenance of the intake channels and of the river was entirely the responsibility of the Central P.W.D. In the same manner, Mr. Sen Gupta, the Executive Engineer of the C.P.W.D. who was in charge of the Water Works Division categorically denied responsibility for maintaining the channels and for deciding the nature of the work. We also see from the report that the Engineer-Secretary has asked for the help of the Defence Ministry and that he had said that for several years it was the Defence Ministry which was responsible for digging the canals and saving water from contamination and the Defence Ministry's help was called and the Defence Ministry did not come to his help. As has been pointed out, it was only after a long time that a bulldozer was sent and that also got stuck up in the mud. In any case, whatever might have happened to the bulldozer, you will find after going through this report that the officers of the Defence Ministry failed in their duty to help in the digging of the canals. I know the Minister is not agreeing with that, but it is very clearly stated in the report.

Another point which is very important is this. There has been no co-ordination whatsoever between the different Ministries. They have been shifting responsibility from one to the other. I feel that it is a criminal negligence on the part of the officers that more than 40,000 people have suffered from this epidemic. It is very easy to say that it is not a matter for this Ministry or that, but for those who have lost their lives, the responsibility lies with the officers and the people who were at the time in charge of these departments. It is no use saying that this did not happen or that did not happen or putting forward such excuses. The fact remains that in this modern city, capital of India, where so many high dignitaries come and so many foreigners come, we supplied half urine, that is, half sewage and half water. This is a matter of disgrace

and shame for all those who have been in charge of the departments.

This report of the Committee is not enough. I demand another enquiry, a full-fledged enquiry, into the conduct of the officers who were in charge of these departments at that time—all the three or four Ministries who were responsible for this.

Another thing which I would like to say is this. The Committee has recommended that there should be a unitary authority to control water and other civic matters. This recommendation must be implemented as early as possible.

I have nothing more to say. But I feel again that some responsibility must be fixed on those people who were in charge so that this thing may not be repeated. It is no use saying that the blame has to be apportioned. I do not want to apportion blame. After all, this thing has happened. It has happened also at another place in our country, at Bombay. Today's paper says that a decomposed body was found in the water duct in Bombay. It has been said that it is something unheard of in the world. It is no use saying that this virus could not be controlled by the authorities. There are remedies for it. The Health Ministry and the Government knew since 1947 about the existence of Najafgarh Nalla; they knew very well that new colonies were coming up; they knew also that sewage was getting into the water and also that this Nalla was there and 700 feet downstream the water reservoir was there. It has been stated very clearly in the report, and if one reads it carefully, he will find that Government knew about this even on the 4th November. In any case the danger of contamination has been admitted in the report since 1947. I would like to know that steps the Government have taken and the officers of these departments have taken in the matter when they know definitely that sewage was getting into the water. Therefore, something must be done. I do not consider that a Parliamentary Commission is necessary, but a further enquiry must be held so that such a thing may not be repeated in this country.

Shri V. P. Nayar (Chirayinkil): I have very carefully read this report. There is not the least doubt that all the authorities are collectively to blame. The Delhi State Government is responsible for that; the Joint Board is responsible for that; more.

than anybody else, the Central Government is also responsible for that. What I am amazed at the conduct of the Government is that when the epidemic was taking a very heavy toll, as reported in all the papers, the Government of India chose to come before the public and issue a Press Note, one of the most foolish Press Notes I have ever seen. After hundreds and thousands of people have had this attack, the Government of India comes forward and tells the people—I am reading from the Press Note of the 5th January—that the outbreak on the whole has been relatively mild and the total reported dead till January 4 was 22. It would appear that the Government regret that the attack was mild and only 22 people died. It is not a very small matter. Four lakhs of people were infected and if all of them did not get visible symptoms of infective hepatitis, it was because they had some power of resistance. In Madras when there was a jaundice epidemic, there were more cases of deaths. The proportion was even more, naturally because down in the South the comparative resistance of the people is poor due to their conditions of nourishment. It is idle to contend that because the seeds of infective hepatitis were available for transfer from people to people and because the Najafgarh Nalla was not kept in proper order, it had resulted in this. This is a cruel joke. I was reading this report. What is worse is this. You will find that all possible and known methods of decontaminating the water were not adopted with as much care as possible. In the report you will find that what little control they exercised, chlorination or dechlorination or any other process, was not capable of ensuring any viral purity—it was the doctor's report. The virus was there. The contamination by bacteria may have been prevented. But, you read the report. I think almost every man who knew anything about public health engineering would agree that this process will not result in annihilating virus. The Press Note of the 5th January says that this process, that is chlorination, dechlorination and every other process, has normally existed and is sufficient to destroy the virus of ineffective hepatitis. I ask: could there be a better way of misguiding the people? The Government Press Note starts by saying that the infection is mild. The people were really panicky; Press reporters went to the place and here I hold a paper in my hands which states that on the 4th January, Mr.

Cohen, correspondent of a very res-

ponsible paper, visited the spot and there he found that carcasses of dead animals and other filth were still lying on the sandy Jumna bank only a few hundred yards from the water works. Only this week I was told by a Press correspondent that he had taken photographs even as late as 4th or 5th January 1956, the day on which the Press Note was released. One found the dead bodies of animals a few yards from the place where water was being sucked. If the Health Minister was not here those days, I can perfectly understand her sympathies. She came back to Delhi and in her Press Conference she blamed, not the Government, not the officials, but she says that part of the blame must be placed on the shoulders of the people. Why? Because of their unclean habits. Again I am relying on a passage of the *Statesman* of the 11th January where the Minister of Health is reported to have said, "She, however, partly blamed the people for not co-operating with the authorities". This is a case of jaundice having taken very heavy toll.

As I go through the report, I find that some of the most fundamental requirements are not being complied with. For example, on holidays there was no chemical analysis of water—Is there any rule in nature that the virus or bacteria will not infiltrate into water on a holiday? It is very specifically said that on holidays there was no chemical examination. Even when there was a chemical examination, the chemical examiner's report has taken five days to reach from one office to another. There is a clear indication that on the 12th November, the chloride content increased from 5 parts to 25 parts per million and on the 15th November; it came to 90 parts per million. What this report says is very clear. Extraneous matter was in the water. Whether it is virus or bacteria is not a matter for the people to know. It is for the public health authorities, the Central Government and the State Government to know. When the chlorine content has gone up, it is a clear symptom of contamination in water. To say that some intervening holidays were there and so the results of the chemical examination could not be communicated—I think it is something which must make every man who took that plea hang his head in shame. It is a case where many people lost their lives and many are still suffering. Delhi has been the distributing centre for this disease. Even on these

[Shri V. P. Nair]

crucial days, you find how the red tape puts hurdles. There was a telephone call from one Ministry to another. Some officer was away from Delhi on a pleasure trip or picnic and another officer was not available. The result is that water was allowed to be contaminated and people were allowed to suffer and die. I only say that this is not a matter for an enquiry like this. I say that every man responsible for this from the highest to the lowest, should be given a sack for this one reason that it has resulted not merely in anxiety but in death of a large number of people.

I understand that many Government servants were forced to be in bed owing of this attack for weeks and months. Especially so is the case of class IV servants who were more exposed to this attack and they had no leave. They did not get jaundice on account of any of their faults. It was only due to the criminal negligence of the authorities that they had to be in bed. When they applied for leave for the period they were actually in bed and when they were certified to have been in bed by the doctors, should not they be granted leave? So, Government should pass an order that all Government servants who are in bed with jaundice will not only get their pay as if they were on duty but also get the entire cost of the treatment which they were forced to undergo due to the criminal negligence of the Government and the subordinate officers.

Shri Gidwani (Thana): I shall only invite the attention of the House to page 6 of the report wherein it is said:

"Thus, if the total number of jaundice cases in Delhi is computed as 20,000, and the total number of manifest cases of infectious hepatitis is 40,000, i.e. including fever cases due to this infection but without manifest jaundice, the total infections will be considerably larger; may be five or ten times or even more. Assuming that the ratio is 1 to 10, the total infections are about 400,000 in a total population of 18 lakhs. The size of the epidemic has, therefore, been very considerable indeed."

I am thankful to the committee for giving these figures. Apart from jaundice there are other symptoms of this disease also. There were many people who could not eat, sleep, etc. and there were people who suffered from various other complications during the incubation period when the disease is not manifest. One does not know how many

people have suffered and how many are still suffering and how many people will hereafter suffer. Cases are being reported even now. It is a very serious matter. I do not think that this is enough. This report has given us enough material but I do hold that another important committee may be appointed by the Central Government. The former committee was appointed by the Chief Commissioner of the Delhi State and there were two doctors but both were Government officials. The Delhi Medical Association requested the Government to nominate one of their representatives but I am told that their request was turned down on the ground that the proposal was made too late. This is not a party matter. This is a matter which requires thorough investigation because the damage done is so colossal and great that we want further information on the point.

The other thing is about the military aid. I am sorry to say this. We have all praise for our military but this is what the report says—on page 34:

"Mr. Katwalla was emphatic in his statement that the Army authorities let them down. Mr. Mehta would not certainly go so far. But he said that, if he had received the same spontaneous help from the Army authorities on the present occasion as he did in 1953 and as he hoped he would, the tragedy would have been averted."

I wanted to emphasise these words. If he had received help from the military authorities, the tragedy would have been averted. That means so many people who had suffered immensely would have been saved to much misery and sufferings.

These are matters which require thorough investigation. Therefore, I would suggest to the hon. Minister one way out. There is nothing lost if a committee is appointed. There is no question of prestige. We should be satisfied that we get good drinking water. Thousands of foreigners are living here and so many foreign embassies are here. All should be satisfied that we are taking every care to keep the city clean and give them clean water.

I am told and it also finds a place in the report that Government has received medicines for injection. The doctors, it seems, were asked whether they were willing to undertake to do injections on Rs. 10 per day. Some of them, I am told, refused to do so and they said that they were willing to do this

work free in their dispensaries if the medicines were sent there and the patients were asked to go there. About a lakh of inoculation tubes are there, it seems. I want to know how much of this has been utilised, and also whether the offer of the doctors has been accepted or not.

I would again say that it is not a party matter nor is it a matter of privilege. It is not a matter of Government versus people. It is a human problem and a matter of life and death. We do hope and appeal to her to agree to the appointment of another committee and to see that Delhi becomes free from such troubles.

डा० एस० एन० सिंह (सारन पूर्व) :
अध्यक्ष महोदय, इस पीली किताब में यह पूरा जिक्र दिया गया है कि किस प्रकार दिल्ली नगर में इस पीत रोग या पांडू रोग का उद्भव हुआ और इसके बाद न सिर्फ भारत वर्ष में बल्कि सारे संसार में बिखेर दिया गया। यह समय गुस्सा करने का नहीं है। यह बड़े दुःख का विषय है। कल जब हमारे भाई नायर साहब बोल रहे थे तो मैं सोचता था कि यह हमारी सरकार का क्या रवैया था। और मैं तो एक बात जोर के साथ कह देना चाहता हूँ कि हमारे सुरक्षा मंत्री अपने सेक्रेटरी को एक अशोक पदक उस के लिये प्रदान करें जो कि उन्होंने किया, और हमारी स्वास्थ्य मंत्राणी जी से मेरा अनुरोध है कि जिन अफसरों ने यह काम किया है उनको काम से कम पदमश्री तो जरूर देना चाहिए क्योंकि यह सारे संसार में एक अद्भुत काम हुआ है। देश और विदेश में इसके कारण हमारा सिर शर्म से झुक जाता है। यह मिसाल सारे संसार के इतिहास में अद्वितीय है। इसके कारण सारे संसार के आगे हमारा सिर लज्जा से झुक गया है। लोग कहते हैं कि यह प्रकृति का प्रकाप था। यह गलत बात है। आप देखें कि इस रिपोर्ट में लिखा है कि :

“One is constrained to remark that the people of Delhi were drinking half sewage and half river water”

यह सीवेज भी कैसा था। उनको मालूम हुआ कि क्लोराइड ५ पर सेंट से बढ़ कर १२ पर सेंट हो गया। उसके बारे में रिपोर्ट में लिखा है :

“The only sources of chloride was the sewage charged with the urine of man and cattle”

यह तो आप का रवैया है और जितनाकुसूर

है उसे आप प्रकृति पर मढ़ना चाहते हैं और कहते हैं कि साहब हम क्या करें। हम अपनी जान के लिए इस हद तक आपके सेक्रेटरियों पर निर्भर हैं यह मुझे इससे पहले नहीं मालूम था। मुझे यह नहीं मालूम था कि हम सांस भी आपकी अनुकम्पा के कारण ले पाते हैं। इसके लिए आपको बहुत धन्यवाद है।

जब उनको यह खराबी मालूम हुई तो उन्होंने पानी में ऐलम (फिटकिरी) मिला दिया और कहा कि इस पानी को पीयो और मरो तो अपने भाग्य से और जिम्मे तो अपने भाग्य से, इससे हमें क्या लेना देना है।

6 P.M.

इस तरह की गैर-जिम्मेदारी अगर इन मंत्रालयों में चले तो मैं सिर्फ यही कहूंगा कि अगर उन्हें गांधी जी का ज़रा भी ख्याल हो और ज़रा भी उनकी याद आती हो तो जिम्मेदार अफसरान को शमिदा होना चाहिए और जिम्मेदारी के पदों से हट जाना चाहिये। पानी की व्यवस्था के लिये यह दोनों मंत्रालय अर्थात् स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय और सुरक्षा मंत्रालय जिम्मेदार हैं और जब डिफेंस सेक्रेटरी से पानी की व्यवस्था ठीक करने के काम में मदद मांगी जाती है और उनको खत लिखा जाता है तो उनका जवाब आता है कि हमारे पास उस काम को करने के लिए आदमी नहीं है। हमारे पास तोपें हैं, बन्दूकें हैं लेकिन आदमी नहीं है और इस तरह वह बात वहीं पर खत्म हो जाती है। इस तरह के महत्वपूर्ण कार्य में जहां कि लाखों इन्सानों के स्वास्थ्य का सवाल हो चिट्ठी बाजी से काब लिया जाता है और टेलीफोन के द्वारा इस मामले को हल नहीं कि जाता। उस पानी की व्यवस्था के ठीक होने ११ दिन लग जाते हैं और ११ दिन तक आप दिल्ली के निवासियों को गंदा पानी पिलाते हैं। मैं अधिक न कह कर सिर्फ यही कहूंगा कि ऐसा वाक्या सारे संसार के इतिहास में और कभी नहीं हुआ। आपने जब यह मान लिया कि वाकई इस तरह की खराबी आई जिसकी कि वजह से दिल्ली में इतनी बीमारी फैली तो आपको उसके लिए जिम्मेदारी स्वीकार करनी चाहिए और जब आप अपने पाप को स्वीकार करते हैं तो गांधी जी के रास्ते को अपनाते हुए यदि आप उस जिम्मेदार के स्थावक के क्राबिल न हों तो चुपचाप वहां से इस्तीफा देकर हट जायें और सिर्फ इतना हि नहीं बल्कि जिन आदमियों ने यह काम किया हो, उनको भी सचेत हो जाना चाहिए और उनक लिए भी

[डा एस० एन० सिंह]

अच्छा है कि वे अपने पदों से हट जायें क्योंकि यह सब को पता लग गया है कि यह पीलिये का रोग दिल्ली में क्यों हुआ और कैसे हुआ। यही जनता की मांग है कि कम से कम वे अधिकारीगण जो कि पानी की व्यवस्था को ठीक बनाये रखने के जिम्मेदार हैं और बड़ी बड़ी तनख्वाहें पाते हैं, वे उन पदों पर न रहें। ऐसे अफसरान को रख कर के, जो यह नहीं समझते कि पानी में क्लोराइड की मात्रा अगर पांच प्रतिशत से ज्यादा हो जायेगी तो वह स्वास्थ्य के लिए कितना हानिकर हो सकता है और क्लोराइड की मात्रा अधिक हो जाने से कितने लोगों की जानें गईं, में समझता हूँ कि कभी भी जनता का हित नहीं हो सकता है क्योंकि उन्हीं के कारण हजारों लोग बीमार पड़े। इस तरह का शर्मनाक वाक्या इसके पहले कभी नहीं पेश आया था, हमारे इतिहास में इसके पहले घटित नहीं हुआ था और मैं समझता हूँ कि संसार के इतिहास में भी ऐसी घटना घटित नहीं हुई होगी। आप अपने अधिकारियों को उनके अच्छी तरह काम करने के लिए स्वर्ण पदक दें, अशोक चक्र प्रदान करेया और भी तरह से उनको पुरस्कृत करें, मुझे उसमें कोई आपत्ति नहीं है लेकिन इतना निवेदन मेरा जरूर है कि अगर वे गांधी जी के मार्ग के अनुयायी हैं तो उन्हें उन जिम्मेदार अधिकारियों को उन पदों से छुट्टी ले लेनी अथवा दे देनी चाहिए।

The Minister of Defence (Dr. Katju): Mr. Speaker, very many unkind things have been said about the army authorities.

Shri Kamath: Not 'unjust' if 'unkind'.

Dr. Katju: Sir, I do not want to take more than five minutes and would ask for a little indulgence.

No one can be more sorry or aggrieved than I as to the results but let us not mix up what has now been discovered or what happened afterwards with the position on the date when it happened. So far as the Army is concerned, it is not its responsibility to conduct water works and all that. The responsibility of the Army is to go to the rescue or to respond to the call of the civil authorities whether it is for maintenance of law and order or for meeting any emergency. I say with pride that the record of the Army in this respect has been great. In the Punjab, a few months ago, there were floods. You go and see what they did. You go to Orissa where, again, there were floods. The Orissa Government has said that they did their job well. My

hon. friends here have read from the Report one sentence here and one sentence there. In the first place I am not apportioning blame to anybody—this Committee consisting of great public health authorities and a retired Judge has pointed out that at first no one ever apprehended contamination. What they were trying to protect against was shortage of water supply. The Jamuna was changing its course and therefore, they were apprehending that water may not find its way into the water works.

On the 6th of November a letter was sent to the Defence Secretary saying: "Please give us some help in order to make or cut a canal". To that an answer was sent on the 8th or 9th. Now, I do not want to take much of your time, Mr. Speaker, by reading it. The contents of that letter are quoted at page 26. Three reasons are given there: firstly, that our engineers are not here and, therefore, it will take time which will involve some delay; secondly the nearest place from where we can get machinery is Gwalior and thirdly, the Secretary said: "I have come to know that the Central P.W.D. has got all the equipment and so, please approach them."

Shri V. P. Nayar: That was on the fourth day.

Dr. Katju: So far as this letter is concerned, at page 34 of this Report, paragraph 73, the findings of the Committee are given. This is not my argument but it is the finding of the Committee which says:

"The letter of the Secretary to the Defence Ministry gives cogent reasons...."

I emphasise "gives cogent reasons.."

Dr. Lanka Sundaram (Vishakhapatnam): May I interrupt you? Why don't you quote the paragraph where they have said that they are short of men and machinery?

Dr. Katju: I would request the hon. Member to please sit down for a moment. The Committee goes on to say:

"... why the Army authorities could not come to the rescue of the Joint Water and Sewage Board earlier than they did. The Committee is satisfied that no blame can be attached to the Army authorities."

Then afterwards, on the 12th of November—there was a telephone message. As soon as we got it we set to

work. I have read the evidence and I have read all the relevant papers. By the earliest possible time—on the 15th—we went there. We sent the machinery and we sent our jawans. There were about 100 in number. They worked there night and day. Everybody has quoted that the bull-dozer got stuck as if there was only one bulldozer. There were four bulldozers. My respectful submission is this. Supposing you go in a motor car and the motor car breaks down, that is not the fault of anybody who keeps the car. This bulldozer, I am told was actually operating for the whole night and after about 12 hours' work it got into the mud and got stuck in the mud. It did not break down. It was pulled out and it began functioning. Then the second bulldozer arrived, the third bulldozer arrived and fourth bulldozer also arrived.

My only point is this: Something horrible happened; I realise that. But, it has now been discovered that the contamination may possibly have occurred either between the 10th and 16th of November or the Committee says it may have occurred earlier and the results began to be apparent after the period of incubation—which period was about 30 days. Therefore, about the middle of December, jaundice cases began to occur and we all know what actually happened. My suggestion is that the hon. Members who are trying to apportion blame should not do so by the subsequent events. They should place themselves in the position of the persons, whose conduct they are considering, on that date, the 6th of November. On the 8th of November, the Secretary, Defence Ministry, wrote that letter and he immediately sent a copy of that letter to the sister Ministry dealing with Central P.W.D. He said: "This is what I have written. Will you kindly communicate with them?" That is all that I have got to say. The Army laments what happened but where is the Army to blame in this matter? I am trying to answer my hon. friend Dr. S. N. Sinha. If my resignation will promote the purity of water there is no harm, but the Army is not to be blamed.

Dr. Lanka Sundaram: How long would it take to bring equipment from Gwalior to Delhi?

Dr. Katju: It will take two days. The engineers were not there. They were working in NEFA. My hon. friend, Dr. Lanka Sundaram, pretends to be all wise. We know he is a very wise man, but it is no use putting this question today. No one knew of the emergency of

the matter on the 6th or on the 8th November. We are now applying the knowledge that we have gained from reading this report. So, to say now that this thing could have been done or that thing could not have been done is not correct.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Shri Mohanlal Saksena (Lucknow Distt. cum Bara Banki Distt.) : *rose*.—

Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava (Gurgaon): Five minutes for each Member were allowed.

Mr. Speaker: Yesterday, I said that 20 minutes will be allowed to the hon. Minister. One hour was fixed for both the Minister and the hon. Members. We found that the time was not sufficient and so it was extended for one more hour. So, even yesterday, I told the House that the hon. Minister would be given 20 minutes. Therefore, it is too late. Enough has been said by now.

Shri Mohanlal Saksena: The time may further be extended. It is a very serious matter, and so the time may be extended by at least half an hour. I move that the time be extended.

Shri S. C. Samanta (Tamluk): I second the proposal. The time may be extended.

Mr. Speaker: I cannot extend the time. Enough has been said. Let us hear the hon. Minister.

Dr. Lanka Sundaram: On a point of order. An hon. Member has moved a formal motion that the time may be extended. It was duly seconded by another hon. Member. Please give your ruling or take the vote of the House.

Mr. Speaker: I think it is a dilatory motion. I am not going to allow it.

Shri Mohanlal Saksena: I should like to put a question before the hon. Minister begins her reply. I do not blame anybody for what happened on the 9th November or 15th November. But the officials knew that there had been contamination or that there might have been contamination, and still, they did not issue any communique saying that, because of that disease which came in the form of epidemic, at least water should be boiled before drinking. At least this instruction should have been given. I may tell you from my experience that very early in December, I was informed

[Shri Mohanlal Saxena]

by one of the homoeopaths that the water got contaminated. Still, the Director of Health Services said that there were only 7,000 cases and added that there might be a "few more cases", where the people might have gone to v aids and hakims. I want to say this: it is not a "few more." It was not 6,000 or 7,000 but the number came to 40,000. At least about 33,000 cases had been dealt with by private v aids, etc. Even the statement that about 7,000 cases had come to notice was issued only after the appointment of the Enquiry Committee. Even on that date, the Director of Health Services said that there were only 7,000 cases. I want to know how and why this statement was issued. It only shows the attitude of the authorities, as well as the attitude of the Health Minister.

The Minister of Health (Rajkumari Amrit Kaur): I rise to reply to the debate with very great sorrow, because no one has been more upset and sad than I have been about this epidemic. Naturally, with my love and sympathy for suffering humanity, I do not want to see any extra suffering ever coming into my picture. I think there is some misunderstanding in the minds of the Members who have spoken as regards the constitution of the Delhi Joint Water and Sewage Board. It is under the Chief Commissioner. There are four members from the Delhi Municipal Committee who are elected by that Committee; one member of the Delhi Civil Lines Notified Area Committee; one member who is a citizen of Delhi. These are all non-officials. Then there is a member who is nominated by the Officer-Commanding, Delhi Independent Brigade. Further there are two persons nominated by the Central Government, namely the Superintending Engineer of the Delhi State, C.P.W.D., and a Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of Finance. Then, by convention, the Health Minister of the Delhi State is always invited to attend the meetings of the Board. The Municipal Engineer of the Delhi Municipal Committee is also invited likewise. Therefore, it is a body on which one places a certain amount of reliance and of which the majority are non-officials.

I have of course listened with very great attention to the speeches that have been delivered by the hon. Members. Many angry things have been said and I do not blame them for being angry, because the situation has been an extremely unfortunate one. The Enquiry Committee's report has dealt with all the

points. I felt that in order to satisfy public opinion an enquiry should be made and I asked the Chief Commissioner, Delhi, to have a committee appointed. I got two of our best sanitary engineers to serve on that committee as well as a retired judge of a high court so as to see that that committee could command public confidence. The Enquiry Committee's report is a very valuable document and I would like to express here my gratitude to the Chairman and members of the committee for so quickly dealing with all the references that had been made to them. Of course many Members have taken sentences out of the report and quoted them which is not always fair. But I think in the report it has been indicated quite clearly that there were circumstances which could not possibly have been anticipated and there were factors beyond human control which led to the outbreak of the epidemic. This point has not been stressed enough or has not been perhaps appreciated by the Members. Again, I do not blame them nor do I wish—I am not that type of person—to shift the blame from my shoulders on to anybody else's, even though I myself am not connected with the Joint Water and Sewage Board officially. But I can say this: whenever any bodies who are in Delhi come to me for help, I take immediate action. It is always very easy to be wise after an event, though in saying so I am not minimising the gravity of the situation in Delhi in the months of December and January. But I would like to ask all of you dispassionately to consider all the relevant facts of the case. There were unprecedented floods in the Jamuna and this great river changed her course quite unexpectedly and receded over 2,200 yards overnight, as it were; with the result that the main stream of water shifted from the west to the east bank, and we were faced with a stupendous problem of maintaining the water supply. Now, emergency measures were taken and you have seen from the report what the actual position of the water supply was in the month of November. The Board was faced with the problem of either stopping the water supply completely for Delhi, which naturally even the committee has recognised was an impossible measure, or to take all possible steps to stop bacterial or such infection as they could. I have to admit that viral infection was really not thought of, because it is not a thing that everybody knows and viral contamination in this instance was the first of its kind that has ever taken place in the world. There again I am not pleading for considering

the unprecedented nature of the events that took place as extenuation for what has happened. But what I say is that we should not easily be led away into making unjustifiable criticism because of the gravity of the epidemic. There were, as a matter of fact, cases of infection even before.

Shri Kamath: Please turn to page 21 which says something about contamination.

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur: I know there was contamination. But there were cases of infectious hepatitis in Delhi even before this epidemic. There has been a steady rise in these cases not only in Delhi but in many towns of India, and because I was aware of the rise in the whole of India, I had actually asked the Indian Council of Medical Research to carry out research on the problem.

My friend opposite, Shri Kamath, with his characteristic—what shall I say—

Shri Kamath: Don't say:

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur:—over-dramatisation, on which is part and parcel of him, has exaggerated the mortality rate.

He exaggerated the mortality rate by saying that thousands and thousands of people have died.

Shri Kamath: Hundreds.

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur: All right, hundreds. All the official records in my possession . . .

Shri Kamath: I do not say official records are lies, but something else.

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur: All the records in my possession, and death records are fairly accurate . . .

Shrimati A. Kale (Nagpur): One small child also was a patient.

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur: If we take the total number of infections, according to the report, as 400,000, the deaths have been under 100 in Delhi. The incidence of the disease was certainly high but it was mild from the point of view of its severity. Special instructions were issued to the hospitals to admit all cases; not a single case; as far as I know, was refused admission in any hospital in the city. Separate wards were allotted,

If any officials are found to be responsible for this in any way, the Chief Commissioner is enquiring into everything and it is within his right to take any action. But in my opinion, many things like this can happen without anyone's fault but it is a pointer to the unsatisfactory state of affairs that exists. There is no doubt in my mind—the criticism has been made by several Members—that the diversity of authorities dealing with civic and other problems in Delhi is one great reason for the lack of co-ordination and for the fact that it is difficult to assign responsibility . . .

Dr. Lanka Sundaram: How do you propose to stop it?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur: I am divulging no secret; ever since I have been Health Minister, I have tried and tried to have a single authority to deal with this evergrowing and complicated problem of Delhi; and, if I have not succeeded to the extent that I wanted or that I consider necessary, it is not for want of endeavour. After partition, refugee colonies sprang up and sprang up—in spite of my advice, unfortunately—haphazardly and indiscriminately with no proper drainage and sewage arrangements.

It is perfectly true that this Najafgarh Nalla, about which we have heard so much, was always meant to be a storm water channel; but it was made to serve as a sullage canal, with disastrous results. This has rightly been pointed out by this committee. But now, the point is primarily what steps are to be taken to see that such a thing does not happen again. I have asked for the services of Shri Modak of the Bombay Corporation to advise me on the immediate steps to be taken.

Dr. Lanka Sundaram: Am I to take it that there is to be no unified control now?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur: As far as the water question is concerned, there must be speedy and expeditious action and I am doing the utmost in my power to go ahead with it. Action has already been taken to divert the sullage from the Najafgarh Nalla by the provision of outfall sewers and to erect treatment plants at a cost of Rs. 1.4 crores west and north of Delhi. These works will be carried out expeditiously.

I entirely agree with my friend Dr. Lanka Sundaram; he has made some very valuable suggestions regarding changing the location of the Wazirabad pumping station. He said it should be

[Rajkumari Amrit Kaur] shifted further upstream. This matter has already engaged my attention and I would like to associate him with the discussions on the subject. In fact, I would like all Members of Parliament who are interested in what is being done to come to my Ministry and talk those things over with me to see what we are doing.

Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava: The Ministry was not accessible for three days; Rome was burning and the Ministry was fiddling.

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur: My Ministry is not even connected with it. I cannot do anything until I am told that the water is contaminated. Can I? The moment it came to my notice, I took immediate action. On that very day I had a conference with all the persons concerned with it.

Dr. Suresh Chandra: When did it come to your notice?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur: The news about contamination came to my notice on the 15th. At once I summoned a conference.

As far as the analysis of the water is concerned, some Members asked, "when the percentage of chloride content was found to be high, did they not suspect that the water had been contaminated?" There was evidence of chloride but none of nitrates or nitrites and therefore, they hoped that there had been no contamination.

I am perfectly willing to admit that it has been a very unfortunate situation. I agree with my friend Shri Krishnan Nair, that apportioning blame is not a wise thing to do when sometimes circumstances get the better of one. I can assure the House that if anybody has been wholly negligent, we should see that he is dealt with and we have to put the position right, so that in future nothing of this kind can happen. I can assure the House that already I have taken such actions as I can on the recommendations of the committee; I wish to go still further and see what can be done in order to improve the position. I remember how in order to see that there was no bacteriological infection of the water we were working night and day with the Defence Ministry at our elbow. I would like to join with my colleague, the Defence Minister, and say that no particle of blame attaches to the Defence Ministry. The moment they said that their personnel were not here, we at once got

the C.P.W.D. machinery, but unfortunately that did not work satisfactorily. Therefore, the very next moment we appealed to the Defence Ministry again and they sent their people at once and they were working night and day. When this very responsible committee says that there were very cogent reasons why the army could not come at first and also that they are in no way to blame, I think the House should accept that finding.

Shri V. P. Nayyar: Did not the Defence Ministry take four days to reply to your Ministry's letter asking for help?

Dr. Katju: No.

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur: No; they replied at once.

Shri V. P. Nayyar: Your Ministry's letter is dated the 5th and the Defence Ministry's reply is dated the 9th.

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur: My Ministry's letter may be dated anything; my Ministry does not work always by correspondence. We telephoned to the Defence Ministry and we immediately got the reply that their personnel were not here. Then we went to the C.P.W.D. and with all the equipment that they had, we went ahead. I would like to say this: if the water could have been pumped successfully with the machinery at our disposal quickly enough, there would have been no contamination. It was only because the channels that were built up with the machinery at our disposal broke down that we could not pump out the water and the water from the Najafgarh Nalla contaminated the drinking water. I am very sorry about it and I can only apologise to this House for what has happened. As far as my own Ministry is concerned, we did what was in our power the moment we were apprised of the situation and I will continue my efforts to see to it that these things do not happen again and that the Delhi public does get the water that it needs. I also agree that sullage and sewage should not go into the river—this question was raised on the floor of the House some time ago—because our people go and bathe in the Jamuna. I have been time and again asking people not to bathe in the river because I feel that because of the lack of proper drainage and sewage this water is not pure. Even today there is another drain near Rajghat where sullage goes into the river. I do not like it. I want to take

precautions against it. Something may be evolved whereby sewage plants, which will make the sullage innocuous, are installed or the sewage is diverted into other channels. I have gone into the question of sub-soil water. That is so contaminated that I cannot possibly use it. We have been exploring every avenue. We have been sanctioning money for the necessary works. I would once again assure the House that I will do whatever is in our power and I will take the members of the House into confidence at every turn. But I would ask them to help me to find out how we can best battle against the problem, which is a very big one. I repeat it is not a small problem. Facilities for drainage and sewage and the equipment necessary for it have not gone up *pari passu* with the increase in population and the enormous number of people that are coming in and with the amount of drainage and sewerage that is necessary to cope with the sanitation of Delhi. My friend Mr. Nayar, has talked about a press conference that I gave. But again, as I said, a remark that I made was torn out of . . .

Shri Kamath: Must have been misrepresented!

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur: It was torn out of its context because I said infective hepatitis comes not only from contaminated water but also from contaminated food. And when I ask the public to co-operate with me as far as not eating contaminated food is concerned, I do not get the co-operation that I need. Sir, I would not like to take much more time but I would request the members of this House to recognize that it was a very difficult situation and circumstances beyond our control were responsible for it and I apologize for this epidemic having come. But I also plead with them to help me to see that such things do not happen again.

Dr. Lanka Sundaram: Can I have an assurance from the Minister that she will take up at the Cabinet level the question of creating one unified authority for this matter, cutting across constitutional, procedural and other tangles?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur: I have already taken up this question. Now there has been an interim development authority formed which is seeing to all things of

this nature. The other question—the States reorganisation—will come up shortly. But as far as water is concerned, I can give an assurance to the Members that this will be the Centre's responsibility.

Shri Kamath: On a point of information. What action is being taken against the officers or authorities who have been proved to be grossly negligent by the Committee? What action has been taken?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur: As I said at the beginning before I began addressing the House, that matter is before the Chief Commissioner, who is the Chairman of the Joint Water and Sewage Board. It has nothing to do with my Ministry and I am not responsible.

Shri V. P. Nayar: He is also responsible.

Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava: I want an assurance that if there are emergencies and calamities and the matter is very urgent then the Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries and the Minister herself would be accessible to those who want their help and guidance in overcoming them. In this case, on page 27 the whole thing has come out. I want an assurance that they will all be available.

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur: I am in my office on every holiday. I am never absent. The chemical analysis is done in the laboratory. It is not under me: It was a question of the chemical analysis not being done because of holidays.

Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava: The Secretaries are not available.

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur: That is not so.

Shri V. P. Nayar: Your Ministry, the Health Ministry.

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur: In my Ministry somebody or other is always approachable on every holiday.

Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava: Then the Report must be wrong.

6-36 P.M.:

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Half Past Ten of the Clock on Wednesday, the 14th March, 1956.