

Short Notice Questions and Answers**SEVERE GALES IN BENGAL AND ASSAM**

I. Shri Amjad Ali: Will the Minister of Home Affairs be pleased to state: (a) whether the attention of Government has been drawn to the newspaper report (A. B. Patrika, dated 17th March 1953) of the severe gales sweeping parts of Bengal and Assam;

(b) the loss to property and lives it involved;

(c) damage to standing crops and fruit bearing trees; and

(d) the relief measures taken and also measures to restore the tele-communications?

The Deputy Minister of Home Affairs (Shri Datar): (a) to (d). With your permission, Sir, I propose to make a brief statement covering all the points.

I regret to say that full details have not yet been received from the State Governments concerned. However, according to the information so far received, it appears that the affected areas in West Bengal are mainly in the Kotwali and Dinahata Police Stations of the Cooch-Behar district. It is reported that several persons were injured in these districts, but only three cases proved fatal; some cattle are also reported to have been destroyed. A number of huts were razed to the ground and many more severely damaged affecting more than 2,000 families. Several refugee colonies were also affected. Some damage was caused to Tobacco both in fields and in godowns. A few roads were blocked by uprooted trees but have since been cleared. Telegraphic and telephonic communications which were disrupted have since been restored. The total amount of damage is stated to be Rs. 2 lakhs.

Medical aid was rendered on the night of occurrence. Next morning, arrangements were made, wherever possible, for the distribution of powder milk and biscuits from local Red Cross stocks. Later rice, dal, blankets, dhuties, saris and more powder milk were distributed from relief stocks in hand. A sum of Rs. 3,000 has been sanctioned by the State Government for distribution as gratuitous relief for food. They are also expecting further proposals from the district authorities for free grant of loan for house building purposes.

The particulars of the storms that might have passed over the other

Northern Districts of West Bengal are being collected by the State Government.

In Assam, more or less all districts are reported to have been affected but none of them very severely. The damage in the districts of Nowgong, Goalpara, Golaghat, Kohima in Naga Hills district is, however, more severe than in other districts. So far 17 deaths have been reported. Several houses have been blown down and some Government buildings have also been affected. No serious loss to animal life is reported. There are at present no standing crops in Assam. Suitable relief measures have been taken by the State Government.

There were some heavy breakdowns of tele-communications in both Assam and Bengal. Telegraph lines were extensively damaged in Manipur Road—Mariani, Gauhati—Cooch-Behar—Siliguri—Katihar, Gauhati—Shillong and Siliguri—Darjeeling sections due to flying corrugated iron sheets from house tops striking against wires, uprooted trees falling on lines and telegraph poles leaning at several points. Main line communications were interrupted to places in North Bengal and Assam on the 13th. Several telegraph circuits (o stations in the interior were also interrupted. The work of repairing the damage to lines was commenced on the night of the 13th itself. Telegraph and telephone communications were restored to Siliguri and Gauhati by the 14th morning, to Shillong by noon and Darjeeling by the evening.

Dr. S. P. Mookerjee: Sir, it is a long statement and we are not able to follow it.

The Prime Minister (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru): It deals with uprooting of telegraph poles in Assam and Bengal.

Shri Datar: According to the rules it has to be read, Sir. There are about 10 or 15 lines more.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: This is a very serious matter. As a matter of fact, the hon. Member wanted to raise a motion of adjournment in this House. Having regard to the amount of casualty etc. brought about by the gales, I said a short notice question would enable the Government to collect the necessary information on these matters. I thought the House will naturally be inclined to hear in some detail all about it. If the hon. Members are not inclined, I will hereafter ask only whatever might be necessary to be read. It is rather difficult. I find that when sufficient information is given exception is taken to it, and when information is not given equal exception

is taken to it. Therefore, I am not in a position to advise the hon. Minister. Hereafter, I will leave the discretion to him. If it is lengthy he need not read it. If it is very long he can lay it on the table of the House. He is not obliged to read every portion of it.

Shri Datar: May I read the rest to the House? I have no objection.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: There are only 10 or 15 lines you may read it.

Shri Datar: Circuits to Tinsukhia and Imphal were restored by the afternoon on the 15th, as the damage in Manipur Road-Mariani section was fairly extensive. All telegraph communications to places in the interior and railway telegraph and control circuits were also restored by the afternoon of the 15th.

The only Aeronautical Communication Stations affected were at the aerodromes at Jorhat and Kumbhirgram. However, there was no dislocation of the Aeronautical Radio facilities at Jorhat. At Kumbhirgram, where more serious damage was caused, the communications were restored by making emergency arrangements on the afternoon of the 14th March. By the morning of the 15th, all Aeronautical Radio facilities were functioning normally.

No damage to the Railway lines and the roads has so far been reported.

Shri Amjad Ali: May I ask one question, Sir?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The answer is sufficiently long.

Shri Amjad Ali: What was the extent of the fury of the gales and is it the information of the Government that one plane was involved in this or overtaken by the gale near Agartala and there was certain loss of lives?

Shri Datar: We have no information, Sir.

Shri L. J. Singh: Are Government aware of the fact, Sir, that more than 50 per cent. of the houses in the southern part of Manipur were blown off by the recent cyclone?

Shri Datar: All the information that has been received was fead by me just now. There is no further information.

Shri L. J. Singh: No mention was made about Manipur.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Further information is being collected.
13 P.S.D.

Shri Nambiar: Sir, in view of the fact that there was so much havoc caused with loss of life, may I know the reason why the relief granted was up to an amount of Rs. 3,000 only?

Shri Datar: It is Rs. 3,000 in Bengal up to the time of wiring the information to us.

Shri Amjad Ali: What was the amount given in Assam, Sir?

Shri Datar: That figure has not been supplied to us.

Shri Nambiar: Was any relief sent from the Centre?

Shri Datar: If it is asked for we shall gladly send it.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Next question No. 79.

Shri Matthen: Sir, my question has been mutilated.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: If the hon. Member is not willing to have it in the mutilated form, I will pass to the next question.

Shri Matthen: No, Sir. Will he allow me to read that portion which has been deleted?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: No; only what is typed and placed before him.

URANIUM THORIUM PLANT

II. Shri Matthen: (a) Will the Minister of Natural Resources and Scientific Research be pleased to state why the proposed Uranium Thorium Plant is to be erected in Bombay Harbour Island?

(b) Did the Government consult the Travancore-Cochin Government before this decision was made?

(c) In view of the availability of the main raw material and other favourable factors, have Government considered the desirability of erecting the Plant in Alwaye or Cochin?

(d) Are Government aware of the need of erecting more factories in Travancore-Cochin in view of the great unemployment problem there?

The Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Scientific Research (Shri K. D. Malaviya): (a) to (d). A statement giving detailed information on the subject is placed on the Table of the House. [See Appendix VI, annexure No. 52.]

Shri Matthen: I have read the reply, Sir. Was not the hon. Dy. Minister present when different reasons were adduced at the meeting of the N.R.