

(v) Need for early completion of Irrigation Projects in Orissa.

SHRI SOMNATH RATH (Aska) : The country has faced the worst drought unprecedented in the living memory. Countless millions require basic needs and succour. Our esteemed Prime Minister is the first man in the country who expressed concern on the appalling drought and made an extensive tour throughout the length and breadth of the country to make an on the spot assessment.

Orissa has been badly affected by the drought. Ganjam district of Orissa is the worst affected. The visit of our Prime Minister to Ganjam has regenerated strength amongst the people to fight this drought. But the follow up action has been very much tardy. Members of Parliament have demanded that there should be allocation of Central funds for drought at the District level instead of State level for effective utilisation of central grants. There should also be effective supervision on the spending of Central grants.

The District of Ganjam is also facing acute drinking water problem. Immediate measures are required to be taken to meet the situation.

Construction of Nurpalli and Pipalpanka major irrigation projects should start. Construction of Harabhangi project should be expedited spending available five crores rupees.

Bilumara and Kupati minor Irrigation projects should be undertaken. The work in Baghua project is dormant for the last 15 years. Only salaries are paid to the employees of this project since then. The work should be taken up in right earnest.

Union Government should give sufficient funds for permanent irrigation projects and to fight the acute drought in Orissa. Good seeds for Rabi crop should also be provided to farmers.

(vi) Need to reconsider the decision to close down the Government of India Stationery Depot at Calcutta and its branches at New Delhi, Bombay and Madras.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur) : It is a matter of grave concern

that the Government of India has decided to close down the Government of India Stationery Depot at Calcutta and its branches at New Delhi, Bombay and Madras on the plea of decentralisation of the work relating to procurement and distribution of stationery items. This will not only totally upset the well-established and well-coordinated system prevailing over a long period for proper procurement and distribution of stationery items but will result in retrenchment of 1200 employees including officers, except a very few employees who may be given other employment. It is significant that the main work of the stationery office, namely, supply of printing and other varieties of paper to the Government presses will now be done in a centralised manner by the Directorate of Printing at New Delhi ; thus, the result will only be abolition of an existing office and termination of employment of 1200 persons, causing untold suffering to them and their families.

I strongly urge upon the Government to revise its decision and permit the continuance of the stationery office at Calcutta and its branches at other places.

(vii) Need for laying a natural gas pipe line in Assam.

SHRI M.R. SAIKIA (Nowgong) : Large quantities of natural gas is being flared in Oil India Ltd. and Oil and Natural Gas Commission's oil fields in Assam. This is a wastage of a natural asset. A scheme should be taken to lay a natural gas pipeline from Duliajan via Moran, Geleky, Nasira, Sibsagar, Jorhat, Gauhati, Goalpara and Dhubri along the national highway. This will be Assam's life line to progress because it would cater for a refinery cum petrochemical complex at Mesenga, a fertilizer plant each at Jorhat, Nowgaon, Goalpara and Dhubri. From Jakhlabandha a branch line can be taken to the North Bank through the Bhumuraguri Bridge over the Brahmaputra and a fertilizer plant could be set up in the jute land area of Mongoldoc.

(viii) Need to exercise check on prices of essential commodities and ensure their availability.

SHRI JAGANNATH PATTNAIK (Kalahandi) : Price rise in different commo-

[Shri Jagannath Pattnaik]

dities especially essential commodities is a matter of grave concern. Both consumer resistance and administrative control is necessary to check this. Supply of essential commodities at fair prices is to be assured for the weaker sections. More attention should be paid to the needs of masses.

12.25 hrs.

DISCUSSION ON THE STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER RE. SITUATION IN SRI LANKA

—Contd.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : The House will now take up further discussion on the statement made by the Prime Minister in the House on the 9th November, 1987 regarding the situation in Sri Lanka.

I want to inform the House that already we have taken four hours which was allocated for this discussion. The hon. Minister is going to reply to the debate at 2 ' clock because he has to go to Rajya Sabha at 3 ' clock. A debate is going to take place in the Rajya Sabha also.

Therefore, I would request the hon. Members to be very brief. Mr. Soz, you have already taken ten minutes. I think I need not remind you once again regarding this, You please conclude now.

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ (Baramulla): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will certainly be brief because I know the Minister was to reply to this debate yesterday. Now I must finish so that, we can hear the Minister.

Sir, as I said yesterday, we have given support to this Accord. I agree with Mr. Natwar Singh because during the last debate he said that if we have to end the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka ; if we have to safeguard the security environment in our neighbourhood and if we have to end the atmosphere of violence at the door step of India, then we have to enter into this Agreement.

I also agree with the Prime Minister, who said, again during the last debate that because of the ethnic trouble there ; because of the Indian involvement there and also because some people are enemies of the concept of Non-Alignment, they were trying to fish in troubled waters in Sri Lanka. I agree. There is no doubt about it. But subsequent to the Accord, there have been some developments. I want in the national interest that the hon. Foreign Minister and the hon. Prime Minister in their scheme of priorities, now must take notice of the latest developments in Sri Lanka. Firstly, the LTTE have not come forward for any cooperation.

Yesterday, I said, there was some doubt in my mind and I wanted the hon. Minister to satisfy me, if he has time as to why we could not organise a direct agreement between the militants of Sri Lanka, if it is held through the diplomatic channel. But anyway, when we signed the Accord why was not the LTTE made a party to that ? As of now, Mr. Prabhakaran speaks for LTTE. It is the sole voice. This time, the LTTE is out to destroy peace in Sri Lanka. They are killing peaceful Tamilians. They are killing Muslims. They killed the members of the IPKF. And our Armed Forces have played a very commendable role there. But they are performing a very difficult job, Now against this background—again I say in national interest—we must be very cautious about the future course of events in Sri Lanka. It cannot be a long-drawn affair between the militants and the Government of Sri Lanka, because as of now, the Government of Sri Lanka led by Jayewardene is enjoying a kind of temporary peace, a lease of life, and it is our jawans who are fighting their battle on the soil of Sri Lanka. It is our commitment; we must honour this commitment.

I said yesterday that the agreement and its objectives are very laudable. because India made it clear to the comity of nations that we respect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of Sri Lanka. But we must take notice of the dimensions of violence there, and it cannot be a long drawn affair.

Added to this there is another dimension, and I do not think Jayewardene is