

SHRI MOHAN DHARIA: The Central Government had sent the scheme and written to all the State Governments on the same day. They also asked the State Governments to confer the homestead rights on the agricultural labour on the same day. The State Governments that are competent and efficient have taken the advantage and the others have not taken the advantage. It is for the State Government to be more efficient.

Seminar on Irrigation in India

*489. SHRI C. K. CHANDRAPPAN:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether in the papers presented by Administrators, Engineers and Social Scientists in a Seminar organised by the Institute of Economic and Social Change in Bangalore, it has been pointed out that the "irrigation in India is in a mess";

(b) whether public irrigation has been losing all the time; and

(c) if so, what measures Government have taken against it?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI KEDAR NATH SINGH): (a) to (c). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Some of the Papers presented at the Seminar highlighted the following main issues relating to the irrigation development:

(i) Need for realistic water rates and their periodic revision.

(ii) Water logging, see page and salinisation due to canals and distribution channels.

(iii) Need for reclamation of lands through drainage and adequate amendment technique.

(iv) Need for efficient water management.

(v) Systematic surveys for groundwater and soil conservation works in the river Valley catchments.

(vi) Collection of more precise data to assess adequacy of water supply in irrigation systems.

(vii) Command area development to maximise production.

It may be mentioned that several old canal system in our country are enable to provide adequate water supplies in an efficient manner to meet the needs of present day agriculture. Steps are being taken to modernise them and render them more efficient.

(b) and (c). Irrigation is a State Subject and irrigation schemes are executed by the State Governments within their overall developmental plans. The economic feasibility of an irrigation project is, of late, judged on the basis of benefit cost ratio which takes into consideration the value of the increased agricultural production as well as annual financial burden of the project. Irrigation projects, however, yield low returns to the Exchequer mainly because the water rates being charged are much lower. The Central Government has often impressed on the State Governments the need to increase water charges and collect betterment levy, where permissible. The other causes for low financial returns are:

(a) Long gestation period of the irrigation projects.

(b) Lag in the utilisation of irrigation potential created.

(c) Escalation in cost of construction and operation of the project.

The State Governments have been increasing water rates from time to time. However, the increase is not adequate. It is also impressed upon the State Governments to provide adequate funds to complete the on-going schemes with the least possible delay. Command Area Development Authorities are also being set up on major projects to take necessary measures to expedite utilisation of the potential created.

SHRI C. K. CHANRAPAN: The Statement appears to be a routine statement of the Government. But a very shocking fact has been revealed by the said Seminar. The discussions have revealed that more than 50 per cent of the water is being wasted by the inefficiency of the Government in running the irrigation scheme. I really thought that the Government would react to that. I would like to know the reaction of the Government to this.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: I do not think the use of the word 'waste' is appropriate. In fact, what happens is that, in the reservoir, for instance, there are evaporation losses. How do we stop that?.....

AN HON. Member: How much?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: 10 to 15 per cent. Again, in the canal, while the waters flow, there are seepage losses. Lining of the canals is an effective remedy, but the lining is very expensive. The resources position is known to the members. Though Government has accepted the principle, if we go on lining the canals, the other development activities, irrigation activities, will suffer. We have to take a balanced view. These losses are not waste, they are because of the structure of the canals, soil structure, etc. Particularly in northern India where canals are dug and where we have the alluvial soil structure, the water losses are more. In the canal distributive system, the losses

are there. But Government is well aware of the problem and we propose to line the canals when the resources position eases.

SHRI C. K. CHANDRAPAN: In the statement, the Government say on page 2:

"There is a lag in the utilisation of irrigation potential created."

I would like to have an explanation from the Government as to what exactly it means by saying "a lag in the utilisation of irrigation potential", and, if there is any lag, what is the remedy that the Government suggests for the full utilisation of the water resources that we are creating?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: This is really a very important problem. There is a lag in the sense that when potential has been created, it is not fully utilised. Though at the all India level the figure is 84 per cent of water utilisation, there are individual places where water utilisation is quite low. Therefore, the Government of India has decided to have 50 Canal Command Authorities to provide for better water management, improved utilisation, etc as also a number of other steps are being taken.

MR SPEAKER: Now, the Question-Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

मध्य प्रदेश के अम्लाई तथा अन्य आदिवासी क्षेत्रों में यूकिलिस्ट के वृक्ष लगाये जाने के विरोध में अम्माबेदन

*475. श्री बमराह प्रधान : क्या कृषि और सिंचाई मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) पेपर मिलम, अम्लाई के प्रबन्धक मध्य प्रदेश के महडोल जिले में अम्लाई तथा अन्य आदिवासी क्षेत्रों में आदिवासियों