

SHRI P. K. DEO : We cannot participate in the proceedings if it is disallowed. Orissa demands steel plant; Orissa demands steel plant.

12.00 hrs.

Shri P. K. Deo and some other Members then left the House.

SHRI SURENDRANATH DWIVEDY (Kandrapara) : All that we want is to have a discussion on this matter in the House.

MR. SPEAKER : But that is not the way.

SHRI SURENDRANATH DWIVEDY : We have given an adjournment motion. Either you admit the adjournment motion, or you provide some time for a discussion on this matter.

MR. SPEAKER : The next item is the Call Attention Notice. Let it be disposed of. Shri S. K. Tapuriah.

SHRI SHRI CHAND GOYAL (Chandigarh) : Sir, may I request you to felicitate our wrestlers who have retrieved the honour of our country by winning a gold medal? I want the House, through you, Sir, to felicitate the wrestlers. *(Interruption)*

अध्यक्ष महोदय : यहाँ भी कैसे कैसे पहलवान आ गये हैं।

SHRI S. K. TAPURIAH (Pali) : I will have to learn wrestling if this continues in this way.

MR. SPEAKER : You are all old parliamentarians, very learned people. There is a way of doing things. There is a procedure for that. I hope nobody will disturb now.

12.01 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE RE. DEVASTATING FLOODS IN ALAKNANDA

SHRI S. K. TAPURIAH (Pali) : I call the attention of the Minister of Irrigation and Power to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon :—

"The devastating floods in Alaknanda washing away about 200 persons and several buses, taxis and Army trucks."

THE MINISTER OF IRRIGATION AND POWER (DR. K. L. RAO) : Heavy rains occurred in Western Himalayas on 20th July, 1970. Joshimath recorded 22 cm. of rain during 24 hours ending at 03.30 AM on 21st July. In consequence, there were flash floods in the River Alaknanda and its tributaries. There were also a number of landslides leading to blockages in the main river and also in some of its tributaries specially the Pathalaganga one mile upstream of Belakuchi. These blockages suddenly gave way resulting in a quick rise in the level of the river Alaknanda at about 7 PM on 20th July, 1970. The water rose by about 15 metres above the road level near Belakuchi. In this reach, the road level is only about 15 metres above the river bed. The sudden abnormal rise of water level engulfed and washed away a large number of vehicles—13 buses, 5 taxis, 6 trucks and one army vehicle totaling 25 vehicles—trapped on the road near Belakuchi. In addition, a number of bridge were also washed away leading to the disruption of traffic especially between Pipalkoti and Joshimath.

Birahi Ganga is a tributary joining on the left side of the river Alaknanda about 10 km. upstream of Chamoli. On this tributary Birahi Ganga, there has been a lake known as Gohana Lake 24 km. from the road. This is not a natural lake but was formed in 1893 by landslides blocking the stream. The bund so formed was stated to be 275 m. high and completely

stopped the waters of Birahi Ganga from flowing. Subsequently, there was a slip in the bund and the bund was got reduced to about half its height. This year, Birahi Ganga in the upper reaches brought down considerable debris along which got deposited into the lake, thereby causing overflow into the Birahi Ganga downstream. This added to the floods in the Alaknanda.

About 420 people were stated to be travelling in the vehicles but fortunately, the local people of Belakuchi warned them of the rising water level. People left the vehicles and began to climb the hills for safety. In attempting to escape, about 29 of the pilgrims held up near Belakuchi, lost their lives. There would have been far greater loss of life but for the timely warning given by the local people at Belakuchi. This information is based on reports received from the State Government. I have sent a Chief Engineer of the Central Water & Power Commission to ascertain further details and report.

Besides the tragic event mentioned earlier, the floods caused severe damage to Risikesh-Badrinath road and bridges. Telephone and telegraphic communications were disrupted. Due to house collapses and landslides, 23 people died in Chamoli District (including a driver and a worker who lost their lives during rescue operations). Preliminary assessments indicate that damage to houses and property may be of the order of Rs. 24 lakhs and damage to public utilities about Rs. 44 lakhs. The exact damage to house, public utilities etc. are being assessed by the State Government.

Relief and rescue operations are in full swing. 730 persons stranded at various places have been transhipped. The Collectors have been authorised to pay to needy persons fares to enable them to reach home. Housing building subsidies and house building taxavies are being distributed. 1000 blankets have been sent for distribution to the needy.

Additional funds of rupees two lakhs have been placed at the disposal of the Collector by the State Government for

relief work in Chamoli District. The Prime Minister has also sent Rs. 50,000/- to the State Government from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund.

SHRI. S. K. TAPURIAH : This is indeed a very tragic incident. We are all sorry that some pilgrims have died in a very unfortunate manner and probably because of certain lapses on the part of the administration they had in this unfortunate manner, to meet their maker.

In the longish statements of the Minister, as you might have yourself noticed, excepting that it tries to place the blame entirely on nature, the rainfall and on the breach in the bund, it does not give any other information as to what precautionary measures could have been taken, what machinery was available there and whether there was communication to the traffic that was coming there and what steps they could have taken to keep the people away. May I know, Sir, whether the rainfall of 22 centimeters as the Minister said, was abnormal. Did this area in the past also have this sort of rainfall? Was this rainfall of 22 centimeters in a day enough to make up a 15 metres rise in the river at that place? What was the past record and whether this has led to this sort of rise in the water? When he says about the breach in the bund, again a question comes, since it has started breaking the bund, as the statement says, what steps were taken to restore it or to divert the water in case such overflow takes place.

Till a few years ago this area was only of pilgrimage importance. But ever since the Chinese invasion this has been considered a strategic area and our preparations both by the Border Roads Organization and the Border Security Force have increased. May I know when the Government claim that such improvements have taken place, how is it that the communication facilities in that area were so bad? Why was not the advance flood warning system not used? If you will remember, Sir, when the Prime Minister made a statement on the incident, she herself said that she hoped that the death toll would

[Shri S. K. Tapuriah]

not be as bad or as high as the reports were pouring in at that time. If the communication system to the Prime Minister is so weak, can you imagine what can be the information that went to the relatives and other people travelling in that area? May I know from the hon Minister whether the rainfall was abnormal, whether it was enough to give a 15 metres rise at that particular level and whether the flood warning system existed there and whether it was used or not? What were the communication facilities and would they set up a commission to investigate all these matters pertaining to the advance warning system and the communication system in that strategic area?

DR. K. L. RAO : I submit that between Chamoli and Badrinath, a distance of 60 miles the road is to rise from 7000 ft. This portion of the road from Rishikesh to Badrinath has always given trouble. It is understandable that from Chamoli to Joshimath, a 30 miles distance, the road alignment does not seem to be very satisfactory because the road, as I said, has to climb very steeply. Now the question the hon. Member has asked and which I myself was thinking over, was that 22 centimetres or 10 inches rainfall in one day really is not much in these mountain regions. But I am making further inquiries. I understand that there was no rainfall on the 19th. There was no rainfall on the 21st. All this rainfall has occurred on the 20th and from inquiries I have made, I understand that the rainfall started at 3 p. m. and then went on and the whole thing concentrated in a few hours so that all this 22 centimetres or 10 inches of rainfall as I mentioned seems to have occurred at much lesser period of time. The information I have given is from the Metereological Department which gives 24 hours reading. My fear is that there must have been a very heavy concentration of rainfall in that small period of a few hours. So, it is that difficulties must have come in this unstable place. The unstable portion between Rishikesh and Badrinath is within 60 miles. The road between Chamoli and Joshimath is 13 miles. That is the most dangerous place. It is in that place that all these slides have occurred.

There is one more point that I wish to submit. There are two traffic control points, one at Joshimath and the other at Chamoli. Now, at Joshimath, there was no flood as such. It is very interesting to note that. The road bridge, at Vishnuprayag and bridge at Joshimath have not been damaged. All the damages have happened between Joshimath and Chamoli. All these damages have occurred beyond Joshimath. Joshimath is the traffic control point; the next control point is the one at Chamoli. The troubles started at 3 O'clock in the afternoon and till then the traffic was not obstructed; the traffic was allowed to go on. Anyway, what I submit is, all these are subject-matters of the enquiry. I have sent one officer and similarly, I understand, the Border Roads people are making all sorts of enquiries; but, it seems to me, there has not been any human failing in this matter. All these things have come out rather very suddenly in this particular region between Joshimath and Belakuchi.

As regards the other question about flood warning, as I submitted, it is not possible to give such warning in that region. It is a very narrow region. The whole events have occurred in such a short time; it is not really a question of too much of a flood, as such. The flood in Alaknanda is much below the maximum flood; that is the river experience we have got. We only recorded a flood of 2.25 lakh cusecs against 4 lakh cusecs that it was having as a maximum flood before. So, it is not an extraordinary flood as such. What has happened there is this. It is an unstable region. Lot of debris and rocks flowed down and blocked the river and raised the water level. Then after some time the water was coming out and broke the barrier and resulted in high wave of flood.

At Belakuchi the road level is at a very low level. Generally Alaknanda river goes very deep; but at Belakuchi it is only 50 feet above the river-bed. And, it is when the water level rose to 100 feet, all the damage occurred.

I would submit that the question of

Commission and all that will arise after the present investigations are over.

श्री राम सेवक घावब (बाराबंकी) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, हर साल पूरे देश में कहीं न कहीं जबर्दस्त बाढ़ आती है और केन्द्रीय सरकार ने बाढ़ रोकने का काम बहुत पहले से ले रखा है। जब बाढ़ आती है तो भाषणों की बाढ़ भी आती है कि इसका मुकाबला हम युद्धस्तर पर करेंगे लेकिन जो नतीजे सामने आते हैं, एक के बाद दूसरे, वे भयानक आते हैं। आसाम, बिहार, उत्तर प्रदेश और दूसरी जगहों पर इस साल भी बाढ़ में लाखों करोड़ों रूपए का नुकसान हुआ, लोगों की जानें गई और मकान बर्बाद हुए। आज के अखबार की खबर यदि सच है तो भूलखनन्दा में स्थिति ज्यादा भयंकर हो गई है, ज्यादा बिगड़ गई है। इस चीज को दृष्टि में रखते हुए मैं कई प्रश्न मन्त्री से पूछना चाहता हूँ।

जैसी कि आम तौर से यह खबर दी गई कि गोहना भील के पट जाने से यह स्थिति भयंकर हुई तो मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या ऐसी खबरें भी आई हैं और क्या उसमें कोई सत्य और यथार्थ है कि गोहना नदी नहीं बल्कि नीती नदी के बहाव का जो रास्ता था वह रास्ता लैंड स्लाइड के कारण रुक गया और जब वह रुक गया तब यह भयंकर बाढ़ आई और इसमें लाखों लोग प्रभावित हुए? कहा जाता है कि कम से कम एक हजार लोगों की जानें गई होंगी। अभी उसके सही आंकड़े नहीं आये हैं। तो नीती नदी का बहाव लैंड स्लाइड के कारण रुकने से यह बाढ़ आई, यह बात कहां तक सत्य है? और क्या यह भी सही है कि सन् 1962 में वहाँ के लोगों ने, जबकि इसके बहाव का पानी रुक गया था लैंड स्लाइड के कारण, तो वहाँ के अधिकारियों को सतर्क और सचेत कर दिया था कि अगर उसके बहाव का इन्तजाम नहीं किया गया तो बड़े खतरनाक नतीजे

निकलेंगे? यहाँ तक कि चमोली नगर विकास मण्डल ने भी अधिकारियों को इस बात की सूचना दी थी। यदि यह सही है तो फिर वे कौन अधिकारी हैं जोकि इसके जिम्मेदार हैं और जिन्होंने उसका इन्तजाम नहीं किया?

दूसरे यह कहा जाता है कि एकदम भयंकर पानी बरस जाने से बाढ़ की स्थिति पैदा हुई। मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि जिस साल गोहना भील का निर्माण प्राकृतिक ढंग से हो गया, लैंड स्लाइड के द्वारा तो उस साल कितनी बारिश हुई थी और इस साल फिर कितनी बारिश हुई है? अगर उससे कम बारिश हुई है या उतनी ही हुई है तो फिर उन सारे खतरों को दिमाग में रख कर सारी व्यवस्था क्यों नहीं की गई?

तीसरे सन् 1962 में उस इलाके में सड़कों का निर्माण हुआ और जब सड़क का निर्माण हो रहा था तो जिस नुस्ते पर सड़क बन रही थी वहाँ के लोगों ने बताया कि इस सड़क का बनना उचित नहीं है बल्कि अनुचित है और इससे भयंकर नुकसान होगा, आगे चल करके बाढ़ आने का खतरा पैदा हो जायेगा-क्या यह बात सही है?

अंत में मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि इतनी बड़ी भयंकर बाढ़ से जो लोग पीड़ित हुए हैं उन की सहायता केन्द्रीय सरकार ने कितना रुपया दिया है, किस किस रूप में दिया है और उसकी एजेंसी क्या है? और अभी आज जो अखबार में घंटी बजी है कि बाढ़ और विनाशकारी स्थिति धारण कर रही है उसका मुकाबला करने के लिए कौन सी व्यवस्था की गई है?

DR. K. L. RAO : It is not possible to say by what time India can be saved from the damages due to floods, because this country has been blessed with a large number of rivers and it is impossible to say that the floods will be overcome by any agency possible. All that we can do

[Dr. K. L. Rao]

is to try to reduce the effects of these damages and that is what is being done. We have nearly saved one fourth of the damages that were occurring earlier. It will take many more years before a very effective impact can be felt in the matter of protection from flood damages.

Regarding the Gohana lake, as the hon. Member has said, it is true that this lake was formed only in 1893 and it is a source of danger. But from the inquiries that I have made I understand that this lake has not been breached. From the tentative studies that have been made I find that it had been silted up. The silt and debris flowed into the lake and it silted up and thereby the water level rose up and then the water overflowed the banks. That is what has happened. If it had really breached, it would have been far more disastrous in the Chamoli area.

Also, in this occurrence, it will be noticed that Belakuchi is a point which is much higher up the river than the confluence of the Gohana lake, that is, the place where the waters of Gohana lake come and join Alaknanda. Therefore, any kind of Gohana flood would not have affected the conditions at Belakuchi, the place of tragedy. As regards Badrinath, as the hon. Member has said, there it is due to another stream which is called the Patalganga. That seems to be the main source of trouble.

Also, I agree with the hon. Member that the alignment in this portion of the road from Chamoli to Badrinath, especially from Chamoli to Joshimath, requires re-thinking and realignment. It is running in a very dangerous way. From the difficulties and the experience that we have had we find that there have been a lot of hillslides in that area. Since it is a place where pilgrims are going and they are using that road, it is necessary for us to see that that road is properly re-aligned. I think we shall take necessary steps to consult the geologists and frame the data so that we could take the road and the bridge through an area where the hillslides will cause the least damage.

श्री राम सेवक यादव : केन्द्रीय सरकार ने क्या सहायता दी है ?

DR. K. L. RAO : All the help that is necessary is being given by the collectors. They have been authorised to make relief available very liberally and I think they have been giving fairly liberal help.

SHRI RAM SEVAK YADAV : What amount ?

श्री सीताराम केसरी (कटिहार) : अध्यक्ष जी, हिमालय की उपत्यका में बाढ़ के कारण जो प्रलय उत्पन्न हुई उसके संबंध में मन्त्री महोदय ने जो बातचीत किया उसको पढ़ने के बाद मैं जानना चाहूँगा क्या उन्हें इस बात की जानकारी थी या नहीं कि पहले भी मन्त्री 1893 में बिरही नदी में, जो भील है उसमें लैंड स्लाइड के कारण एक बाढ़ आई थी और वह बाढ़ श्रीनगर तक आई लेकिन सरकार ने मुस्ताई के साथ उसका मुकाबला किया था और उसमें कोई भी जान नहीं गई थी ? मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि वहाँ जो यात्री गये हुए थे उन यात्रियों को सरकार के द्वारा डिस्ट्रिक्ट मजिस्ट्रेट के द्वारा या उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार की वहाँ पर जो सम्बन्धित व्यवस्था है, ऐयारिटीज हैं, उन्होंने कोई इस तरह की जानकारी यात्रियों को दी या नहीं ?

दूसरी बात यह है कि जो यात्री वहाँ पर गये या जो वहाँ पर पानी में बह गये और उस बारे में आपने जो फीगर्स दी हैं, जो अखबारों में निकले हैं, उन दोनों में बड़ा अन्तर है। मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि कितने लोग अब तक उस बाढ़ के कारण मरे, कितने लोग अभी तक स्ट्रैंडर्ड पड़े हुए हैं और कितने लोगों को आप ने अभी तक रिलीफ पहुँचाई है।

DR. K. L. RAO : The figures I have given are based on enquiries made and

reports received. More detailed figures will have to await further investigation.

Regarding the other questions, I have already answered that it is not the flood in the Birahi Ganga that is responsible in the present case. It is the land-slide in the tributaries higher up of the Birahi Ganga that has been responsible for this. There was flood in the Birahi Ganga in 1893, but this year I do not think there has been any trouble from it except by the filling up of the lake and overflow of the water.

श्री श्रीचन्व गोयल : अध्यक्ष महोदय, 20 जुलाई को अलकनन्दा घाटी में जो भीषण दुर्घटना हुई है उस में जो भारी हानि चाहे वह मृत्यु के रूप में हो या सम्पत्ति की हानि के रूप में हुई हो जिसमें 30 के करीब ट्रक या बसें बह गयीं और 5 प्राचीन मन्दिर भी बह गये। मैं यह भी याद दिलाना चाहता हूँ कि जो पर्यटकों का आकर्षण केन्द्र गोनी भील थी वह भी सदा के लिए नष्ट हो गई, पर्यटकों के लिए और कोई आकर्षण का केन्द्र अभी वहाँ पर बचा नहीं है। सरकार ने इस बात का प्रयत्न किया है कि यह दिखाएँ कि दुर्घटना केवल प्रकृति का प्रकोप था और किसी सरकार अथवा किसी संस्था या किसी व्यक्ति का इस में कोई दोष नहीं था। मैं उन से पूछना चाहता हूँ कि क्या यह सत्य नहीं है कि 20 जुलाई को बोरडर रोड आर्गोनाइजेशन के हैड क्वार्टर पर यह समाचार पहुंचाया गया था कि ऊपर पहाड़ों पर जो बहुत अधिक वर्षा हुई है उस से बाढ़ और तूफान आने वाला है यदि हां तो क्या उस बोरडर रोड आर्गोनाइजेशन ने इस सिलसिले में कोई कार्यवाही की? क्या उन्होंने वह बद्रीनाथ में चमोली तक की सड़क रुक गई थी उस सड़क को खाली करने के लिए कोई पग उठाया या उन्होंने उन यात्रियों को इस बात की कोई सूचना दी कि उनका वहाँ पर रहना खतरनाक है? सरकार ने केवल अपनी ओर से आँकड़े दिये हैं। मैं बत-

लाना चाहता हूँ कि दिल्ली में श्री सुरेन्द्र ना अग्रवाल एडवोकेट जो कि दुर्घटना के समय वहाँ पर मौजूद थे उन्होंने बतलाया कि वहाँ से आने वाले यात्रियों ने और वहाँ के रहने वालों ने जो समाचार दिये हैं वह बिल्कुल भिन्न हैं उन आँकड़ों और उन तथ्यों से जो कि सरकार देने का प्रयत्न कर रही है। तो मैं यह पूछना चाहता हूँ कि 20 जुलाई को प्रातःकाल जब यह समाचार बोरडर रोड आर्गोनाइजेशन के हैड क्वार्टर को प्राप्त हो गया तो उन्होंने इस बद्रीनाथ से चमोली की सड़क को खाली क्यों नहीं कराया और यात्रियों को पूर्व सूचना क्यों नहीं दी कि उनका वहाँ पर ठहरना खतरनाक है? उन के लिए कोई आल्टरनेटिव व्यवस्था क्यों नहीं की गई?

इस के साथ-साथ मैं यह भी पूछना चाहता हूँ कि पहाड़ों के अन्दर जहाँ पर तंग रास्ता होता है वहाँ पर उन का नियन्त्रण किया जाता है और हम ने देखा कि बाकायदा यात्रियों का पहला जत्था सुबह साढ़े 7 बजे पहुंचा, दूसरा साढ़े 12 बजे पहुंचा, तीसरा जत्था साढ़े 3 बजे पहुंचा और चौथा जत्था शाम को पहुंचा है। इस का मतलब यह है कि यात्रियों के साथ उसी साधारण रूटिन के अनुसार बर्ताव किया गया। न उन को रोका गया और न ही उन्हें किसी प्रकार की सूचना दी गई। जाहिर है कि यदि इस के बारे में आप कमिशन आफ इनक्वायरी एक्ट के तहत जांच करायेंगे तो सही तथ्य आयेंगे। शायद वह भूले न होंगे कि पंचैट डैम के सम्बन्ध में भीषण दुर्घटना हुई थी उस के सम्बन्ध में रॉगटे खड़े करने वाले समाचार उस कमिशन ने दिये थे। तो क्या इन सारी बातों की जांच मंत्री महोदय करायेंगे? क्या ऐसे मौकों के ऊपर कोई मेला प्रमुख सारी बातों का नियन्त्रण करने वाला कोई व्यक्ति वहाँ पर था या नहीं? क्या कोई ऐसा व्यक्ति वहाँ पर मौजूद था। यदि हां तो, क्या उसने कोई पूर्व सूचना दी थी?

मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि 20 जुलाई को

[श्री श्रीचन्द्र गोयल]

प्रातः जब यह दुर्घटना होती है तो उस का समाचार रेडियो पर 22 तारीख को आता है, 21 तारीख को वह समाचार क्यों नहीं आया ? जब प्रधान मंत्री चांदनी चौक में भाषण देती हैं तो रेडियो से सारे देश भर में बाध साथ उनका भाषण प्रसारित किया जाता है लेकिन यह दुर्घटना हुई 20 जुलाई को, 20 तारीख को और 21 तारीख को रेडियो पर उस का कोई समाचार नहीं आया और रेडियो पर जाकर 22 तारीख को आया और 23 तारीख को समाचारपत्रों में उस भीषण दुर्घटना का हाल छपा। मैं जानना चाहता हूं कि इस में जो बिलम्ब हुआ है इस सूचना को देने में और उससे देशवासियों को अवगत करने में उस का क्या कारण है ? इस सारे सिलसिले में कमिशन आफ इनक्वायरी ऐक्ट के तहत क्या आप जांच कराने को तैयार हैं ? अभी भी यह समाचार मिल रहा है कि 500 से अधिक यात्री अभी भी वहां पर फंसे हुए हैं, वह उन खतरनाक जगहों में लटके हुए हैं तो उन को बचाने के लिए सरकार की तरफ से क्या व्यवस्था है ? क्या सही आंकड़े सरकार के पास हैं कि कितने लोग हैं जो कि अभी तक फंसे हुए हैं ?

उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार ने केवल द्वाइ लाख रुपये की सहायता इस में दी है। कल उत्तर प्रदेश के वित्त मंत्री प्रधानमंत्री से मिले थे और रक्षा मंत्री से भी मिले थे और उनको यह बताया कि 6 करोड़ रुपये तो वहां के यातायात सिस्टम को पूर्ववत् करने के हो लिए चाहिए तो क्या केन्द्रीय सरकार यह सारी सहायता देने के लिए तैयार है क्योंकि प्रांतीय सरकार के बूते की बात नहीं है कि वह सारा धन अपने पास से खर्च करके यातायात के साधनों को ठीक कर सके।

इस के प्रतिरिक्त मैं यह जानना चाहता हूं कि जो लोग इस दुर्घटना में अतिग्रस्त हुए हैं, क्या आप उन को सुराक पहुंचा रहे हैं और क्या

आप उन के लिए अन्य आवश्यक व्यवस्था कर रहे हैं ?

अन्त में मैं यह पूछना चाहता हूं कि उत्तर प्रदेश की सरकार ने हमारी केन्द्रीय सरकार की सहायता मांगी है 14 पुलों के बनाने के वास्ते क्योंकि प्रांतीय सरकार बगैर सेंटर की हैल्प के उनको नहीं बना सकेगी, वह सेना की तरफ से बनाये जायेंगे तो क्या वह सेना की तरफ से सहायता प्राप्त देने के लिए तैयार है ? मैं चाहूंगा कि मेरे इन सारे प्रश्नों का उत्तर ग्यारेवार मंत्री महोदय दें।

DR. K. L. RAO : I have already submitted that according to the information that I have, Gohana Lake has not breached this year.

The other point is about the traffic control points. I have already submitted that there are two traffic control points on this road, one at Joshi Mutt and the other 30 miles down stream at Chemoli. I have also submitted that there has been no flood in the Alaknanda at Joshi Mutt. Where the Birahi Ganga joins the Alaknanda, the bridge is perfectly safe. There does not seem to be any abnormal flood at that place. So, there is no reason for obstructing the returning traffic. The tragedy has occurred mostly to the returning traffic from Badrinath, and there was no reason for the obstruction of the returning traffic at Joshi Mutt. The next control point is at Chamoli. The whole tragedy has occurred between Chamoli and Joshi Mutt.

Regarding the question of relief, the relief measures that I have described are being very well organised. It is true that the U. P. Government has stated that a number of bridges in the flood area have been washed away and that the Central Government must assist them to restore those bridges. That is quite correct. When the whole report is made out, I am sure the Central Government will give it careful consideration and assist the U.P. Government.

SHRI DEVINDER SINGH GARCHA (Ludhiana) : Nothing much actually is

mains to be done just now. Nevertheless, I notice from the Minister's statement that there is a tendency to avoid the guilt to be laid on the door of the authorities which were actually responsible for safeguarding the embankments of the Gohana Lake. Eye witness accounts say that at present there is no Gohana Lake in existence. The entire thing has been drained out over the area affected by the floods. The lake, as has been said, was formed in 1891, and it has been, since, then, a source of constant trouble to the people in that area. A number of times it has been responsible for minor floods, but it appears to me that either no permanent arrangements existed for safeguarding its embankments or these measures were inadequate. I want to know what those measures are and whether any permanent measures existed? Who were the persons responsible for safeguarding their safety and would the State Government be taking any action against these persons who did not safeguard the embankments? Would the Government learn a lesson from this and institute a general survey of such risky areas which are responsible for such ghastly tragedies again and again?

DR. K. L. RAO : I submitted already that the road between Chamoli and Badrinath requires to be looked into as the ground seems to be affected by frequent land slides and the road has to go in sixty miles a height of 7,000 feet. Therefore, it requires to be looked into. I shall pass on the request to the Geological Survey of India to see if they could undertake a survey of this tract for realignment of the road.

12.31 hrs.

RE : BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE (Kanpur) : I have to say something about the Order Paper. We expected yesterday and today also that the Minister of Rehabilitation would make some statement on the serious problem arising out of the mass exodus of minorities from East Pakistan. It is surprising he has not done so. The other House has discussed it yesterday. I re-

quest you to ask the Minister to make a statement today and give us a chance to discuss the entire matter. ... (Interruptions)

DR. RAM SUBHAG SINGH (Buxar) : We should discuss the agreement that has been entered into between India and Pakistan. This Government has proved totally ineffective in that regard.

SHRI BAL RAJ MADHOK (South Delhi) : The exodus of minorities from East Pakistan is a serious matter. We have given a motion for adjournment and we must get an opportunity to discuss this matter. This cannot be brushed aside.

SHRI HEM BARUA (Mangaldai) : I submitted on adjournment motion on the Assam floods; they are a regular feature every year and this time also there are floods so. What happened? The Minister and some experts went to the United States to study flood control measures in relation to Mississippi. He has come back but he has not done anything. An expert came from the United States to advise us but nothing has been done... (Interruptions.) On the floor of this House, two years ago the hon. Minister made a statement that dams would be constructed in the Brahmaputra; no such flood control measures had been taken... (Interruptions.)

MR. SPEAKER : Order, Order. Please resume your seat.

MR. HEM BARUA : Two Ministers are going to Gauhati from Delhi? What are they going to do there? The money spent on them could have been given to poor farmers in the Villages.

श्री हनु लिमये (गुनेर) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं एक दूसरी बात कहना चाहता हूँ। मैं आप से एक सवाल पूछना चाहता हूँ और आप मेहरबानी कर के उस का जवाब देना मेरे लिए प्रार्थना है। प्रश्नकारों में यह क्वेश्चन था