

SHRI KARTIK ORAON (Lohardaga) : At the outset, I would like to welcome....

MR. CHAIRMAN : The hon. Member may continue his speech tomorrow.

17.04 hrs.

DISCUSSION RE. FLOODS IN ASSAM

MR. CHAIRMAN : The House will now take up the discussion on devastation caused by the recent floods in Assam and the measures taken by the Government to meet the situation.

श्री शिव चन्द्र झा (मधुबनी) : मेरा इस पर प्वाइंट आफ आर्डर है। अब असम फ्लड्ज पर बहस होने जा रही है। मुझे मालूम हुआ है कि कल केरल के फ्लड्ज के बारे में कालिग एटेंशन आ रहा है। हमने बात उठाई थी कि बिहार में बेहद बाढ़ आई हुई है। मुझे कोई एतराज नहीं है अगर असम के फ्लड्स पर बहस होती है। लेकिन आप इसमें ऐसी व्यवस्था कर दें कि बिहार की बाढ़ों के बारे में भी लोग बोल सकें और मंत्री महोदय सबका जवाब दे दें। बिहार के फ्लड्ज को इगनोर किया गया है। उसके बारे में कोई सुनवाई नहीं हुई है। आप आदेश दे दें कि बिहार के बारे में भी लोग बोलें और मंत्री महोदय उसके मुनाल्लिक भी जवाब दे दें।

सभापति महोदय : कोई प्वाइंट आफ आर्डर नहीं है इसमें। इस बहस को आप चलने दीजिये।

SHRI HEM BARUA (Mangaldai) : I am thankful to you for kindly allowing this discussion on the devastation caused by the floods in Assam and the measures Government have taken so far. True it is that Assam is one of the most neglected parts of India, although the strategic importance of the State is recognised. The problems of Assam are viewed with

indifference, callousness and apathy by this Government. As a result, prices are spiralling up in the State. There is scarcity which haunts the State like a nightmare. On the top of the floods, earthquake has also occurred. To cap it all, the strike by railwaymen in Siliguri has dislocated traffic. All these things have affected the economy of the State by raising the prices and by creating a sort of artificial scarcity in the State.

When I said that Assam is one of the most neglected parts of India, I have reasons for it. When the Chinese aggressed on us, our Prime Minister at that time did only one thing: he broadcast a message of farewell to the people of Assam. This has gone deep into the hearts of people there and they will never forget it. The people of Assam had expected from the Prime Minister defence measures, not a farewell message broadcast over A.I.R.

Floods are worse than foreign aggression. They are a regular feature in Assam. Floods visit the State not once and twice but even thrice a year. The devastation caused is indescribable. Could not their intensity be reduced to a minimum by careful planning? They could have plugged the vulnerable points there which they have not done. There is technological development in the world and the gap between earth and moon has been narrowed down. But to say that we cannot apply technology to abate the intensity of floods in the State is entirely wrong.

I do not want to give a detailed account of devastation caused by floods in the State. But the fact remains that granaries and cattle have been washed away, paddy fields have been submerged and washed off, embankments have been broken. According to the Minister himself, there were 14 breaches, and 12 cuts in embankments. Now what has happened? Some 3 million people have suffered because of these floods. As an aftermath of the floods, cholera has broken out in the BARPETA sub-division, which is represented by Shri F. A. Ahmed. 15 people have died there; there was one death in Sibsagar, total 16 dead. The immensity and fury of the floods was so much that the

Army had to be called out in Sibsagar to cope with the situation. True, the Prime Minister gave Rs. 50,000 for flood relief there. But the amount is so horribly poor and infinitesimal that it is not even a drop in the ocean. It does not meet even a fraction of the massive problem with which Assam is confronted today.

I know committees and commissions are appointed to make suggestions and recommendations for amelioration of the lot of the people. I say there is no dearth of plans. Plans and schemes are there galore and these committees and commissions have also made valuable recommendations. But what has happened to these recommendations? They are conveniently cold-stored.

You have an investment in cash. At the same time, it should be supplemented by an investment in will. Will is lacking, the will to implement is absent. That is why I say Assam is treated in a very apathetic way, in a very indifferent way.

I remember the hon. Minister, Dr. Rao, went to the USA accompanied by an officer to study flood control measures taken by the USA in relation to the Mississippi. He has come back possibly enlightened, but he has not applied any of those measures so far as Assam is concerned.

Some foreign experts also visited Assam and studied the problem of floods there. Those foreign experts have also made certain recommendations and suggestions, but these recommendations and suggestions have not been put into practice. This is how year in and year out floods visit that unhappy State and year in and year out that State is neglected.

I remember that in 1954 on 5th September Prime Minister Nehru visited Assam and made certain suggestions, but those suggestions and recommendations have been conveniently put in cold storage and nothing has been done up till now. I remember that he made a suggestion for a Bramabudra Valley Commission, but that did not come into existence. For 15 years the suggestion of Prime Minister Nehru has been lying in the old files, and nothing has

been done so far. Therefore, I say that there are schemes and plans, but those schemes and plans are not implemented. Government has possibly understood the gravity of the problem and, therefore, I think, the Government has appointed a three-tier authority, and I think, Dr. Rao is going to speak about it.

The problem of floods in Assam is two-fold. One is erosion and the other is inundation. Erosion has caused havoc. After the floods recedes, there is the erosion of the river banks and people suffer because of this. I remember that from 1954 upto 1967 the Government spend Rs. 103 crores to combat this situation. That would come on an average to Rs. 7.7 crores a year. The Revenue Minister of Assam has said recently that since 1950 up till now the state exchequer had to incur a loss of Rs. 150 crores, but nothing has been done up till now. The floods are there and they create havoc.

We talk of improving agriculture, but what about the impact of the floods on agricultural production? Ten per cent of the agricultural land is being washed away by the floods. This is the position.

The National Flood Control Policy was announced in 1954. It visualised three major steps, immediate, short term and long term measures. Where are the long term measures taken? Nothing. Although the Brahmaputra and the Bara rivers of Assam cover only 27 per cent of the land in that State, the havoc created by their tributaries like the Pagladia, Puthimare, Jiabharali, Nona, Dikrang, Longlai and Katakhal and other feeding streams is immense.

A high level Committee on floods was also appointed and it said that "the annual *per capita* damage is the highest in Assam". You know that, yet what have you done? That is the question that arises in the minds of the people of Assam because of this devastation. I do not want to give a description of the devastation because it is too well known to be recounted. This year, according to the admission of the Minister, you have to spend Rs. 8.6 crores to combat this situation. At the same time,

[Shri Hem Barua]

21 persons are dead. In 1962, when the floods came, 115 people died, do not forget that. Now then, as an aftermath of the floods, cholera has broken out and as I have already stated, 16 persons are dead because of this epidemic. I have already said that there are plans and programmes for improving the situation. Dredging is one of them. I remember a long time back one of Dr. Rao's predecessors said in the House that the people of Assam should learn to live with floods; another said they should build houses on stilts. There might be some originality in their suggestions. But these things do not help the people. Ministers have aerial survey of flood affected areas in helicopters or other aircraft and they make all sorts of promises to the people and unless they are translated into action, empty promises do not help.

SHRI ABDUL GHANI DAR (Gurgaon): In spite of that they are very loyal to Fakhruddin's Congress.

SHRI HEM BARUA: Whatever that might be. I have doubts about the three tier authority's efficacy. It was the Prime Minister of India who made a suggestion some 15 years ago on 5 September 1954. If his suggestions could be cold-stored like this, recommendations of this authority can also be cold-stored. The Brahmaputra Commission was inaugurated in Gauhati and the State Ministers and Officials came down from Shillong to Gauhati for the inaugural ceremony. Two Ministers flew to Gauhati from Delhi. One Minister was enough; what is the purpose in asking another Minister to fly down to Gauhati. It is the people who have to bleed through their nose to pay the DA and TA of the Ministers. It may sound a minor thing and yet I should say: what business did two Ministers have there to fly down from Delhi to Gauhati at the expenses of the people? One Minister, Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed had to attend a Congress meeting at Gauhati; he wanted to attend that meeting and therefore an official programme had to be arranged for him and therefore he flew down from Delhi to Gauhati. If they have to do party work, they can do so

with their own money; they should not do party work using public resources. I do not understand this. It is a cruel joke.

There should be steady flow of the waters in the channels even during the monsoon. It is said that rainfall was not heavy in Assam; still the floods were the heaviest. It is true that the mouth of the Brahmaputra is in foreign countries. There is also a news item that China has built a certain nuclear device in Tibet and dynamited the catchment areas and so all that water has come down. It is called Tsangpo in Tibet. They have done it in order to drown India. Possibly because of that Assam is suffering from heavy floods, as also East Pakistan.

SHRI DHIRESHWAR KALITA (Gauhati): What is the source of your information?

SHRI HEM BERUA: Meteorological data. Unfortunately there is only one meteorological office in Shillong; it functions there even during the monsoon and there is no warning to the people in the monsoon or floods affected areas.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU (Diamond Harbour): They have said that the Chinese have caused this mischief?

SHRI HEM BARUA: The Chinese blasted the catchment areas in Tibet. The meteorological department has supplied the data; this year the floods have been heavier inspite of the fact that rainfall was not heavy. Whenever there are floods in Puthimari or Pagladia or Jiabharali or Brahmaputra, embankments are raised. I remember in 1954 it was the Ayyangar Committee that suggested the construction of embankments all along the Brahmaputra. But now the whole world has dismissed the idea of embankments. After the earthquake of 1950, the bed of the rivers in Assam has risen. At Dibrugarh, the bed of the river Brahmaputra has risen by 10 feet and in other places it has risen by 18 feet. Whenever the beds of rivers rise, embankments are built. What about the embankment? The whole world has dismissed the idea of embankments. These embankments are the sources of corruption and trouble in the area in the sense that they bring money into

the pockets of those who build the embankments ; whether they are the contractors or the PWD men, it does not matter. It brings money into the pockets of the men who have the responsibility for building the embankments. (*Interruption*) In this country almost every body is corrupt and the country has degenerated into the catacombs of corruption. That is the trouble.

Then what about the catchment area ? It is said that the Brahmaputra is located in the valley of Assam and that the source and mouth of the river are in foreign countries. But I remember that on the floor of this House the Minister gave us an assurance that he is going to build retention dams in Assam. What about the retention dams ? Not a single retention dam has been created up till now, and where as there are several multi-purpose projects, they are in the rest of India, there is not a single multi-purpose project in Assam. Do not forget that. There is nothing of the sort in Assam. The rivers in Assam are not being harnessed. The Brahmaputra alone, according to official figures, is capable of producing 36 million kilowatts of electricity. Have you ever harnessed this power ? You do not propose to do it. You have not harnessed the power resources. There are other rivers that can produce power like the Kapili valley project. What has happened to the Kapili project ? God alone knows. There is a warning on the wall in Assam. The Government must not forget it. I am sorry to say that what is happening has been forgotten. At the same time, as I have already said, Assam is a very neglected part of India. Although it is said that it is part of India, yet Assam is the most neglected part of India.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU : The Centre wants to take its wealth.

SHRI HEM BARUA : It is not only the Centre, but also all the people from the rest of India.

SHRI RANGA (Srikulam) : No. It is very much in our hearts.

SHRI HEM BARUA : I would say that the Government should adopt measures to see that

the floods are controlled in Assam. To say that it is difficult to control the floods is meaningless ; it is erroneous. Of course I know floods cannot be eliminated lock, stock and barrel. But the intensity of the floods can be reduced to the minimum by careful planning ; you can plug the loopholes at vulnerable points, and it is for the experts to point out where the vulnerable points lie.

SHRI ABDUL GHANI DAR : What you have said is true, but may I ask you a humble question ? In spite of that, your party voted always for Indiraji. (*Interruption*)

SHRI S. KUNDU (Balasore) : He is so much misinformed. I think he should read the newspapers correctly.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Order, order. Let us not waste time. Dr. Ram Subhag Singh.

DR. RAM SUBHAG SINGH (Buxar) : It is well that Shri Hem Barua has raised this discussion regarding the flood problem in Assam on the floor of the House. This is a very timely discussion, when the problems of erosion and inundation are there. The homes of hundreds of thousands of people are being washed away every year in Assam both in the Brahmaputra and the Surma valleys and also in the Barak area, about which he mentioned, which is called the Surma valley area. This situation, according to me, is mainly the creation of reckless cutting of forests in the catchment area of the Brahmaputra, and all those rivers that flow in that region, because the forests are fast disappearing from the entire Assam area. In fact, in the entire eastern region and throughout the country it is being recklessly cut. But in that particular area, there is no control over the cutting of forests in Manipur, Tripura, Assam or NEFA. The catchment area of Brahmaputra lies mostly in NEFA and it goes up to Tibet where it is called Tsang Po. From NEFA, all sorts of trees are cut indiscriminately. It is easier for the contractors to cut the trees which should not have been cut, but there is no control. There should be greater coordination between the Irrigation Ministry and the Agriculture or Forest Ministry as to what type of forest should be cut, whether there should be any

[Dr. Ram Subhag Singh]

mechanised plantation of forests regularly every year or not. There is *jhoom* cultivation in the entire eastern region, which also recklessly destroys the forests. The Agriculture Ministry and Irrigation Ministry should coordinate their activities in controlling the catchment area. I do not want to say anything which may be unpalatable, but I have noticed that recently in Manipur, Tripura and NEFA—now called Arunachal—and in Assam there is total lack of coordination. Nobody goes to the forest areas. If the minister who went to Gauhati to attend the Brahmaputra Commission function had gone to the catchment area of Brahmaputra or Barak, the expenditure would have been worth-while. Simply going to Gauhati and returning to Delhi is something which I consider reckless expenditure. Every time it is being paraded. I do not mean anything against any particular ministry because this has become the fashion. Mr. Chairman you know the Kosi area intimately. There is huge waste of money there. Bharat Sewak Samaj has been recklessly spending money.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU: You mean pocketing ?

DR. RAM SUBHAG SINGH: Yes, I mean that. There was a demand for a commission to enquire into the reckless spending by Bharat Sewak Samaj. Every year, all the papers are full of news saying there was flood control. Dr. K. L. Rao has been there frequently formerly as an engineer and later as minister and he is quite conversant with that area. All the time they say we are going to control floods, irrigate the areas and carry on afforestation work. But what is the afforestation work done in Kosi catchment area? Have you succeeded in controlling the floods of Kosi and bringing the entire catchment area or command area under irrigation? You have not. Similarly, you have utterly failed to control the flood of Brahmaputra. As Mr. Hem Barua asked, is there any trace of the foundation-stones of the retention dams? So much is trumpeted but nothing is done. Near Gauhati, on the way to Shillong, they set up a big flood control bhavan. The bhavan is in existence and expenditure has been made, but I do not know whether any work is done. I want to be enlightened on that.

SHRI N. R. LASKAR (Karimganj): It is now a hospital.

DR. RAM SUBHAG SINGH: That is still worse. If the flood control bhavan has been transformed into a hospital, that is the biggest tribute that can be paid to this Government and this ministry. I am glad that this has been pointed out by a member of the ruling party. I would suggest that you start afforestation from NEFA. You need not go to areas which are not within your territory; you dare not do so. But you can carry on afforestation work from our border point up to Pakistan border where Brahmaputra enters Pakistan or the Surma valley up to the point where it enters Pakistan. If you do not do that, you are committing a crime not only against that particular region but against the entire country. If you do that, you can transform the eastern region of our country into a paradise in regard to both agricultural and forest wealth.

Now no coordinated work is being done. So far there has been no coordinated afforestation or flood control work. Though Dibrugarh was one of the best known cities of Assam, it is being destroyed every year. Though the dike has been constructed, it is not in proper condition and the promised amount of work has not yet been done from top down to the border of Pakistan. Both erosion and inundation should be controlled.

Dhubri is being cut every year. I would like to be enlightened as to what is going to be done on behalf of the Government in regard to protecting Dhubri town and controlling Brahmaputra from cutting it further. Similarly, other centres like Neamatighat should be protected. In North Bengal there was a big flood in Jalpaiguri last year and even people were washed away to East Pakistan. There also protection work should be undertaken and expedited. Then, this year Tiesta was in flood.

श्री अब्दुल गनी डार : डाक्टर साहब,
पटना भी है ।

شہری عبدالغنی ڈار—ڈاکٹر صاحب
پٹنہ بھی ہے —

DR. RAM SUBHAG SINGH : There also it is the same story. In Patna they paraded that they are going to construct 3 bridge with a view to fooling the people. Even though the foundation stone was laid, no work has been done. What is the good of laying the foundation stone if the work is not to be started ?

श्री लखनलाल कपूर (किसानगंज) :
पब्लिसिटी की थी ।

DR. RAM SUBHAG SINGH : I stand corrected. The Minister also told us that the Ganga is going to be bridged. I would like to know when this work is going to be started for controlling flood in Patna and other areas of North Bihar.

Famine is a subject which is intimately connected with this subject. South Bihar is affected by famine this time. There has not been proper monsoon this year. Therefore, from the point of view of controlling floods providing proper irrigation and controlling famine by introducing rural electrification, we would like that the entire country should be covered within a short time, more particularly Assam. In Assam, Tripura, Manipur and NEFA work should be started soon for controlling these things. Also, the recommendations contained in various reports on the subject should be implemented.

The annual repair work is a sheer waste. Whenever there is flood you try to do something and incur expenditure of crores of rupees which does not help you in any way. On the other hand, if you concentrate your activities on a particular problem in a particular area, say the Brahmaputra in Assam, and take up the work in a planned way over a period of two or three years, it will give you some result. I suggest Assam because it is a victim of earthquakes ; not one earthquake but so many ; even recently there was an earthquake, though not of that severe intensity. If it is the victim of earthquakes as well as of floods, you should try to concentrate your activity and to concentrated work from Pasighat to the border of Pakistan and see that the people who inhabit that area are properly protected from floods, their agricultural fields are properly protected from soil erosion and Government and other forests are

properly afforested. I trust, the Government will try to do something in this regard.

The jhooming system as well as the entry into the forest area of unauthorised persons, who cut forests and settle there, has created the biggest people in Assam. Neither the Government of India nor the Assam Government has proved equal to the situation. This is a problem which is ruining Assam. I trust that whatever pertains to the Irrigation Ministry will receive the attention of Government.

SHRI LILADHAR KOTOKI (Nowgong) :
Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am beholden to Dr. Ram Subhag Singh, the Leader of the Opposition, for ably supporting the urgent need for controlling the floods of the Brahmaputra and the Barak in Assam. That was exactly the purpose why we sought this discussion.

The motion relates to floods in Assam but the hon. Member, Shri Jha, raised a point of order at the beginning of the discussion to state that floods in Bihar and other States also should have been discussed. Our main purpose is not to ignore the floods in other States but to concentrate and focus attention on the chronic problem of floods in Assam and their seriousness.

Before I go to the floods in Assam, I would express my sympathy for all people affected by floods in whatever State they may be, particularly by the recent have caused by the floods in the Alaknanda River and that region. It was really very tragic and this House expressed its concern about that. I extend my sympathy to them.

Coming to the floods in the Brahmaputra, although the floods this year have been very heavy in themselves, it is essential to look to the colossal havoc that the floods in the Brahmaputra and the Barak have caused to the State ever since the great earthquake of 1950.

I will beseech the House to bear with me when I take the House into certain figures which I have taken pains to cull out from scrappy statistics. The total loss caused by floods and erosion from 1950 to 1969 has been of the order of Rs. 130.34 crores. An average of the 14 years from 1954 to 1968 which has

[Shri Liladhar Kotoki]

been worked out tells that the average annual loss has been of the order of Rs. 7.7 crores. During this period the loss to crops out of these Rs. 130 crores has been as high as Rs. 104 crores.

Now, the House and everybody knows that Assam is primarily an agricultural State where industry is still in a nebulous state and the damage caused by floods is mainly to the fields and the agriculturists suffer. Our annual increase in the primary sector, namely, the agricultural sector, has been of the order of Rs. 4.4 crores. That shows our economy has actually retarded during all these years. That is why we are very much concerned that something positive must be done to salvage the economy of Assam and also give succour and relief to the people who have suffered all these years.

Then, during all these years, the total loss of human life has been as high as 909. The periodical floods have become more severe now. The loss to cattle has been to the tune of 1,20,000 during this period. This shows the extent of loss to human life and the sufferings of the people of the State.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh and also Shri Hem Barua referred to the additional problem of the aftermath of floods, that is, the erosion of the river Brahmaputra. This is very peculiar problem. Over the whole length of 450 miles, both the banks have been eroded, from year to year and prosperous towns and villages have been washed away. Even Dhubri town has been largely washed away. The other areas are also very seriously threatened. Dhubri town is being threatened very seriously. Last year, we raised it in the House. Therefore, the problem of floods has to be viewed together with the problem of erosion. Ever since the national flood control policy was enunciated in 1964, certain short term measures have been taken up. As the hon. Minister, Dr. K. L. Rao, said, during all these years, the works costing Rs. 25 crores have been done, mainly embankments. No long-term measures have yet been implemented. Surely, the embankments have mixed results. It is not true to say that embankments

have done no good. But, at the same time, it will also be wrong to say that embankments have not brought certain suffering to the people. The areas which fall outside embankments towards the river suffer. When embankments break at the pressure of floods, the damage done to the people who are suddenly exposed to the ravages of flood becomes more severe.

In fact, this year, the severity of floods has been due not so much to heavy rains which is normally the case but it has been due to the sudden breaches, a number of them, in the rivers. That has been the main reason for the severity of floods this year. Again, this year, the high level of the Brahmaputra has remained more or less, constant for more than a month which was not the normal feature before. It used to rise for a few days and then recede. It remained at a high level for a pretty long time this time.

We Members of Parliament, the State Government and the people of Assam have been crying and crying that something effective must be done. We pleaded that this problem should be treated as a national problem because it is not within the financial and technical competence of the State Government to grapple with the problem. As early as in 1964, we jointly submitted a memorandum addressed to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Irrigation and Power, the Minister of Finance, the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission and the Minister of Planning. I have got a copy of that with me. All the suggestions that we are making here were made as early as in 1964. We would have been glad and our people would have surely been saved from a large chunk of this huge loss if these measures that we suggested and that as Mr. Hem Barua says, the late-lamented Prime Minister Nehruji, assured us had been taken earlier. Nevertheless we are thankful to the Prime Minister that she has come out with an announcement in this House on the 5th of December last year where she has said that the Government has decided to do something concrete and positive. And in pursuance of that assurance the Brahmaputra Flood Control Board has been constituted and the Commission has been inaugurated

on the 24th July. It is expected, as Dr. Rao stated at Gauhati, that this Commission is going to investigate into the problems of floods and will lay emphasis on erosion control, conservation of excess waters that cause floods and construction of reservoirs and dams to facilitate power generation. These are the main things. Along with it is goes by implication that irrigation will also be a major part of their functions. Only Rs. 30 crores have been provided for this Commission during the Fourth Five Year Plan. Dr. Rao told us that in order that these proposed schemes make some dent and impact, it will require an expenditure of Rs. 250 crores. That is his estimate. Now I wish the House to consider as to how long it will take if this is to be the provision. I do concede that a few years will be taken for investigation and that extra funds will be needed some years later. But unless that is clarified the implementation will take a long time. The investigation is expected to be complete in two year in some of the tributaries. Some investigation was surely undertaken during these years—at least that is my presumption. In some of the more vulnerable rivers and tributaries like Pagladia and Puthi Mari which are very vital because when these rivers breach the railway and the national high way, entire Assam is cut off from the rest of the country, apart from the ravages the floods of these two rivers cause, I would suggest that priority should be given to the schemes of control of these two rivers, Pagladia and Puthi-Mari. I do not mean that the work in the other rivers should be in any way delayed, but these two should be given the topmost priority.

I have to draw the attention of Dr. Rao to the last paragraph of the Prime Ministers' statement of 5th December regarding this. I would just read this paragraph for the benefit of the House :

"The Government of India have also been giving their attention to another problem, namely the periodic ravages caused by floods in the Brahmaputra and its tributaries, which cause considerable concern to the Central as well as the State Government. Government accord high priority to the evolution and implementation of a com-

prehensive plan of flood-control through the agency of a Brahmaputra Flood Control Commission, and have now decided that such a commission should be set up and provided with adequate resources for the discharge of its responsibility. The State Government will be enabled to make adequate provision for this purpose in the State Plan."

When this assurance is there, Dr. Rao should not feel in any way handicapped for want of funds. That was his sentiment, as far as I could make out from the synopsis of the Rajya Sabha Debates. The House should presume that whatever funds are necessary in order to fulfil this obligation will be found some how.

The Ministry may go ahead with their investigation and preparation of the project report and ask the Planning Commission and the Finance Ministry to provide the funds which are wanted.

We cannot and the House cannot accept the position and the people of Assam cannot be expected to continue to suffer because of these natural calamities which can be controlled in these days, when science and technology have advanced so much. Fortunately, we have got a Minister who is a reputed expert on this subject.

So far as Barak project is concerned, we were told, the project was ready for implementation long ago. But some how, due to certain difficulties that cropped up, that was submerging certain areas of Manipur and so it has been delayed. We are very glad that Dr. Rao has found some other alternative site. I would only request this, that like other matters, this should not be allowed to be delayed any further, because the people have become restive due to their suffering.

I want to make a reference about the relief provided. The Assam Government has spent Rs. 26 lakhs by way of gratuitous relief and also seed grants. This is my information upto 4th of August. Everyday they are spending on an average of Rs. 1 lakh. I do hope that the Centre will, under their formula, give adequate succour to the State Government which is financially very weak.

[Shri Liladhar Kotoki]

I want to say one thing more about the rehabilitation of those people whose houses have been washed away. We want one gesture from the Centre, that they should help them with C. I. sheets which provide the main roof of the houses in our State.

I hope that all these aspects will be looked into by the Hon. Minister.

श्री श्रीचन्द्र गोयल (चण्डीगढ़) : असम की बाढ़ की चर्चा इस समय सदन में हो रही है। मंत्री महोदय ने एक वक्तव्य देश के विभिन्न भागों में आई बाढ़ों के सम्बन्ध में दिया है। उनके वक्तव्य से विदित हुआ है कि अकेले असम में इन बाढ़ों से हानि लगभग 9 करोड़ 8 लाख की हुई है। यह अनुमान प्रारम्भ में लगाया गया था। हो सकता है कि हानि के आंकड़े बाद में ज्यादा बढ़ गए हों। विभिन्न रूपों में वहाँ जो हानि हुई है, चाहे फसलों की हानि हो या रिहायशी मकानों के गिरने से हानि हुई हो या दूसरे रूपों में हुई हो, वह हानि इससे ज्यादा हुई होगी, ऐसा मैं समझता हूँ। मैं समझता हूँ कि मंत्री महोदय लेटेस्ट पोजिशन इस हानि के सम्बन्ध में सदन को बताने की स्थिति में होंगे और वह जब उत्तर देंगे तो इस पर प्रकाश डालेंगे।

यह अच्छी बात है कि मंत्री महोदय तुरन्त बाद कामरूप जिले में गए और वहाँ स्थिति का अध्ययन करने के बाद इस बात की व्यवस्था की कि ब्रह्मपुत्र नदी के बांध के अन्दर जो दरारें आ गई हैं या उसमें जो सूरख हो गए हैं, वे बन्द हों और आगे से दरारें न पड़ सकें। इसको रोकने की उन्होंने व्यवस्था की। मैं समझता हूँ इसके बाद कुछ न कुछ इसका प्रबन्ध अवश्य हुआ होगा।

मुझे प्रसन्नता है कि ब्रह्मपुत्र फ्लड कंट्रोल कमिशन का 24 जुलाई को उद्घाटन हुआ और इसकी चर्चा लोक सभा में हुई। मैं समझता

हूँ कि यह जो पग उठाया गया है; यह बहुत देरी से उठाया गया है। जहाँ तक असम का प्रश्न है, ब्रह्मपुत्र नदी के अन्दर और उसके अन्दर दूसरी छोटी गिरने वाली जो नदियाँ हैं, उनके अन्दर बाढ़ आना कोई नई बात नहीं है। कम से कम मैं तो जब भूगोल पढ़ा करता था, तब से पढ़ता और सुनता आया हूँ समाचारों में ब्रह्मपुत्र नदी के अन्दर और उसमें गिरने वाली नदियों के अन्दर हमेशा बाढ़ आती है और इस कारण से हर वर्ष करोड़ों रुपये की सम्पत्ति की हानि होती है, जीवन हानि होती है और सारा असम का आर्थिक ढांचा अस्त-व्यस्त हो जाता है। वास्तव में हमारी सरकार को अनेकों वर्ष पहले इस दिशा में कोई बड़ा तथा प्रभावी पग उठाना चाहिये था ताकि इस समस्या को प्राथमिकता में आधार पर हल किया जा सकता। इसका हल केन्द्रीय सरकार के स्तर पर ही निकलना सम्भव था, प्रान्तीय सरकार के बूते की यह बात नहीं थी और न ही है। जितने धन की इस समस्या को हल करने के लिए आवश्यकता है, उतना धन प्रान्तीय सरकार के लिए जुटा पाना असम्भव है। प्रान्तीय सरकार वह अपार धनराशि व्यय करके कोई समाधान-कारक हल प्रस्तुत करने की स्थिति में न तो थी और न ही है। यह अच्छा हुआ कि फ्लड कंट्रोल कमीशन का उद्घाटन किया गया और आदेश दिया गया है कि जो ब्रह्मपुत्र फ्लड कंट्रोल बोर्ड है, वह उससे मार्गदर्शन प्राप्त करे और उससे आदेश लेकर यह काम करे। मैं आशा करता हूँ कि निकट भविष्य में ही इस समस्या का कोई समाधान निकाल लिया जाएगा। इसमें कितना समय लगेगा, यह पता नहीं। लेकिन एक एग्जास्टिव योजना यह कमिशन तैयार करने वाला है ताकि जहाँ तक सम्भव हो पग उठा कर कुछ ऐसा इसमें से रास्ता निकाला जा सके ताकि आगे के लिए यह समस्या हल हो। यह राष्ट्रीय विपत्ति हर

साल आती है। यह एक राष्ट्रीय समस्या भी है और राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर इसका हल भी निकलना चाहिये। इस दिशा में जो कदम उठाया गया है। वह निश्चय ही स्वागत योग्य है। मैं आशा करता हूँ कि जो कमिशन मुकर्रर किया गया है। वह ब्यूरोक्रेटिक तरीके से वर्षों तक काम नहीं करेगा बल्कि एक सीमा समय को निर्धारित करके उस समय में योजना बना कर और उसको कार्यान्वित करके इस समस्या को हल करने की कोशिश करेगा। मैं कोई विशेषज्ञ नहीं हूँ लेकिन मैं चाहता हूँ कि छः महीने या साल के अन्दर यह काम हो जाना चाहिये। यह सौभाग्य की बात है कि मंत्री महोदय इस विषय के विशेषज्ञ हैं। इसमें क्या कठिनाइयाँ हैं। इसको वह अच्छी तरह से जानते हैं। वास्तव में कितना समय इसके अन्दर दरकार होगा और कब तक पूर्ण योजना इस सिलसिले में बन सकेगी, इसको वह अच्छी तरह से जानते हैं। लेकिन मैं समझता हूँ कि उनके मार्गदर्शन में यह योजना जरूर बनेगी और पूरी होगी।

देश के विभिन्न भागों में आए वर्ष आने वाली बाढ़ों के सम्बन्ध में आठ दस साल पहले मैंने पंजाब के एक इंजीनियर जोकि इरिगेशन डिपार्टमेंट के थे, श्री एच० एल० सैली, उनका एक लेख पढ़ा था। लेख का मन्तव्य यह था कि बाढ़ें जितनी ऊपर दिखने वाली हानि करती हैं, उतनी तो करती ही हैं परन्तु उसके साथ-साथ जो जमीन की फर्टिलिटी है, जरखे-जियत है, उस मिट्टी को भी अपने साथ बहा कर ले जाती हैं। इस वास्ते वास्तव में हानि बहुत अधिक होती हैं। उन्होंने यह भी लिखा था कि इस बुराई में से हम कुछ अच्छाई भी निकाल सकते हैं। उन्होंने इसके बारे में सुझाव भी दिये थे। टेक्नीकल दृष्टि से मैं कुछ भी उनके बारे में नहीं कह सकता कि असम के अन्दर या देश के किन-किन भागों के अन्दर यह सम्भव है लेकिन उनका सुझाव यह था कि

जितना भी पानी जा कर दरिया में गिरना है और बिल्कुल जाया हो जाता है, नष्ट हो जाता है, इसको बचाने की हमें कोई योजना करनी चाहिये क्योंकि यह पानी बहुत कीमती होता है, उसमें भूमि का उर्वरापन शामिल होता है। इस वास्ते उनका सुझाव था कि जहाँ भी सम्भव हो, सारे पानी को रोक कर उसका एक जखीरा बनाकर, उसको स्टोर करके, रखने का प्रबन्ध किया जाना चाहिये और देश के जिस-जिस भाग के अन्दर और जिस-जिस मौसम के अन्दर उसका उपयोग हो सकता हो, वह किया जाना चाहिये। वह एक बड़े अच्छे ओहदे पर पंजाब में इरिगेशन डिपार्टमेंट में इंजीनियर थे और बड़े अच्छे इंजीनियर थे। मैं समझता हूँ कि मंत्री महोदय उनके साहित्य का अध्ययन निश्चित रूप से करेंगे और उन्होंने जो सुझाव दिए हैं, जो विचार व्यक्त किए हैं, उनको जहाँ तक हो सकेगा; अवश्य कार्यान्वित करने की कोशिश करेंगे। यह जो बुराई है इसमें जितनी भलाई निकाली जा सके, निकालने का प्रयत्न मंत्री महोदय करेंगे, इसकी मुझे पूर्ण आशा है।

18.00 hrs.

विदेशी मुझे जब मिलने आते हैं तो हैरानी प्रकट करते हैं कि हम बाढ़ों पर भी काबू नहीं पा सके हैं। यह एक प्राकृतिक प्रकोप है और इस पर पूर्ण रूप में काबू नहीं पाया जा सकता है, इसको मैं मानता हूँ। लेकिन विदेशियों का मत है कि इस विज्ञान के युग में, इस टेक्नोलोजी की प्रगति के युग में और उसका सहारा लेकर दुनिया के अनेक देशों में असम्भव चीजें भी सम्भव हो गई हैं तो क्या हमारे यहां एम्बैक-मेंट्स या दरिया के किनारे को इस ढंग से बना कर ऐसी व्यवस्था नहीं की जा सकती है कि ज्यादा वर्षा होने पर भी उनके अन्दर दरारें या सूखा न हों? शायद यह बहुत खर्चीली योजना होगी। लेबल को ऊंचा करना होगा। बीस वर्षों से यह समस्या हमें परेशान कर रही है। दुनिया के और देशों ने साइंस का सहारा

[श्री श्री चन्द गोयल]

लेकर क्या इस मसले का हल निकालने की कोशिश की है या नहीं और अगर की है तो कहां तक वे इसका हल निकाल पाए हैं, इसको हमें देखना होगा। मैं आशा करता हूँ कि मंत्री महोदय इस ओर ध्यान देकर इस पर निश्चित रूप से विचार करेंगे।

अब सहायता का प्रश्न भी पैदा होता है। नौ दस करोड़ की हानि असम में हुई। ये आकड़े अंतिम नहीं हैं। राज्य सरकार ने 22 लाख 40 हजार रुपये की मदद दो मंदों के अन्दर दी है। प्रधान मंत्री ने कृपा करके अपने फंड में से पचास हजार रुपये दान दिए हैं। यह राशि 23 लाख के करीब होती है। जहां हानि दस करोड़ की हुई हो, वहां सहायता 23 लाख की देना कहां तक मददगार साबित हो सकती है, यह मैं आप से समझना चाहता हूँ। केन्द्रीय सरकार को चाहिये कि खुले दिल से वह प्रान्तीय सरकार की सहायता करे। अगर ऐसा नहीं किया गया तो जो दुखिया लोग हैं, जो इन बाढ़ों से प्रभावित हुए हैं उनके लिए अपने आपको फिर से बसाना कठिन हो जाएगा। जीवन की रोजी कमाने के जो साधन हैं, फसल इत्यादि है, उसको वे फिर से बो सकें और बीज, ऋण आदि के रूप में उनको जो सहायता दी जानी है, वह इतनी दी जानी चाहिये जो पर्याप्त हो। अभी तक जो सहायता दी गई है, वह बहुत नाकाफी है। देश के विभिन्न भागों में जो बाढ़ें आती हैं, उन पर राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर और राष्ट्रीय दृष्टिकोण से विचार आप करें। सरकार दूर-गामी योजनाओं, लांग-टर्म मेजरज, पर अलग विचार करे और तात्कालिक उपयोग की, शार्ट-टर्म मेजरज का अलग से विचार करे। देश के विभिन्न भागों में बाढ़ आई है, हम किस-किस रूप में उनकी सहायता कर सकते हैं, वह इसका अलग विचार करे। वह सारे देश की दृष्टि से दूरगामी योजनायें बनाये, ताकि प्रकृति के जिस प्रकोप के कारण देश के विभिन्न भागों में हर

वर्ष करोड़ों रुपयों की हानि होती है, हम उससे छुटकारा पा सकें।

मैं आशा करता हूँ कि मंत्री महोदय इन सब बातों पर ध्यान देंगे और बाढ़ग्रस्त लोगों को शीघ्रातिशीघ्र राहत पहुंचाने की व्यवस्था करेंगे।

SHRI BEDABRATA BARUA (Kaliabor) : The estimated loss does not include other losses and the consequent devastation that is caused, the epidemic that follows and also the rise in prices and other things. Once there is a flood, the total social cost in Assam is immeasurable and every time it is repeated, the social cost goes on increasing.

[SHRI SHRI CHAND GOYAL in the Chair]

There was a time when this cycle did not affect us so much, but the great earthquake of 1950, the type of non-scientific approach to floods that we had, lack of research, all these things led to this condition. Therefore, we demand, we request the Government to give immediate relief to the Assam Government in this matter so that the Assam Government is able to cope with the consequences of the floods. Though the spectacular side is over with the receding of floods, the aftermath is there, the terrible consequence of ruin, the complete failure of crops, etc., which will continue for a whole year and lead to the starvation of more than a million people.

In addition, we have also the problem of erosion. This problem has not received enough attention. The Minister told us two years ago that one or two dredgers were coming. Hundreds and thousands of acres of Assam's valley are affected. After all, the valley is not wider than 60 km. The Brahmaputra is eating into hundreds of square miles of Assam. I am not exaggerating. Nothing has been done to get the dredgers. Even now the report is the same, that the dredgers are coming. The taming of the Brahmaputra is out of question and the Minister has made

it clear, but certainly he should pay attention to the type of erosion that is taking place. Only a month ago I visited the Kaziranga Game Sanctuary and I found that the Brahmaputra is eroding in the direction of the Sanctuary now. In two or three years time, the sanctuary will not be there, including other thousands and lakhs of acres of cultivable land by the side of the Brahmaputra because the force of the water is so strong in one direction or the other. No research has been made but it has been taken for granted that the use of a dredger or dredgers in the tributaries as well as in the Brahmaputra could have alleviated this condition, could have saved a huge area of arable land in the State. I would, therefore, request the Minister to see that something serious is done to get these dredgers. They have been coming for the last five or six years, but they have not reached there. They must reach there, otherwise next time we do not know how much we would lose.

SHRI N. K. SOMANI (Nagaur) : They are crawlers, not dredgers :

SHRI BEDABRATA BARUA : Dredgers should, I suggest, actually appear in the Assam river system, not one but enough in number, to deal with this problem. Brahmaputra is 10—15 miles wide in certain places ; all that is arable soil of Assam ; it has gone into Brahmaputra. That loss is not computed ; it does not come in the records of flood loss. We are happy that the Brahmaputra Valley Commission has been instituted. There has of course been some delay, as hon. Members point out. We thank the Government and the Minister for having taken so much interest. In spite of my great regard for my senior friend Mr. Hem Barua we do welcome Ministers visiting Assam ; we hope he will visit us more, not only he but the Deputy Minister and others, and see the conditions in Assam.

SHRI HEM BARUA : I did not mean this Minister ; I mentioned some other people going from New Delhi at the expense of the people who were forced to bleed through their nose.....(Interruptions.)

SHRI BEDABRATA BARUA : I have seen M. Ps. going to places as far as Trivandrum two times during a short session, and four or five times during a long session. Does he rebuke the Government for that ? That is considered completely in order but this Minister's visit is not considered normal only because he is a Congressman and so it becomes a political visit.

SHRI HEM BARUA : Whether he is an M. P. or a Minister, when he goes to some place for party work, he should spend his own money.

SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY : This allegation should be kept out of the record ; he alleges that Members go home four or five times.

MR. CHAIRMAN : It is not an allegation against any body. Let him proceed.

SHRI BEDABRATA BARUA : It is a curious thing that when flood-control comes in the Government cannot spend money, not because they do not have resources but because it is a State subject. I know the constitutional difficulties but they are not immense. Atomic energy supplies electric power in the same way as hydro electric projects. We are not in distress in a matter like hydroelectric power or atomic energy but in respect for flood control works we are dealing with the distress of the people. When atomic energy produces power Government can spend any money. I am not protesting against it. My point is that if money, can be found for such purposes, the constitutional reason should not stand in the way. Money should be found to finance this project and there should also be research work done. Our approach all these years has been non-scientific and so our planning in regard to floods had been defective. We build embankments. It is said that they lead to silting up. For fifty years or 100 years we had floods and when they come they fertilise the fields. Now we have embankments. There is a breach. Not that embankments are wrong. We have never faced the problem scientifically. Our colleague said that vested interests develop

[Shri Bedabrata Barua]

when embankments or protection works are erected because large sums of money are involved in this. Government must take serious steps. In that area, near Kaziranga, when I went there, I found that during the last few years, they have built nine embankments. One embankment is over this year, and next year they will have another embankment. This year they are going to have two embankments. Every embankment means lakhs of rupees. Naturally, there is nothing more lucrative than building an embankment. Unless the Central Government helps and tries to get dredgers, I think we will go on building embankments and destroy the embankments as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN : The hon. Member's time is up.

SHRI BEDABRATA BARUA : I am concluding. I notice that I have taken about 10 minutes. Another important matter is there, in which we are deeply interested. It is said that much can be done in this matter. Much can be done if we get the co-operation of the Pakistan Government. Now, it is not something which is startling for anybody, because, as the Minister has said in the Rajya Sabha, on that part of the river in its upper reaches we cannot do anything because it is in China and we can not do much in the rest of it because it is in Pakistan. Well, there are tributaries in Pakistan through which the water could be diverted ; we cannot do it because it is in Pakistan. But the point is this. I would like to quote what the Awami leader in Pakistan, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, said only last year in August, when he was addressing his party members. I do not know why these are not published in this country. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman said that there should be joint co-operation between India and Pakistan to solve the problem of floods. He further said that if the Government of India and the Pakistan Government can co-operate in regard to the Indus waters and other problems, why it is not possible for the Government of Pakistan to do this. He appealed to the Government of Pakistan to co-operate with the Government of India to solve the problem.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU : Because it is a prohibited zone for Pindi and Delhi, both.

SHRI BEDABRATA BARUA : This eastern area problem can only be solved jointly. This morning also, we were discussing the fish problem, and it can be solved easily with their co-operation. East Pakistan is selling fish at a throw-away price, and West Bengal and Assam do not get enough fish. Why not the Government of India do something in the matter of this river flood also in co-operation with the Government of Pakistan ? Why not we discuss it with them and take some initiative ? It is no good saying that we have been trying, or we would like to welcome their co-operation and so on. The question is whether the Government have taken any initiative, just as they discussed Farakka. The question is whether anybody, some Ministers, whether the Prime Minister or anybody had taken up this question of flood control with the Government of Pakistan, and whether any initiative has been taken during the last 22 years with the Government of Pakistan, in regard to this problem, because we in Assam feel that we have been the victims of partition which divided the country. In Assam, the partition dislocated our communications to Calcutta. We could go to Calcutta formerly in 24 hours, but now it takes twodays. Calcutta is our market. We have no communal riots. We do not know that a communal riot is in Assam. It was partition that hit us and hit us irretrievably. Even today we are not able to get out of the consequences of partition. We have suffered tremendously along with the people of West Bengal. Of course, once partition was done, we accepted it. There is no more question about it. But we should not be made to suffer the consequences of partition, continuously. Something should be done. The Pakistan Government would be obdurate ; they may not like to co-operate with us. But then, we would welcome co-operation, and I would ask the Government whether they had really taken any initiative, because in Pakistan also the floods have brought about the same consequences. So, if both the Governments could

tackle this question jointly, and see what could be done, it would be welcome to all of us.

SHRI N. K. SOMANI (Nagaur): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I think this is a matter of great pity and concern, as a backward and a poor State, which is also a very sensitive area, as far as our country is concerned, is allowed to sit at the mercy of violent vagaries of Nature due to the utter disregard and callous attitude of not only the successive Central Governments that have been in power in Delhi so far, but also due to the indifferent attitude of the State Government. Dates have been mentioned; data have been cited by my predecessors in this regard, to show that this matter of national importance has been receiving only superficial attention and only lip sympathy by both our officers and Ministers at both these places. Therefore I think that we should be grateful to Prof. Hem Barua who has made it possible—and his colleagues also—for the House to attend to this matter and to take certain urgent attention. The data has been provided. I, therefore, stand at a considerable disadvantage from two points of view. More or less adequate ground has been covered and not being a son of the soil, most of the members from Assam have already covered adequate ground. Whatever little contribution I make, I hope the minister will take that into consideration. I also hope, through the good offices of Mr. Bedabrata Barua, it will be possible for me in the near future to visit Assam also.

The other day in the Rajya Sabha the Minister mentioned that this problem is of such a magnitude that it has defied solution so far. This itself should have opened the eyes of this Government and its predecessors long time back, because the extent and scope of the fury of the Brahmaputra was known not only after independence but as a historic fact. If nothing or very little has been done to tame this river for use by the people of Assam and other parts of the country, it should be a cause for censure.

On July 24th the Brahmaputra Flood Control Commission has been set up with fanfare and ceremony. Neither national pride

nor paucity of resources should be allowed to stand in the way of obtaining the world's best technical know how for the Brahmaputra complex. If there is lack of technical know how and expertise in the country, which I hope we do not have, in that case we should be able promptly to get it from wherever it is possible. But if the Minister claims that we are sufficiently advanced in this technology, he will have to produce much more evidence of the performance of his Ministry. Certainly he himself being a technocrat, I for one would have expected a much better performance *vis-a-vis* the river Brahmaputra and the Assam valley. There is a complaint that there is lack of coordination about the records that have been maintained during the British times and now concerning hydrological data, river flooding data, etc. and that collating and charting has not been done properly. The Ministry should carefully look into it about the relationship between rainfall and level of the river, the frequency of the river changing its course, the extent of damage being done by silting, etc. These are problems which should receive the urgent attention of this Government.

It has been mentioned before that about Rs. 250 crores would be required over a period of time. Not only from the point of view of the volume of money needed but also from the human angle, it is necessary that this money should be found on a priority basis even at the expense of certain other projects, if I am allowed to say so, and there has to be a total master plan for solving this problem. For too long this Government has tried to solve this problem on an *ad hoc* basis. If there is a breach in a embankment, they take a particular step on a warfooting. If a particular town is threatened and if lives and property are lost, there is some shake-up here as well as in Shillong and Gauhati. Because of the enormity of the problem, its complexity and the admission of the Minister himself that we have not been able to find a solution so far, it is all the more necessary that a total master plan to tackle the problem from all its angles should be prepared. From whatever knowledge you have about the source of the river in Tibet right up to its entry into

[Shri N. K. Somani]

the Bay of Bengal through East Pakistan, all the data should be collated and a master plan prepared by the Brahmaputra Commission as well as the experts available in the Ministry. It is great pity that during every monsoon, for three or four months, communication is severely disrupted between the upper and lower Assam. This has been a recurring problem. About the damages, figures have been cited. As far as human lives and certain other intangible losses are concerned, no Government would be able to quantify that. The extent and scope of this damage should have moved the Government of India at least 20 years ago if not earlier. Now they are only trying to wake up, just as Mr. Bedabrata Barua said, the dredgers are still coming. I don't know what kind of expertise is involved. Why should the Government of India take so long to decide upon placement of orders for supply of dredgers, which according to today's reckoning are expected to be delivered in 1972? God knows when they would be coming.

SHRI HEM BARUA : The dredgers were ordered long ago.

SHRI N. K. SOMANI : For the sake of the people who have been killed and for the annual miseries and the damage that has been caused to Assam, he will have to answer for the delay. If the order has been placed long ago, the Minister is doubly responsible for explaining why it has not arrived and why no action was taken for expediting it.

Coming to flood warning system, I do not know why most of the warnings in our country are at our doorstep only when our house is on fire. When the floods are at our doorstep then only we wake up and warn the citizens of the impending floods. A comprehensive flood warning system should be set up so that if the danger is 100 or 200 kilometre before your house the Government, the Flood Control Commissioner or the various authorities should be able to warn the people all along the course of the river so that as much property and as many lives as possible could be salvaged and saved.

I would like to add a few background notes to this. As we all know, Brahmaputra is one of the

largest of our Indian rivers. Not only that, it carries one-third of the total of India's waters. It is a great pity that this water has so far not been used for the sake of the people, either for irrigation or any other purpose. Again, look at the catchment area. It is 9.24 lakhs sq. kilometre. In spite of this tremendous potential that exists in the case of Brahmaputra, the annual loss has been put at Rs. 10 crores, not calculating the human and other losses.

From a territory which used to be called Tibet, which is now part of China, this river flows for 1,600 kilometres and the balance 400 kilometres is in East Pakistan. I would like to support the plea of the earlier speakers who have mentioned that there should be some kind of special dialogue with both Chinese and Pakistani authorities, because it is in the interests of those countries also that this mighty river should be tamed and put to some valuable use. Even if the proper climate for such talks does not exist today, I would say that you will have to start making a master plan right from the point where this river takes birth up to the point it flows to the Bay of Bengal, because when one fine morning you find you have friendly relationship with these countries, that would not be the time of thinking of preparing a master plan. That would be the time of implementing such a master plan. So, this is the time for preparing a master plan, charting the course of the river and collecting all the data from A to Z.

Mention has also been made by some people, and this is coincidental to this debate, that in India most of the rivers can be connected by some kind of water grid. I do not know whether Brahmaputra and the other Assam rivers could be connected but it is a matter which the Minister should seriously consider because there is a tremendous annual loss on account of the vagaries of the rivers, though of course there is much more damage in Assam, then in Bihar and Bengal. In addition to the loss of life and property, there is misery and woe to lakhs of people. Therefore, apart from the master plan for taming this river, a master plan for the entire

water management of this country should be prepared.

Reference has also been made to the disastrous after-effects of the 1950 earthquake. I am told that the recurring floods in the Brahmaputra valley are largely due to the congestion of the river bed caused by heavy siltation. Therefore, when these things were noticed as long ago as 1950, that was the time when the dredgers should have been ordered and that was the time when with technical assistance the master plan should have been prepared. Even now we hope that these imported dredgers would be in Assam in 1972 and I hope the Government would try to expedite the supply of these vital equipments.

A point about the barrages has been mentioned. I am sure the hon. Minister knows about it. These barrages have to be built at suitable sites and the sites have already been suggested on the basis of archaeological and hydrological data and data on rock formation obtained in various parts of the Assam valley. It has been suggested that these barrages which will help to tame the river should be built at Dibrugarh, Silghat, Gauhati, Chanderdinga and Dhubri. Now, as far as Dhubri is concerned, for the last two years I have myself been in correspondence with the hon. Minister as a result of SOS and telegrams sent by the people of Dhubri. Yet, I do not think any succour has been provided to that unfortunate town and the other areas on both banks of Brahmaputra.

Then, the Manas and Kaziranga sanctuaries, both of which are in Assam, are also annually devastated by the Brahmaputra floods.

SHRI DHIRESWAR KALITA : Not Manas ; only Kaziranga.

SHRI N. K. SOMANI : I stand corrected.

Fortunately or unfortunately, the great Indian rhino thrives and is protected only in

the Kaziranga sanctuary. There is a risk that this great species about which the country should be proud, will be completely extinct if you do not protect it. Therefore we should take a survey as to where else this part of the population could be transferred so that we could preserve the great Indian rhino for the sake of posterity.

Tall claims have been made by this Government that during the Fourth Plan period and thereafter sufficient funds would be found for an accelerated development of backward areas in this country. If there is any deserving cause in India which should receive all the allotment, both within the Plan and outside it, if there is any other problem that is to be solved on this urgent basis, I think, it is Assam's problem and the Brahmaputra River and the whole complex should receive the topmost priority.

SHRI DHIRESWAR KALITA (Gauhati) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I must first congratulate hon. Members who have spoken and shown sympathy towards the solution of the flood problems of Assam, Bihar and other States.

About the origin of these floods in Assam, something has been said by the hon. Dr. Ram Subhag Singh and also by my hon. friend, Shri Hem Barua. Since 1950 when the great earthquake took place in the month of August (*Shri Hem Barua* : On the 15th August.), according to the bulletin of the Assam Government floods are annually ravaging from 1953 on wards. Something wrong has taken place in Assam as a whole and with the riverbeds not only of the Brahmaputra but also of other rivers. I think, from 1950 onwards either the Central Government or the State Government has not undertaken any geological survey in regard to this effect of the great earthquake of 1950. Since then the riverbeds have become upside down. Their beds were normal prior to 1950. Though I was in jail in 1950, I know that there was no flood. In my college days, there were no such floods probably in Assam. But after that great earthquake every year the floods are gradually increasing and there are also earthquakes. So

[Shri Dhireswar Kalita]

I want to stress that the effect of earthquakes may be one of the great causes for disturbing our riverbeds which have either risen or the river banks have been disturbed.

If we study the figures of damage from 1953 onwards, we find that the area affected in lakh hectares was 0.81 in 1953; in 1954 it was 31.46; 1955—14.05 lakhs; 1956—5.99 lakhs; 1957— 3.96 lakhs; 1958—12.45 lakhs; 1959—10.35 lakhs; 1960—4.73 lakhs; 1961— 1.92 lakhs; 1962— 16.22 lakhs; 1963— 5.82 lakhs; 1964— 7.60 lakhs; 1965— 6.94 lakhs; 1966—17.85 lakhs; 1967— 2.55 lakhs; 1968— 4.05 lakhs; 1969— 8.5 lakhs. Coming to 1970, this year, the figure is 3,14,925 acres of land that have been damaged uptill now by the current floods in Assam.

As regards the loss of human life, in 1953, it was 4; 1954—32; 1955—19; 1956—5 and, this way, hundreds of lives have been lost from 1953 to 1970. Yearwise, I can cite crores of rupees worth damage that has occurred in Assam. But I am not going into that. This is the damage caused every year in Assam.

In the last 17 years, the Government of India had not awakened to this problem. Only now, this year, the Government of India has come out with a flood control policy. From 1953 onwards, when the floods occurred in Assam, what was the work done? How did the Government of Assam tackle the flood problem? They went on constructing embankments unscientifically everywhere. Whenever there was a flood, they constructed some embankments here and there. That was the unscientific work done by the Government of Assam. The people of Assam thought that this will give some relief. But when the embankments were erected, the river beds also began to rise. Because of the embankments, the water always carries silt and the rivers begin to rise. With one or two heavy showers in Assam, there is a flood in Assam and by the heavy current of the river, the embankments give way. This unscientific construction of the embankments in Assam is also one of the

causes for damages to the crops and also the loss of human life in Assam. I want the Government of India to make a thorough inquiry into the working of these embankments in Assam.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member should try to conclude now. He has already taken double the time allotted to his party.

SHRI DHIRESWAR KALITA: My hon. friend, who preceded me, also spoke about the construction of embankments in Assam. In that area affected by floods, they are constructing embankments and the water of the Brahmaputra river is rising. They know the current is slashing all the banks. Instead of protecting that cutting they are constructing embankments 10' or 100' apart. They know the current is cutting and it is going to erode, but the Engineering Department of Assam are erecting some embankments 100' apart and as a result next day it is being washed away. What is this nonsense going on in Assam? Every year it is going on. You know stone spurs are necessary to prevent erosion but they are not putting there. Instead of that they are putting only embankments. It is nonsense. When you know the Brahmaputra is cutting its banks, you are putting only embankments. Can you prevent floods by that? Dr. Rao has agreed to make an inquiry into this.

Secondly, in Kamrup district there is one Dharapur area and another area is Sual Kachi village which is the most thickly populated village in India. Near that there is one small town called Palasbani which is completely eaten away by the Brahmaputra floods. There is Dharapur. Some wooden spurs were built in the midst of Brahmaputra current. I think you have not seen Dharapur. This village is being eroded every day. If Dharapur and Sual Kachi are not protected, then the whole of Brahmaputra will flow into south and the National Highway which is there will also be eaten away by the Brahmaputras current. You should see that these two places, Dharapur and Sual Kachi are protected here and now.

Otherwise, the National Highway is going to be washed away within a few months because the current is flowing like anything.

Then I come to the Brahmaputra Control Commission. The Brahmaputra Control Commission has three-tier system. One is the Brahmaputra Control Board where you are the Chairman. It is the policy-making body and another body is the Brahmaputra Control Commission. That will do implementation on part. Another body is the Brahmaputra Flood Control Advisory Commission in which national and foreign experts are there. I do not know what you are going to do with this three-tier system. We have got the experience. I think you have visited Shillong. There is one place called Barni between Gauhati and Shillong. There is one Central institution which is called the River Research Institute. Where was it constructed? It was constructed on a hill top. River Research Institute is built on hill top. Perhaps you are not aware of that. It has now been converted into a military hospital knowing full-well that it is all nonsense. If these things are going to take place in Assam in the name of Brahmaputra Control Commission, you cannot expect any co-operation from us. I know one Engineer has been taken into this Commission. He was the Chief Engineer in E and D Department in Assam. Does he know where Sual Kachi is? Does he know where Dharapur is? Does he know where Sonari is? He does not know anything about Brahmaputra. That man has been appointed as one of the engineers in this Commission. He was the Chief Engineer of the Assam Engineering Department. You should take cognisance of all those aspects. Due to lack of time, I am not going into the details.

This situation can only be helped by the Government of India. The Prime Minister has only given a token amount of Rs. 50,000 but crores and crores worth of properties have been damaged and washed away. Why is it that the Government of India is not coming to help this State with proper relief measures? At least Rs. 20 crores should be immediately provided for to meet the ravages of floods in Assam.

One word about the Central Government employees who are working in the Post and Telegraph Departments, Railways, etc. Many of their homes and homesteads have been washed away due to these floods. Through you, Mr. Chairman, I request the Hon. Minister Dr. Rao, to influence the other Ministries of the Government of India to give flood relief advance to such people to build their houses and to meet their immediate needs. The Central Government employees who are working there and whose houses have been washed away need some relief which should be provided. With these words I resume my seat. Thank you.

SHRI BASUMATARI (Kokrajhar) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, this problem is a national problem and there should not be any attempt to make only criticism but we should try to see how the chronic problem can be solved. Mr. Kalita referred to embankments. Of course everybody knows that embankments were not constructed in a scientific way. They were constructed by the experts who were available, by the technical personnel who were available. All the rivers in Assam have become shallow and silted after the earth quake of 1950 and the water level in the Brahmaputra and its tributaries rise and overflows and it becomes very difficult for the people to protect their lives and crops. In large numbers people from the Pagladiya area demanded that they should have embankments, and I happened to represent that areas as an M. L. A. at that time.

I told the people that embankment should not be constructed without proper study and examination, but the people did not listen to me. When I opposed it the political parties took advantage of it. You can use any language, but it is not Government alone, it is not the people alone who are at fault, but it is due to inexperience of the people as a whole. The scientific and technical people, available there are also responsible for all these things as they had yielded to the people to construct without proper examination. Instead of having the embankments at a distance of half a mile or one mile from the river bank, they constructed as the people demanded, that is just on the river banks. Mr. Dhireswar Kalita

[Shri Basumatari]

and myself come from the same district. The rivers Baralia, Nana and Puthmari were very shallow and they flooded the whole villages. Only the other day I had been to these areas and found that the people over there could not stay on the ground floor, but they had to construct some *machangs* in their houses. The cattle had to be taken to the embankment. Had there not been any embankments, I do not know where the people could have taken shelter. I have seen the miseries of the people there. My hon. friend Shri Dhireswar Kalita has not been there, but I was there only on the 29th of last month, and I found the people were having untold miseries. I found the people very glad to speak to me. I may tell you that the people of Assam are very considerate. The political parties may not be considerate, but the people there are very considerate. They say, 'What to do? It is a natural calamity, and nature has given this suffering, but have pity on us, only ask Dr. K. L. Rao to implement the recommendations of the Brahmaputra Commission as soon as possible.

At the same time, they asked about the Pagladiya project. The word 'Pagla' means 'mad', and the word 'diya' means 'river'; Pagladiya means a mad and powerful river. This Pagladiya river is causing great havoc and misery, much more than the other rivers. We have been insisting since 1957 that there should be some project to control this river, and when I was an M. L. A of Assam, we were told that the Centre was making some plan or scheme for the control of the Pagladiya river. But I would submit that the minister in charge of that time in the State told us that the outgoing minister took a wrong project and it had to be dropped but the official side told us that it has not been wrongly done or dropped and it was very important effective. I want to know what the position of the Pagladiya project is, and when Government propose to complete and commission this project.

Last year, you know that the railway line there had been suspended for one month. This time also, the Pagladiya river has washed away some portion of the line and the railway line had to be suspended for some days. The sche-

me of Brahmaputra Commission may take a long time for completion. I am told that it will take about a hundred years. How are then people going to live in this plight for hundred years?

SHRI LILADHAR KOTOKI : Not 100 years, but next year it should be completed.

SHRI BASUMATARI : I would only submit that we need more experts, and we want that more tributaries of the Brahmaputra should be controlled. For that, enough money is available. My hon. friend Shri Liladhar Kotoki has already quoted the statement of the Prime Minister where she has said that money is not the problem, etc. We are also with the hon. Minister, and let him find out the money to construct this project. I hope my hon. friend Shri Jyotirmoy Basu and all others will co-operate with us and help Dr. K. L. Rao in finding out the money for the construction of this project.

Assam is suffering not only from floods, but from earthquake and drought.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU : And continuous neglect from the Centre.

SHRI BASUMATARI : And continuous neglect also, because my hon. friends opposite do not think of Assam. Assam is a vulnerable and very sensitive State, and yet when people talk here, they do not refer to the problems of Assam, and that is the tragedy of the matter. I hope, therefore, that the whole House will support the cause of Assam so that Assam could be saved from the ravages of floods.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU : We cannot flatter the Government for the lip-service that they render.

SHRI BASUMATARI : I know Dr. K. L. Rao for a very long time, and I know that he has not only lip-sympathy but heart-sympathy, and I hope he will apply his heart and lip—both to do something to save this State.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU (Diamond Harbour) : A lot has been said and I

do not wish to carry coal to Newcastle. But a few things must be said. This is a vast country and we must know that our rivers will overflow if they are not trained or tackled properly in time.

Siltation of river beds due to soil erosion, lack of conservation work, lack of terrace cultivation in hills, which in many places and in many cases are the sources of river water—all these have certainly been contributing to the growth of floods in this country. We have created big dams and barrages and as I understand them, their objects have been three: power generation, flood control and irrigation. Dr. Rao knows better than I do that seldom have these objects been achieved.

The enforcement of the Embankments Act which the Britishers had enacted in the last century is seldom done. River beds have been occupied, cultivation has been done, houses have been built in that area. So the water cannot flow when there is rain. The natural bed for water has been encroached upon by human beings without being looked after by Government. This encroachment has also been due to pressing economic reasons. There Government have failed and this is one of the reasons for the present state of affairs.

We have seen in many places railway bridges and culverts designed and built selfishly without taking into account the difficulties of the people, the need for flood control. Result: the natural flow of water is impeded. We have seen in North Bengal how the railways had been selfishly doing this, ignoring the interests of the people concerned.

In October, 1968, there was a huge flood in Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri which killed 30,000 people and destroyed crores of rupees worth of property. The characteristic of this Government is to show the least anxiety for the common people. So they are not really perturbed when such things happen. They give lip-service do some window-dressing, make some propaganda and as soon as the people forget about it, they put the whole thing in coldstorage.

This Government has enough money for increasing its defence expenditure and police expenditure and for maintaining the white elephants of Ministers, but there is no money for services for the people.

In North Bengal, we have seen utter neglect on the part of the irrigation department, the administration and the bureaucracy. It was exposed beyond limit. What has been done? Has anything been done? No.

The flood warning system, which miserably failed recently in the case of Alaknanda floods, does not work in Assam also in the way it should. Past experience in this respect should have been a lesson to us. But no, they do not draw any such lesson. If they had drawn the appropriate lessons, lives and property could have been saved.

China, our great neighbour, has trained a number of turbulent rivers. The Hwang Ho and Yangtis Kiang had been doing immense damage. But they have been tamed and trained, thus saving millions of lives and millions of rupees worth property. Dr. Rao had been to China—if I remember aright. We would expect him to tell us what he learnt on this subject and how much of what he learnt there has been tried out in this country. We are entitled to know because his going there meant money and it gave us hope that he would take some lessons from their experience tackling turbulent rivers.

Dr. Rao had also gone to other countries in recent months. We would like to know what he has learnt how does he want to implement those things here.

Why is it that Dr. Rao, though speaking in a friendly way to Pakistan in regard to the Farakka Barrage, does not adopt the same attitude to Pakistan on the question of the Brahmaputra and try to find a permanent and lasting solution? Or is there a sense of untouchability on this matter due to the designs of the Americans and the Britishers who want to keep these two countries apart and fighting? Is that what is stopping him from coming to some sort of understanding with Pakistan?

[Shri Jyotirmoy Basu]

Brahmaputra is one of the most turbulent rivers of this country. That is why it has a male name whereas all our other rivers have female names. What is happening in Assam. We witness a most devastating flood in a State which is giving the country a lot of precious foreign exchange. But it is neglected throughout. I tell Mr. Basumatari that we feel for Assam as much as any other man in this country. So, let us not make mistakes about it.

19 hrs.

Why is it that we see so much of damage to human lives and property being caused? This Government has not done anything towards rural housing schemes. If they had built pucca houses, implemented the rural housing projects that they promised 15, 20 years ago, which was all tall talk, then very few houses would have been washed away and very few lives would have been lost. Let us see how they take this job and with what intention and how soon they fulfil it.

I would not say anything more on this because of shortage of time, but I say let the Government rush adequate relief and rehabilitation funds. This Rs. 6 lakhs business is a mockery, a drop in the ocean. You want to make fun of the people who are drowning with their children, cattle, belongings and everything. You are throwing salt on their wounds. You can spend billions and billions, Rs. 20 crores for the beautification of Delhi on vulgar fountains and parks, but you cannot find money for people who are drowned to death. It is a shame, and this is the character of this Government. The Prime Minister's Rs. 50,000 I consider is an insult to the people of Assam. When the loss is more than Rs. 10 crores, what is it going to do? I consider that Rs. 10 crores may be just a fraction of the real loss, because the Government estimates in these cases always underplay it.

Why is it that Dr. Rao is not suggesting to the Finance Minister that he should consider improving some sort of flood insurance? Now that the LIC is in your hands, you can easily go in for flood insurance. Why is it that you

are not thinking on these lines, so that whenever there is a case of this sort of devastation, the flood insurance money can be given to them freely, and we need not go and knock at the Prime Minister's door for Rs. 50,000 as small alms for the people of Assam where the damage may be Rs. 20 to 30 crores, it is anybody's guess, because the bureaucracy will never bother to go deep into the villages or cross the rivers. We know exactly what they are, so these estimates can be anybody's guess. I take it with a pinch of salt.

Let not the Brahmaputra Flood Control Commission be like the Master Plan for North Bengal, the Teesta-Mahanadi Scheme. We have been hearing of Rs. 100 crores and Rs. 120 crores, all tall talk. We do not trust this Government, but we would like the Government to take note that if they do not behave well, do not go to the rescue of the people who are in real and grave danger, the people will really give them a lesson when the time comes.

श्री शिव चन्द्र झा (मधुबनी) : यह असम की बाढ़ के सम्बन्ध में प्रस्ताव है, इसको मैं चाहता हूँ कि अविश्वास के प्रस्ताव में बदल दिया जाए। हर साल बाढ़ें आती हैं और भारी जन धन की हानि होती है। यह सरकार और यह मंत्रालय इतने निकम्मे हो गए हैं कि इन पर काबू पा ही नहीं सकते हैं। आजादी मिले इतने साल हो गए हैं लेकिन इस समस्या को वह आज तक हल नहीं कर सकी है। बाढ़ों पर काबू पानी मुश्किल नहीं है लेकिन यह सरकार इसमें बिल्कुल नाकामयाब रही है।

जहाँ तक असम का सम्बन्ध है, उसके मुतालिक बहुत सी बातें कही गई हैं। जो सुझाव दिए गए हैं उनसे मैं बिल्कुल सहमत हूँ। सरकार को मुस्तैदी के साथ उस पर अमल करना चाहिये और उन सुझावों पर ध्यान देना चाहिये और वहाँ बाढ़ों को रोकने का कांशिश करनी चाहिये।

बिहार का मामला भी मैं उठाना चाहता हूँ क्योंकि मैं साबित करना चाहता हूँ कि लाग रेंज हैं, प्राजक्ट्स जो वे ही न केवल फाउंडेशन ले करने के बाद स्थगित हो जाती हैं बल्कि जो स्कीमों आलरेडी सैंकशंड हैं, और पैसा भी है यह सरकार और यह मंत्रालय इतना निकम्मा है, कि उनको भी कार्यान्वित नहीं करता है। चार पांच साल से सैंकशंड हैं लेकिन फिर भी उनको कार्यान्वित नहीं कर रहा है। कहने को तो कहा जाता है कि बाढ़ की जो विभीषिका है, उससे जो बरबादी होती है, उसको मजे में रोका जा सकता है लेकिन रोक नहीं रहे हैं क्योंकि मशीनरी सुस्त है और स्वयं सरकार सुस्त है।

उत्तर बिहार में दरभंगा, सहरसा, मुजफ्फरपुर, चम्पारन आदि के लिए एक बड़ी योजना है, पश्चिमी कोसी नहर योजना। और वह पूरी हो जाए तो वहां बाढ़ों को कंट्रोल किया जा सकता है। लेकिन यह सरकार कुम्भकरण की निद्रा में पड़ी हुई है। मालूम नहीं कब वह नहर बनेगी। कितनी ही दफा उसका शिलान्यास हो चुका है, फाउंडेशन ले हो चुका। बार-बार कहा जाता है लेकिन सरकार कुछ नहीं कर रही है। कहती है कि नेपाल से पढ़ा-लिखी चल रही है। अगर नेपाल से आपकी बात पूरी नहीं हुई है तो उगमारा बैरेज बना कर तो आप काम शुरू कर ही सकते हैं। लेकिन ऐसा भी नहीं किया जा रहा है। लांग रेंज साल्यूशन तो बैस्टर्न कोसी नहर को बनाना है जो यह सरकार नहीं कर रही है। कोसी और कमला बलान की बाढ़ से बड़ी भयंकर स्थिति पैदा हो गई है। मोटे तौर पर तो सारे देश में बाढ़ की विभीषिका एक जैसी है। 12 अगस्त के आर्यावर्त में "समुद्र-सा दृश्य कमला बलान में बाढ़" के शीर्षक से हिन्दुस्तान समाचार द्वारा यह समाचार दिया गया है: "कमला नदी का जलस्तर आज चौथी बार खतरे के बिन्दु से 4 फुट अधिक हो गया है।

झंझारपुर के पीपराघाट, अमौर, मसहरी, नारोलिया तथा घनदयामपुर प्रखण्ड के जयदेव पट्टी सुमौल, पोहरी आदि गांव टापू जैसे नजर आ रहे हैं। तटबन्धों के बीच पड़ने वाली जनकार्य विभाग की सड़क पर चार फुट पानी बह रहा है। झंझारपुर से मधेपुर तक समुद्र जैसा दृश्य प्रतीत हो रहा है। यहां प्राप्त सूचनाओं के अनुसार लोकहो प्रखण्ड का नरहिया बाजार भूतही बलान की बाढ़ की चपेट में आ गया है। झंझारपुर से खुटौना जाने वाली सड़क पर कमर भर पानी बह रहा है।"

उत्तरी बिहार में बाढ़ से दस लाख से ज्यादा लोग एफेक्टिड हैं और पांच करोड़ रुपये के लगभग की सम्पत्ति बर्बाद हुई है। लेकिन यह सरकार कुम्भकरण की निद्रा में सोई हुई है। कोसी और कमला बलान की बाढ़ की रोकथाम के लिए एक नीमा स्कीम है। वह पांच लाख रुपये से ज्यादा की स्कीम है। 1966 में माइनर इरिगेशन डिपार्टमेंट द्वारा वह स्कीम सैंकशन की गई थी। मैं उस समय एम० पी० नहीं था। मैंने दौड़-धूप करके उस स्कीम को पास करवाया था। जीवच नदी के दोनों तरफ नहर इन्वैकमेंट और स्लूगेट बनाने की स्कीम है। लेकिन इस सरकार ने 1966 से लेकर आज तक इन चार सालों में कुछ नहीं किया है। माइनर इरिगेशन डिपार्टमेंट के इंजीनियर कहते हैं कि यह स्कीम रिवाइज की गई है, अब इसको लिया जायेगा, आदि। चार साल से इस तरह की बातें चल रही हैं। जैसाकि मैंने कहा है, यह स्कीम पहले से ही सैंकशंड है। अब इसमें कुछ नहीं करना है। केवल दस्तखत करके काम को एक्सपीटाइट करना है। लेकिन यह सरकार निकम्मी है और यह मंत्रालय इन्तहा दज का निकम्मा मंत्रालय है। यह कुछ भी नहीं कर रहा है।

दरभंगा में भल्लुआ नहर बनाने की भी बात है। उसके बारे में भी सरकार कुछ नहीं

[श्री शिवचन्द्र झा]

कर रही है। बहुत सी स्कीम्ज पहले से सैंक्शन्ड हैं, लेकिन उनको कार्यान्वित नहीं किया जा रहा है। जो बड़ी स्कीमें हैं, जिनका फाउंडेशन लम्बा चलता है, जिनके बारे में लम्बी खतो-किताबत चलती है, जिन पर लम्बा खर्चा होता है, उनको न शुरू करने की बात तो कुछ समय में आ सकती है। लेकिन जो स्कीम्ज पहले से ही सैंक्शन्ड हैं, उनको भी सरकार कार्यान्वित नहीं कर रही है।

बताया गया है कि आसाम को बाढ़ सम्बन्धी सहायताकार्य के लिए प्राइम मिनिस्टर ने अपने फंड से पचास हजार रुपये दिये हैं। लेकिन बिहार को इस सम्बन्ध में प्राइम मिनिस्टर के फंड से कितना रुपया दिया गया है? कुछ नहीं, एक पैसा भी नहीं दिया गया है। केन्द्रीय सरकार द्वारा बिहार को जान-बूझ कर इग्नोर किया जा रहा है। इसकी बहुत सी वजहें हैं, जिनमें मैं इस समय नहीं जाना चाहता हूँ। यह उसकी बुनियादी नीति है।

यदि यह सरकार बाढ़ की रोक-थाम करना चाहती है, तो उसको वारफुटिंग पर इसके सम्बन्ध में उपाय करने चाहिए। हर साल बाढ़ आये, सरकार द्वारा एक स्टेटमेंट दे दिया जाये और हम लोग उस पर बहस करें, इससे काम नहीं चलेगा। राष्ट्र के दूसरे गम्भीर मसलों की तरह इस समस्या का सामना भी वारफुटिंग पर करना होगा। इसका मतलब यह है कि सरकार को अपनी तमाम मशीनरी को गीयर अप करना होगा और मुस्वैदी से काम करना होगा। लेकिन सरकार ऐश्व नहीं करती है। उसके सब काम ठप्प रहते हैं। बाढ़ से जो देश में बर्बादी होती है और विभिन्न क्षेत्रों से मदद न मिलने की जो शिकायत की जाती है, उसकी जिम्मेदारी केन्द्रीय सरकार पर है। मैं चाहता हूँ कि उत्तरी बिहार में बाढ़ से जो बर्बादी हुई है, उसको दृष्टि में रखकर केन्द्रीय सरकार कम

से कम दस करोड़ रुपया बिहार को रिलीफ के तौर पर दे। इसके अलावा प्राइम मिनिस्टर अपने फंड से तुरन्त जो कुछ दे सकते हैं, वह दें। बाढ़ की रोक-थाम वारफुटिंग पर करने के लिए एक खास मशीनरी बनाई जाये। अगर यह मंत्रालय ऐसा नहीं करता है, तो दोनों मंत्री इस्तीफा दे दें अभी दे दें। यह मंत्रालय बिल्कुल बेकार और निकम्मा है।

श्री लखन लाल कपूर (किशनगंज) : सभापति महोदय, मैं बाढ़ के इलाके से आता हूँ। मुझे भी मौका दिया जाये।

MR. CHAIRMAN; Mr. Kapur, your party has taken 25 minutes. Kindly be fair to the other Members. He was the Mover, and he was allowed 15 minutes, but he took more.

श्री लखन लाल कपूर : वह तो सूवर है। मैं भी उस इलाके से आता हूँ, जहाँ बहुत फ्लड्ज आये हैं। मुझे दो तीन मिनट दे दीजिए।

SHRI N. R. LASKAR (Karimganj) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I will not speak much, as you have said that there is not much time left. Enough has been said already about the Assam floods, and the Bihar floods also, and the hon. Minister of Irrigation and Power is an expert on the subject, and he knows thoroughly about Assam and its floods and what is to be done there. He has given us so much idea. I think, previously also in this House. But these ideas have never been implemented. He said there are so many tributaries to the Brahmaputra. The Brahmaputra itself is a big river and we cannot control it well, but we can control the small tributaries. We can build dams or barrages at the source itself. These are assurances given to the House, but he has not been able to implement them so far. Why has he not implemented them? He says there are no funds. This problem of floods in Assam is a recurring problem. Every year we have floods and the people are habituated to live with them, and so we do not much complain

about it, but then, when the floods become terrific, we have to say something about the Assam floods.

This year's floods, as has already been said by so many speakers in this House, have been severe and for a month the floods have been continuing. You can imagine what terrific suffering the people under went and how they can live in these conditions. How do they live? Many of them live on house-top or some embankments. I invite the hon. Members, who have not been there, to go and see for themselves how the flood havoc has made the people suffer and how the people live there. Some people live with snakes even as their companions because of the floods, and I have seen this myself.

Our State is a beautiful part of India. It has rivers, hills and beautiful landscapes. But these floods are spoiling the landscape and everything. The economy of the State is dwindling year after year. We are mainly an agricultural people, and the agricultural crops are our only sustenance. As Mr. Kotoki said, the loss of crop is to the tune of Rs. 6 crores a year or more than that. How can we survive? How long can this Central Government be a helpless onlooker to our problems? They have instituted Brahmaputra Commission and we are glad of it, but the lack of funds should not stand in the way of implementation of the proposals of the Commission. Funds any how have to be found out.

So many Projects have been started in the country and they have invested crores of rupees in them, but here is a human problem and we are not finding funds for solving it. It is really a sorry state of affairs. We will condemn this sort of callous approach to this problem.

I have not much time left, but I will tell you one thing. We have two valleys in our State: the Assam valley, i.e. the Brahmaputra valley and the Barak valley from which I come. The problem of the Barak valley is a small one. Even with regard to that small valley, they could not implement the proposals to solve the problem. The Barak river is a small river. We have been agitating in this House, and

also the Minister has been assuring us that once the investigation of the Barak river project is completed, they will start building a dam. The investigations were completed a long time back, and everything is ready. But now they say that our neighbouring State, Manipur, are objecting. I have consulted friends in Manipur and they have said they have no objection. It may be the officials who may have objected. I do not like to say more. I want that the Barak dam should come immediately to solve the problem of the people who are living in that part of the country.

The floods are almost a yearly problem in Assam. So many river valley projects are functioning in the rest of the country, but not a single river valley project has been taken up in Assam. What more can we say about our planners and their planning? I request the hon. Minister at least to see that, now that the investigations of the Barak project are complete, they begin to implement the project as early as possible. The people will not remain as sad onlookers for long. They are agitated, and the situation will become out of control if things are further delayed.

SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY (Cooch-Bihar): Sir, we have been having a very interesting debate about the visitation of floods in Assam. Unspeakable miseries have been caused by the floods each and every year. It is unfortunate that in spite of the assurances given and the schemes and programmes taken up by the ministry from time to time, this ministry is not in a position to control floods in any part of the country, whether it is north, south, east or west. Tomorrow we are having a discussion on floods in Kerala. The causes of the floods have been explained and I need not go into them in detail. I am happy that though belatedly the Government of India, in consultation with the State Government, have come to the conclusion that there must be some drastic steps to control floods particularly in Assam and neighbouring areas and they have set up the Brahmaputra Flood Control Commission. But flood is not limited in our country to any particular zone. If funds are necessary, not only Rs. 250 crores but even more must be found on a

[Shri B. K. Daschowdhuri]

priority basis. If necessary Central Flood Control Commissions like the one for Brahmaputra should be set up in other areas as well.

For instance, take the ravages of floods in North Bengal, especially in Cooch-Bihar and Jalpaiguri. It seems whenever unspeakable miseries are caused by visitation of floods, the Governors, officers and ministers take the chance of flying over the affected areas in helicopters. But that does not stop the misery of the people. So far as North Bengal is concerned, as far back as 1905 and 1906, the then Chief Engineer decided that to stop the floods, there must be two big schemes for Bengal. Bengal is one of those parts of the world where we have enough water wealth but we are not in a position to control it to the benefit of humanity at large. The two big schemes that were decided upon in 1905 and 1906 were the Karnafuli dam project and the Teesta Valley dam project. Later on, in 1924, the Teesta Valley project was again considered. In 1945 and 1946, a tentative scheme was prepared at a proposed cost of Rs. 53 crores. Reference can be made about this. On 11th December 1946, a scheme was prepared for the Teesta dam project by Rai Bahadur A. N. Khosla, Consulting Engineer to the Government of India, Waterways, Irrigation and Navigation. It has been stated here that a plan or scheme for the conservation and regulation of water of Bengal rivers has been prepared and the first stage is the Teesta dam work which is the most productive one. About the Teesta dam work, it says that it will give :

“complete control of floods in the Teesta river by storage of surplus supplies at the Teesta dam for equalising supplies in the river throughout the year ;

a navigable lake 50 to 60 miles in length, providing cheap transport for tea, forest and other produce of the area concerned, and facilities for fish culture, wild life and recreation ;

over half a million kilowatt of cheap electric power for use in rural and urban

electrification, electrification of railways, manufacture of fertilizers and for other industries such as paper, sugar, copper, tea drying etc.....”

I do not understand what has happened to this scheme or why the Government of India kept this scheme in cold storage, knowing full well that this causes all these floods.

In 1968, something unthinkable, something unprecedented happened and in that flood more than 20,000 persons died and many more were rendered homeless. Though an assessment has not yet been made, it was stated that in the great October flood of 1968, more than Rs. 100 crores worth of property was lost. In North Bengal alone it has been estimated that on an average Rs. 3 crores to Rs. 4 crores worth of property is damaged every year in 3-4 districts. The Minister Stated that the loss in Assam because of the floods is more than Rs. 10 crores. In the case of North Bengal on an average it is Rs. 3 crores to Rs. 4 crores per year. So, if we calculate it for the last ten years, it comes to about Rs. 30 crores. In 1968 it was more than Rs. 110 crores. So, it comes to a total of Rs. 140 crores.

In 1968 the Prime Minister and then Finance Minister visited North Bengal particularly Jalpaiguri and Cooch-Bihar and stated that these heavy floods must be controlled and for that finance will not come in the way. So, these promises and assurances have been made.

In 1969 they prepared a draft scheme, which was discussed at the meeting of the Ministers of Irrigation at Nainital ; according to that scheme five measures should be taken to control floods in the North Bengal in a proper manner. This is the report that I have received from the Consultative Committee report :

“A draft flood control plan for the following rivers has been drawn up by the State Government, in consultation with the Central Government, as longterm

measure in North Bengal, which has been approved by the Central Water and Power Commission."

That plan says :

Master Plan for Teesta	Rs. 11,400.00 lakhs
Master Plan for Jaldhaka	Rs. 941.00 „
Master Plan for Raidak	Rs. 3,085.00 „
Master Plan for Torska	Rs. 2,830.00 „
Master Plan for Mahanand	Rs. 182.00 „

The total comes to Rs. 184.38 crores. That was the draft scheme. It has been adequately explained and sufficiently represented to the Central Government by the State Government that these are huge schemes necessary to save the people from the unspeakable miseries from which they suffer every year and that because of their limited resources, it is not possible for the State Government to take them up and so the Central Government should come forward to help the people by taking up these schemes. This has also been brought to the notice of the Central Ministers and the Prime Minister from time to time. I do not know why these have been placed in cold storage. Even in this session there was a question about the serious damage done by Teesta river every year and the reply given was that it was the concern of the State Government. But, in the wake of the October flood of 1968, the Ministers of the Centre did not say that it was the concern of the State Government ; at that time, they said that it was obviously the concern of the whole nation because it was a national calamity.

This entire region, I would repeat and reiterate, is probably the most fertile area in the whole world. You will not find any parallel region in the whole world. There may be some other spots which are giving oil but in the eastern region we are giving tea, petroleum, coal, tobacco, jute and many other agricultural products. Both Assam and North Bengal, combined together, produce more than Rs. 1,500 crores of wealth which the whole of India is enjoying. What is more, the produce of that region has been sold at certain standard price throughout India. You are

getting tea throughout India at standard prices ; you are getting tobacco at standard prices ; you are getting petroleum at standard prices ; you are getting other things at standard prices, but do the people of the eastern region get sugar and other commodities that are produced in Western and Southern India at standard prices ? I would like to emphasize that as these people are producing more and more wealth and are getting a standard price for that wealth which they produce—tea, tobacco, petroleum and other things if necessary, the Government of India should come forward to provide more and more funds for controlling floods in this area, both in North Bengal and in Assam, having accepted this master plan project.

श्री लखन लाल कपूर (किशनगंज) :
सभापति महोदय, मैं अभी आसाम और बंगाल के उस एरिये से आया हूँ, जहाँ फ्लड बहुत ज्यादा है। मैं कभी-कभी इस बात को सोचता हूँ कि इस देश में मरने के कितने तरीके हैं ? यहाँ पर तो ताप से भी लोग मरते हैं, सन-स्ट्रोक लग कर लोग मर जाते हैं, कड़ी सर्दी पड़ती है, उससे भी उनको नहीं बचा सकते हैं, उससे भी लोग मरते हैं, बाढ़ें आती हैं तो उससे भी लोग मरते हैं, सिर्फ भूख से ही नहीं मरते हैं, बल्कि मरने के और भी बहुत सारे तरीके हैं—कैसा विचित्र यह मुल्क है।

23 वर्ष आजादी के हो गये, ब्रह्मपुत्र से लेकर गंगोत्री तक जो हिमालयन रेंज है, जिसके बारे में निश्चित मालूम है कि इतने वौल्यूम वाटर हमारे मुल्क में इन नदियों के सहारे आता है — क्या अब तक उसके लिये कोई मास्टर प्लान आपने बनाया है ? सरकार मास्टर प्लान बनाती है, लेकिन कागजों पर रहता है, उसको इम्प्लीमेंट करने की या तो इनके पास फुरसत नहीं है या इनके पास बुद्धि नहीं है या हृदय नहीं है। इतनी प्राकृतिक विपत्तियाँ इस देश में आती हैं कि इस सरकार को जितनी भी सजा दी जाय, वह कम है।

[श्री लखन लाल कपूर]

मैं समझता हूँ कि यह बिलकुल क्रिमनल नेगलीजेंस है कि सरकार ऐसी बातों पर, जो बिलकुल राष्ट्रीय प्रश्न हैं, एक दो नहीं लाखों-करोड़ों मनुष्यों के जीवन से ताल्लुक रखते हैं, ऐसी समस्या को इतने हल्के ढंग से लेती है। जब विपत्ति आती है, उस वक्त यह सरकार संकल्प लेती है, लेकिन उसके बाद भूल जाती है।

मैं कहना चाहता हूँ कि ब्रह्मपुत्र से लेकर गंगोत्री तक जो हिमालय से पानी आनेवाला है, क्या इसका नापतौल सरकार के पास है, उसका बांधने के लिये, उसको स्टोर करने के लिये, उससे जनता की रक्षा करने के लिये हमने क्या व्यवस्था की है? उस पानी में सिंचाई करके हम सुखाड़ से बचा सकते हैं, अन्न उपजाने में उसको काम में ला सकते हैं, हमारे यहां चीजों की कमी नहीं है, लेकिन पता नहीं है कि यह सरकार इतनी निकम्मी क्यों है? जहां तक आसाम, नार्थ बंगाल और नार्थ-बिहार का सम्बन्ध है, ये क्षेत्र हर दृष्टिकोण से बहुत पिछड़े हुए हैं। वहां की स्थिति को देखते हुए अगर यह सरकार बाढ़ और सुखाड़ से ही उन क्षेत्रों को त्राण दिला दे, तो इसके लिये वहां के लोग लाखों वर्षों तक ऋणी रहेंगे। इसी संदर्भ में मैं कहना चाहता हूँ कि उत्तर बिहार में फ्लड कंट्रोल करने के लिये कोसी और गण्डक की जो योजना चली, उसके अन्दर कितने रुपये खर्च किये गये, उसका उपयोग नहीं हो पा रहा है, क्योंकि अब रुपये की कमी के कारण वहां पर वेस्टर्न कैनाल भी नहीं बन पाई है। गण्डक योजना भी धीमे चल रही है, उनको पूरा करने की इनके पास फुरसत नहीं है। अगर वहां पर वार-फूटिंग पर काम हो और इन योजनाओं को क्षीघ्र पूरा किया जाय तो वहां पर फ्लड भी रुक सकता है और सिंचाई भी हो सकती है।

उसी तरह से नेपाल और पूर्वी पाकिस्तान के बीच से होकर जो तीस्ता नदी, महानन्दा नदी और कनकई नदियां हिमालय से आती हैं, ये नदियां पूर्णिया जिले में हर साल हैबक मचाती हैं। मैं जिस इलाके से आता हूँ, उस इलाके का 4 महीने तक रेलवे स्टेशन से और मुख्यालय से बिलकुल सम्बन्ध विच्छेद रहता है, आदमी और गांव पानी में रहते हैं और मुझको देख कर दर्द होता है। मैं ब्रह्मपुत्र के इलाके में गया था, गोहाटो गया था और अपने इलाके से कन ही आया हूँ, हजारों गांव पानी के अन्दर डूबे पड़े हैं, रात-दिन लोग मचानों पर बैठे हुए हैं, उनके मवेशी किसी ऊंची जगह पर फंसे हुए हैं, उनको खाना नहीं पहुंचाया जा सकता, चूल्हा जलाने की जगह नहीं है। न उनके लिये किसी तरह की रिलीफ पहुंचाने की व्यवस्था है, न राशन, तेल पहुंचाया जा रहा है और न ही उनके निकालने की व्यवस्था की जा रही है। मालूम होता है कि आज वहां कोई सरकार ही नहीं है, भगवान के भरोसे जानवरों को जिन्दगी गुजार रहे हैं। इस सरकार को जितना दोष दिया जाय, जितना इसकी निन्दा की जाय, वह कम है। अगर इस तरह से नेग्लिजेंस होती रही तो मैं कहना चाहता हूँ कि यह जो फ्लड कंट्रोल की बात है, सिंचाई व्यवस्था की बात है, करोड़ों लोगों के जीवन को बनाने की बात है, इस सरकार से कुछ भी नहीं हो सकेगा। यह सरकार समाजवाद का ढाल पीटती है, आंसू बहाती है—ये क्रोकोडायल टियर्स हैं, इससे काम नहीं चलेगा। इसलिये जितना जल्द हो सके—यह राष्ट्र की सबसे प्रमुख समस्या है—बाढ़ कंट्रोल के लिये वार-फूटिंग पर योजना बनानी चाहिये और ब्रह्मपुत्र से गंगोत्री तक के लिये बन्दोबस्त करना चाहिये।

THE MINISTER OF IRRIGATION AND POWER (DR. K. L. RAO): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to thank the hon. Members

who have participated in the discussion and drawn attention of the House to a very important problem of the country. As the time is very short and we are already sitting late, I will not be able to answer various points that the hon. Members have raised. But I would try to cover some important aspects of it, particularly, in regard to floods in Assam.

One of the things which the hon. Members have mentioned is about the utility of embankments. In any flood control system in the world, it is not correct to say that the world has rejected embankments. I find embankments are most important and they play a vital role. In fact, in Assam itself, we have constructed 2000 miles of embankments since Independence.

SHRI HEM BARUA : I may point out that the Bhagwati Commission has said about the futility of these embankments.

DR. K. L. RAO : These 2000 miles of embankments have protected a vital and an extensive area. This year, we talk of damages in Sibsagar and various other areas. It is not due to river-flow coming in. That is entirely because there have been breaches in the Brahmaputra river. There have been breaches in various places, in Dessang area and others. Supposing these breaches had not occurred, there would have been no damage in Assam. It is on account of these breaches that this damage has occurred.

SHRI DHIRESWAR KALITA : Will you make an enquiry into the working of these embankments ?

DR. K. L. RAO : Then, one hon. Member asked what they are doing in China. But for the embankments, half of China would have been under water. The only way in which they are controlling rivers is by constructing excellent embankments.

Take, for example, the Kosi itself. The hon. Members are not aware of the facts. I am surprised when the hon. Members say that the western Kosi canal will control floods of Kosi river. It is most surprising. The Kosi carries a flow of 700,000 cusecs of water and the western Kosi canal can take hardly 7000 cusecs of water. In fact, at the time of floods, we will

not allow the water of the western Kosi canal to run out. Otherwise, it will flood Darbhanga area and other areas. It is very unfortunate the hon. Member does not know the facts. I would request the hon. Member to discuss that matter with me and I can give the correct information.

Then, another hon. Member said that the Kosi floods have not been controlled. That is not correct. If today north Bihar is prosperous, it is entirely due to the Kosi embankments. Kosi embankments have been standing very well. If only the Assam embankments have been constructed in the same way as the Kosi embankments, Assam would have been very happy. I would have been very happy with the Assam work. Unfortunately, in Assam two things have happened. One is after the floods of 1950 the bed has risen and when the bed has risen, the river has become very shallow and when the shallow river has become wide and when the river bed has risen, the flood ravages have become intense. If the embankments were not there, more areas of Assam would have been flooded and flooded very badly. Therefore, the embankments had to be strengthened. I agree that the embankments are not correctly sited, in some places and wherever the river is very weak, for example, the tributaries, the banks are over flown. They are not breached. For example, in Pagladiya area and Puth Mari which are the most serious where out of Rs. 10 crores, Rs. 6 crores of damages have occurred there were breaches of the banks. Why? Because there is a railway bridge and under the railway bridge the water way was very insufficient. It is just like Jalpaiguri and the water way has to be widened and has to be extended so that the water does not pile up in front of the bridge causing the breaches in the banks. Therefore, the solution for the Pagla area and the Puth Mari area is to have a wider water way under those bridges. The other day we had a discussion with the Railway Engineers and the Railway Ministry and I have written letters to the hon. Minister for Railways that these should be taken up immediately and completed in the next two seasons. It takes two seasons to complete these bridges because it has to be done under traffic conditions.

[Dr. K. L. Rao]

So, what I am submitting is that the banks have got to be maintained very carefully. Maintenance is the best safeguard. There is a Chinese proverb. Embankments without proper maintenance is like having no embankments at all. It is as good as no embankments. In fact it is more dangerous. People feel certain security which is not there. For example, in Puth Mari embankments there is no road on the top of the bank. How can people go there when it is raining? How can you expect any human being to go and maintain the bank? It is impossible. There is no flood warning. There is no telephone system. There is no lighting. It is all complete darkness there. How can you expect anybody to go and say that he is patrolling the bank? Therefore, one of the things that I have insisted in that area is that they should construct roads on the top of these banks. They should have lighting system in the vital places and they should have a trained staff. At the moment they say that there is one man for every kilometre. What can that man do? This is not the way this should be done. There should be a telephone system and it is going to be arranged.

I hope with the setting up of the Flood Control Commission we would make an impact in this area. I hope by the end of two years we should be able to say that this area will be free from floods. After all Pagladiya and Puth Mari rivers have very little water. It is of the order of thirty or forty thousand cusecs which we consider a very little amount of water. The rivers are going through a densely populated area and very rich area and breaches occur resulting in damages. We have closed the breaches in Pagladiya. We have closed two breaches in the Puth Mari area. One more breach remains in Puth Mari area. That is going to be closed tomorrow or the day after. I quite agree that the maintenance of the banks has got to be done and the banks have got to be maintained, strengthened and brought to the proper section and that is what is required immediately in the case of Assam flood control programme.

Then the hon. Members referred to erosion. Quite correct. In fact in the main river it is

erosion that is causing trouble. In the tributaries it is the breaches. In the main river it is erosion. Erosion is one of the most difficult subjects in the world. It is very easy to say: 'Why don't you put stone spurs'. In Dibrugarh we have stone spurs. Nearly four to five crores of rupees had to be spent. If you want to do like that, it is impossible. The whole river cannot be provided with spurs like that. At the moment, for examples the hon. Member said that Dhubri has not been attended to. We have taken up the work there and we have spent so far nearly half a crore of rupees on that. Silt comes from various places and we have to take steps to see that soil erosion does not take place. Erosion is a very difficult thing to control; even in such a nice river like Ganga erosion takes place. There are number of places where erosion is occurring in the Ganga. This is one of the important subjects and I will try to get maximum information from all countries of the world. I have visited some of the Research Stations on erosion in Georgia in the USSR and I am now hoping to send out some people to find out what measures we can take in order to reduce at least some of the erosions that take place.

Somebody said, why not cooperate with Pakistan. It is very useful. We should be good friends, especially with our neighbours. With Pakistan I have been thinking of this for a long time, that we must have complete cooperation in the matter of floods control. We are most earnest about it. One of the hon. Members referred to Barak project. When it is constructed the people who will be benefited most will not be those of India but of Pakistan and that is why Pakistani friends, when they meet us in international conferences etc. ask about this. Therefore in the Brahmaputra, if we have a specific project in a particular section they could very well share in that. But the main problem is, we have no specific project. It is not that the whole water of the Brahmaputra comes from China or Tibet. Only one-fourth of the river comes from the top. The balance of it, that is, three-fourth is gathered in its 550 mile run in Assam, NEFA etc. The only way in which we can control, apart from embankments, is to have storage

capacity. In Yangtse in China they have constructed very big detention bases. They are very big basins which submerge 3 lakhs of acres and we cannot think of that in Assam where so many people are living by the side of the rivers. We are trying to have a detention base in Pagladiya river. But construction of reservoirs of at least 40 million acre feet capacity equal to 8 to 10 Bhakra Dams will be required for effective control. Once a project is constructed it will be multi-purpose ; it will be producing large amount of power and so on. When you have to construct any dam in that area you have to do it after proper investigations.

Mr. Hem Barua said that Assam was neglected. I won't call it neglect. In fact I will tell you what happened ; there was no study of the detailed problem by these various committees which studied this problem in general ; not a single one had studied this problem in detail. That is the difficulty. In fact, it is with a view to rectify these defects, to have very thorough investigations and have a scheme prepared that we have constituted the Brahma-putra Flood Control Commission.

Shri B. K. Daschowdhury was very angry that the Tiesta Dam had not been built. But what is to be done ? It is true that in 1950 or 1954 they thought of a dam there. But when the investigations were made, it was found out that the site was most unacceptable and further the geologist said that we could not construct a 700 feet high dam there. We have received recently a proposal from Bengal that a dam on the Tiesta should only be for power and not for flood control at all. It was a proposal to have a power dam only and not a dam for flood control ; it was just a run of the river scheme. That is how the difficulty has come in. Some of the Members have been very angry with me on this score, specially the two or three Members who spoke last, but I can assure them that any scheme which is technically sound will be taken up.

SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHARY : Who is to prepare the scheme ?

SHRI N. K. SOMANI : He has to prepare the scheme.

DR. K. L. RAO : The main trouble in regard to the Barak Dam is that we have not been able to come to any conclusion regarding submersion areas.

Take, for instance, the Beas Dam. I am most anxious about the construction of the Beas Dam. But the problem is one of submersion of the people. It is a big problem, because the area belongs to another State. In the case of the Beas, the Pong Dam is most important for our country, and a number of hon. Members have been very earnestly suggesting that we should stop the waters to Pakistan flowing from the Indus river system. I am not able to ensure that because I am not able to proceed with the Pong Dam, because Himachal Pradesh is objecting very strongly against the submersion of its areas. We are trying to go on trying to get the things together.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU : Why does he not ask his Government to give him sufficient funds ? Why does he not exert himself in that regard ?

DR. K. L. RAO : In West Bengal and Assam, as Dr. Ram Subhag Singh has said, soil conservation is very important. Especially in North Bengal, it is very important. We had set up an inquiry committee in 1968 to look into the flood problems. They suggested that Rs. 80 crores must be spent for this, and out of that, Rs. 50 crores were to be spent on soil conservation.

SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY : In 1945-46 there was a good scheme which had been prepared and all the details had been drawn up. I think he can have all the details from his office.

DR. K. L. RAO : For all these things, we must have complete details. Unless we have a detailed scheme, we shall get into trouble and we shall not be able to go ahead.

AN HON. MEMBER : What had he done for 20 years ?

DR. K. L. RAO : In 20 years, this country has done much more work than any other country. We have spent Rs. 200 crores on

[Dr. K. L. Rao]

flood protection, and this expenditure of Rs. 200 crores has done much more useful work in this country than anywhere else. We have raised our food production.

AN HON. MEMBER : What about Assam ?

DR. K. L. RAO : In Assam itself, there is a committee which has gone into the question of the usefulness of the embankments and they have said that they have been most beneficial.

SHRI DHIRESWAR KALITA : I repudiate it. (*Interruptions*)

DR. K. L. RAO : I do not want to enter into those aspects now. So far as Assam is concerned, the main problem is one of strengthening of the embankments, construction of the embankments, maintenance of the embankments, and drawing up of proper maintenance schedules for embankments and construction of reservoirs, if it is possible. That has got to be investigated.

SHRI HEM BARUA : Can he not draw out the excess flood waters to some other drought-affected areas in India ?

DR. K. L. RAO : If that were possible, we would certainly have done it.

SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY : Why not connect the Brahmaputra and the Ganga by a canal ?

श्री लखन लाल कपूर : मैं एक सवाल करना चाहता हूँ। जिस तरह से आप आयल पाइप बना कर तेल को असम से दूसरी जगह ले जाते हैं, क्या उसी तरह से पाइप बनाकर जहाँ एक्सेस पानी है, वहाँ से उसको ड्राउट एरियाज में नहीं ले जा सकते हैं? आप उसको पूरे हिन्दुस्तान में ले जा सकते हैं। पाइप बना कर उसको सारे देश में डाइवर्ट कर सकते हैं।

DR. K. L. RAO : The hon. Member has got some good ideas on the subject which I would like to discuss with him separately as it would take time. For carrying away water, there must be a certain level. It is only in a few cases we can pump the water out. And how much can we do? It is a very small quantity of water that can be carried away in this manner. We must remember that the Brahmaputra carries a very huge quantity of water as it is one of the largest rivers in the world.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU : In the Indian Water Transport Survey Committee, we had strongly suggested that the Brahmaputra should be made a national waterway so that its maintenance and conduct should be the responsibility of the Central Government. The State Governments are no better than municipal offices in this respect. They have no funds. The Central Government have ruined them in the last 20 years.

DR. K. L. RAO : Navigability of the Brahmaputra is one of the investigations they are going to do. I have got a complete scheme drawn up.

We have set up this Commission with various advisers and consultants. I am expecting two American advisers in the next two or three weeks to give us some ideas on this. I am also trying to get some people who can advise us on this question of soil erosion and river erosion.

SHRI HEM BARUA : Some foreign experts had already visited that area and made some recommendations.

DR. K. L. RAO : Yes, but their reports are not such on which we can take any action. A detailed scheme is necessary. They have said this should be done and that should be done. That is not enough. If I had a detailed scheme already, I would have been quite happy to proceed with it.

Coming to dredgers I forget to mention it earlier—they have got a very limited value and limited function, because we cannot use

them for the sake of construction or removal of sand in the river or anything like that. If you think that you can lower the river bed by 10 ft. by using dredgers, it is impossible. What we can do is that whenever there is pressure on the banks at any point, then we can try to relieve that pressure by dredging a channel just nearby and divert the water to that extent. That is what we want to try. We have ordered two very big dredgers. But from the indigenous angle, it has to be manufactured in this country. That is why there has been some delay. If it was possible to purchase dredgers from outside, it would have been quite easy to do it and get on with the work. I thought of diverting one or two dredgers from Farakka, but they are small ones. What we want is the gigantic type of dredger because the moment you start dredging, it should not be filling up.

SHRI HEM BARUA : When Shri Hafiz Mohd. Ibrahim was the Minister, he had stated on the floor of the House that dredging would immediately be taken up in the Brahmaputra.

DR. K. L. RAO : As I said, it has got a limited value. Take, for example, Dhubri. The river there is at right angles: I have inspected the site. It is very difficult to control erosion there. Unfortunately, in Dhubri another thing has happened. Dhubri proper is at a high level. But some of these business people went and occupied the bed of the river, the sand banks etc. We have put up some stone spurs and have already spent more than half a crore of rupees. We are going to spend another crore. If a dredger is available there, we can try to turn the river, just dredge another channel and try to divert the river, if it is possible, for a very short length. That is the idea. Anyway, I have been trying to remind suppliers and actually, while the official date of delivery is middle of 1972, they have promised to give one of the dredgers in the middle of next year. But it has a very limited value. Members should not feel that the whole solution lies in that.

SHRI BEDABRATA BARUA : At least it should be tried.

DR. K. L. RAO : That is right, I am myself very anxious about it. (*Interruptions*)

We have set up a Control Commission. One of the main troubles in Assam was that there was inadequacy of staff and inadequacy of funds, both the things were there. There was only one Chief Engineer and he was stationed at Shillong. Now we are putting Members and Chairman with more than the rank of the Chief Engineer, nearly four of them at Gauhati and in a number of circles all along the river. Formerly there was nobody in the valley. Now there is a huge amount of staff, because we require a very big staff to watch the behaviour of the river and gather the necessary data. So, we are trying to make up the deficiency of the staff and deficiency of funds also to the extent possible.

SHRI HEM BARUA : Deficiency in the number of the staff.

SHRI BASUMATARI : Calibre also.

DR. K. L. RAO : I will not say that, because the Assam engineers are very capable people. Of course, we are trying to give them training as every engineer has to be trained and refresher courses are being organised and so on.

Hon. Members were saying that they saw some building on the way to Shillong occupied by some people. That is because we have shifted the research station to a lower place, for having a big model of the Brahmaputra. There is a hydraulic research station lower down near Gauhati. One of the Members appointed in the Brahmaputra Flood Control Commission is one of the top ace men in hydraulic model studies. I hope that with the help of this scientific, technological assistance, it will be possible for us to find a good solution.

Hon. Members were saying that there was no co-ordination between the Ministry of Irrigation and the Ministry of Agriculture. There is no such thing. In fact, the Soil Conservation Adviser works under the Ministry of Agriculture, and I requested him and

[Dr. K. L. Rao]

the Ministry of Agriculture to send some people to draw up a detailed scheme, not a general one, for us to implement.

SHRI LAKHAN LAL KAPOOR : What about the Mahananda ?

DR. K. L. RAO : Hon. Members have said that the Prime Minister sent only Rs. 50,000 and so on. It is just a token. We know fully well that a few rupees like that would not help. Then Shri Shiva Chandra Jha said that nothing was given to Bihar. All sorts of things are said in excitement without understanding facts. Prime Minister has given Rs. 25,000 to Bihar. It is just a sort of token and nothing more than that. For relief, the State Government itself has granted Rs. 30 lakhs in the form of taccavi loans etc. and another Rs. 10 lakhs for medicines. Nearly Rs. 40 lakhs they are spending. They will continue spending more and more.

Some hon. Members were asking what about Central assistance. In accordance with the rules and procedures, a Central team is going to Assam on the 24th of this month. They will assess, try to find out exactly what relief is required, and we will give money. This is the standard procedure.

AN HON. MEMBER : It is too late.

DR. K. L. RAO : It is not late. The State Governments are always advised to spend as much as the situation requires and the money will be refunded.

SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY : Are you sending any team to North Bengal ?

20 hrs.

DR. K. L. RAO : The hon. Member is very persistent about North Bengal. In North Bengal we have appointed a committee as the hon. Member is aware and they have submitted a report. The Committee's recommendations have been that the bridges' openings must be increased, *i.e.*, by the Railways and the Ministry of Transport. They suggested

construction of banks ; that is estimated to cost nearly Rs. 25 crores ; soil conservation is estimated to cost 50 crores and bridges are estimated to cost Rs. 5 crores. These are their main recommendations. Hon. Members must be aware that flood control works are part of the State Plan and are not in the Centre. All that we do from here is to give a sort of a technical assistance and co-ordination work and so on. I find the West Bengal Government has not provided any money for flood control work in North Bengal.

SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY : How can the State Government provide Rs. 80 crores or Rs. 100 crores ?

DR. K. L. RAO : No body expects them to do that. All this is not to be spent in one year ; it will extend over a period of 10—15 years. There must be some token provision. I have taken it up with the West Bengal Government.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU : You have given the State Governments a deep burial in 22 years.

SHRI LAKHAN LAL KAPOOR : What about Mahananda flood control works ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : There is no end to it. Let him proceed.

DR. K. L. RAO : The most difficult flood problem is in Assam. We have so far spent about Rs. 22 crores or so on the Brahmaputra. It is not adequate. My only request to the hon. Members is that we should not discourage the staff that we have appointed but they should encourage them and see that they carry out this investigation in the next two years with rapidity so that at the end of two years, hopefully, we shall have some material on which to formulate a scheme and include it in the next plan. I am sure in the next plan we shall be able to provide adequate funds so that a dent is made in controlling this great river. This is one of the very difficult rivers and there is no use minimising the problems and promising

something which cannot be done. It will be my privilege, and a great one too at that, to be of any service in the control of this river and I am anxious in the next one and a half years when I shall be dealing with this subject to see that some solid foundation, some solid data collection is made and some plan is formulated so that we can start implementation of the scheme. In the case of Assam, the difficulties of floods are well known. The question is one of obtaining sufficient amount of data so that we try to draw up a

correct masterplan and see that when we implement it shall not be subject to any bad effect but that it will result in the control of these floods to a large extent and reduce the suffering of the great people who inhabit that State.

20.05 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Friday, August 14, 1970/Sravana 23, 1892 (Saka).
