

[Pandi bakur Das Bhargava]  
will take more time tomorrow when the subject comes up. There are only two examples more which I wanted to give.

**Shri D. C. Sharma:** How many hours more does the hon. Member require?

**Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava:** According to the rules, when a Bill is under discussion, every Member is at perfect liberty to go on independently.

**Shri N. R. Muniswamy:** But the other Motion is there.

**Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava:** When the Chair has permitted me to speak, I do not know what objection hon. Members can have to my speaking. If they are not willing to hear me, I shall sit down. I will continue tomorrow.

**Shri Palaniyandy:** Bhargava may go on speaking till the Madras gets Thirupati.

**Mr. Chairman:** The hon. Member may continue tomorrow.

15.08 hrs.

# **MOTION re: REPORT OF DAMODAR VALLEY CORPORATION**

**Shri N. R. Muniswamy (Vellore):**  
**Mr. Chairman, Sir,** I beg to move:

"That this House takes note of the Annual Report of the Damodar Valley Corporation for the year 1957-58, laid on the Table of the House on the 29th August 1959."

This Annual Report covers various points. I may be permitted to say at the start that it covers mainly two aspects, that is, with regard to the

administration, and the audit report thereon. I may be permitted to deal with these two aspects in a comprehensive way in the order in which I choose.

On the whole, this Report is a long one and many of us are exercised over the real administration of this Corporation. My object in moving this Motion is only to pinpoint some aspects and problems that are facing us so as to draw the attention of the House to them and see that these things are not repeated.

With regard to administration, for a period of two years—if I remember aright from November 1956 to February 1958—there was no Secretary for this Corporation. The reason assigned was that no suitable successor was available to the previous incumbent. As such, an Additional Secretary was appointed to act on behalf of the Secretary for a period of 16 months. The appointment of a Joint Secretary for or Additional Secretary arises only when there is a Secretary. Even without the existence of a Secretary, an Additional Secretary was appointed to discharge the functions of the Secretary in his own way. It is an autonomous corporation handling as much as Rs. 130 crores. It is a deplorable situation that there has been no Secretary during the period I mentioned. I do not mean to say that the Additional Secretary has not done his job properly. He has done yeoman's service. But the lightning and thunder that would be attached to Secretary would not be there.

The question of headquarters has been exercising the attention of many hon. Members here as also the participating Governments and they wanted the headquarters to be shifted from Calcutta to the valley. Some reasons were given by the DVC not to shift it from where it is but not one of them

is convincing. It has been pending for more than several years and so a suitable place should be located in the valley. At least now, the Government should take the responsibility of shifting it to the valley where the main work is done. Calcutta is no doubt a premier city and everybody wants to be there but work is not done at Calcutta and they are also not willing to go to the mofussil area. They can have very good supervision over the entire administration if the headquarters are shifted to the valley.

The three major objects with which this Corporation was brought in were: flood control, irrigation and power. When we examine it with reference to these, it is a sorry tale. So far as flood control is concerned, it has not done its job properly. There had been unprecedented floods in September this year. There was a new risk of inundation on account of the monsoon. I do not mean to say that we should not have flood control. But this is intended not only to avoid floods causing damage to crops and villages but also to provide a sort of an insurance against drought. Flood control is designed with a view to see that the unusually heavy floods do not inundate the villages thereby causing damage to the villagers. So, there were these three objects with which this Corporation was set up.

Every one of us know the damage caused to human beings and cattle-heads in the 1956 floods. In 1959 also we have seen that. Only in 1957, if I am right, there were no floods. It has been stated off and on that these flood control measures are maintained not only against floods but also to provide against drought. Last year it was said that they had enough storage capacity to meet the drought. The lower channels of the Mahanadi river could not accommodate the inflow of the river and it has caused damages. It has been said by D.V.C. administration in October, they have issued instructions to the people living down below that area, that

there was a possibility of releasing more water and so they must take precautionary measures by shifting themselves to safe grounds. Thereby, the loss is not avoided. Therefore, new risks and new problems have been created for the Government to look to. When the Corporation issues such warnings to the people, it indicates something else also it would possibly hint that some other storage capacity has to be provided or some upper catchment area and to be developed to tackle the new situation that has arisen as a result of these floods. Even in the Hirakud Dam, when the water could not be contained because of fresh water inflow on account of rains, they had to deepen the lower channels so that they can accommodate larger inflow of water. Similarly, in the DVC also, dams had been constructed. When water from the tributaries and also fresh rain water comes in and inundates some areas, they are not able to cope up with the situation. In normal times it is adequate if there were normal monsoon rains. But in exceptional circumstances, they found it impossible. The canals are not sufficiently big enough to accommodate the inflow of water and the dams were not sufficient. So, when they released water, there was damage to the crops. We have to take stock of the new problems that have arisen now. In the first stage, four dams were constructed in the Damodar Valley. More dams have to be constructed because these four dams have not served the purpose so far as the flood control is concerned.

The other aspects are power and irrigation. I am told reliably that the energy is being sold at very reduced rates to many industrialists, neglecting the rights of the people inhabiting the villages in the nearby area. These people should be given preference. I am told that the industrialists are required to pay only four annas per unit. But even the World Bank which made enquiry about the disposal of the power here thought that it was being sold at a reduced rate.

[Shri N. R. Muniswamy]

They must increase the rates. For a very long time it seems the Corporation has not given effect to this recommendation of the World Bank. Even now they seem to think about it seriously but have not come to any conclusion. Power must be utilised for electrifying the villages and helping them, they have a primary right to the benefits and not the big industrialists. At the same time, the industries should pay more money as they get more money on account of this energy. They run like business concerns. They buy low and sell high and get money. The Corporation is not a commercial or business concern. We cannot altogether forget that it has to reimburse the expenditure that has been incurred by this Corporation. Rs 130 crores have been spent. So far as the floods are concerned we have not been able to see that the floods are properly controlled. We have seen that a number of floods have occurred as a result of heavy rains resulting in great damages, and fresh steps have been taken to see that they are not repeated in the future.

As regards irrigation, Section 34— I am speaking subject to correction— of the Corporation Act lays down the principles how the expenditure incurred on irrigation, the capital charges on irrigation are to be shared. A formula has been given there. So far as Tilaiya is concerned, a ratio has been tentatively fixed on the offtake per year and the ratio is 22 : 78. As a matter of fact, on the actual determination of the offtake per year it has turned out to be 11 : 98.9. Therefore, the formula enunciated according to the Act has not been given effect to because the expenditure that has been incurred on the construction of the dam has not been decided upon. The Corporation has said that since we have not come to any conclusion as regards the total expenditure incurred on the construction of these four dams we cannot now allocate on

the formula laid down and the ratio works out to 11 : 98.9. I would, therefore, say that the Corporation should exercise its rights in demanding from the State Governments that they should pay irrigation charges according to the ratio fixed subsequently.

The other aspect which has been brought out in this report is about the non-compliance of some of the sections of the DVC Act. There is one omnibus section wherein it is stated that this Corporation is an autonomous body, it has all powers and its powers cannot be curbed by anybody. There is a Financial Adviser attached to this Corporation to go into the question of every item of expenditure and see whether it has been spent according to the heads for which it was meant. He is also responsible for the preparation of budget and all that. What we find is that even his advice is very often negated by the Corporation. I should say, this is a sorry tale, that this Corporation should negated the advice given by the Financial Adviser whose main function is only to see that they do not spend money unnecessarily and they submit proper accounts to the Central Government for the money they spent. I hope Government will issue instructions to the Corporation to see that they give proper weight to the views and remarks given by the Financial Adviser and not a single pie is spent without his concurrence.

Then there are sections 32 and 33. They deal with inter-governmental allocation of expenditure on soil conservation, afforestation and other developmental aspects. I am surprised to see that the participating governments, especially Bihar and West Bengal, have not accepted this formula, though an authoritative verdict has been given by the Attorney-General that it must be shared by the participating governments. Relying upon this a huge amount of money has been spent. It was thought that

the participating governments would accept the decision of the Corporation and the verdict of the Attorney-General. They have now gone back on that and they have refused to accept it.

In this respect I want to say only one thing. I have been told very often by some hon. Members from West Bengal that this Corporation Act needs a good deal of revision and modification, if not totally changed. That is a very good idea. If we really want to see that this Act is properly amended, there is no reason or ground for them to postpone acceptance of the Attorney-General's views on the question of allocation of developmental expenditure. It is one thing not to accept it and another thing to ask for an amendment. If before amendment of the Act anything happens, it is for the participating governments to see that they carry out this mandate.

As regards the allocation of expenditure incurred in the construction of the four dams Tilaiya, Konar, Maithon and Panchet Hill, it has been stated that these dams have been constructed mainly for the purpose of carrying out the three main objects of the Corporation. As I told you, the main objects happen to be irrigation, power and flood control. How the expenditure is to be allocated is a question which has been left to the Corporation. The Corporation has taken upon itself the storage capacity of each dam, allocate the expenditure incurred on each dam in the normal way and thereafter divide it according to the object with which this water is utilised. In spite of all this, in spite of rules having been framed and directions given to the respective governments, I find that this has not been done and there is a good deal of trouble.

So far as Maithon, Panchet Hill and Konar dams are concerned, the water is merely intended for West Bengal for irrigation purposes. I find that

even the water from Konar could not be taken for irrigation purposes of West Bengal, the reason being that the contour of the land is such that water is not capable of going to the places where they want it unless we pump out or pump down the water. Naturally this would involve some more expenditure. In spite of that, I would respectfully state.....

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Member should try to conclude now.

Shri N. R. Muniswamy: Sir I will take only 30 minutes in all.

Mr. Chairman: The time is to be allocated by me. There is no question of 30 minutes being given to the mover.

Shri N. R. Muniswamy: That in the time normally allowed.

Mr. Chairman: There are many other hon. Members who would like to take part in this debate.

Shri N. R. Muniswamy: I appreciate, Sir, that this is more the concern of West Bengal and Bihar and not Madras. Still I have to make some more points which are very relevant.

Mr. Chairman: He may take five minutes more.

Shri N. R. Muniswamy: I will try to finish even earlier.

Now I want to point out the inaccuracies and the acts of omission and commission of the Corporation as a whole. The Corporation is given not a small sum but a huge sum to the extent of Rs 130 crores. They must, therefore, see that the money is spent for the purpose for which it is intended. According to the Audit Report, 1957-58—it is yet to be scrutinised by the Public Accounts Committee, but since it has come before us I think I can point out a few things from there which are relevant—there are many irregularities. They should

[Shri N. R. Muniswamy]  
not be repeated. More often than once the Public Accounts Committee has brought to the notice of the Government and the Corporation such irregularities and they have been told that such things should not be repeated. Every time such things are pointed out they give cogent and convincing reasons for departing from the usual course. They should at least see that the entire amount is spent for purposes for which it is intended. As I have stated, the main objects are three in number; that is, to say, the object is multi-purpose. The whole thing may develop into something else also later on, such as a commercial concern, and it may develop into an industrial area also in the long run.

You will be pleased to see that in this report it has been stated that the Prime Minister opened the Maithon dam in September, 1957. It is a very good feature that it has been opened. Everybody knows the utility of the Maithon dam and that the power house is down below and it has done quite a good service.

So far as the personnel is concerned now that the construction is closed, the workers are rendered surplus and so their services have been transferred to other agencies. They were able to succeed in doing that, but still we are not quite happy, because many of the workers are still without jobs. There have been frequent strikes, and there had been a strike in the Bokaro thermal power station, but yet, continuous supply of energy has been given to all the people. To that extent, we thank the Corporation for having run it successfully in spite of the strikes.

The labourers have been agitating for more amenities and concessions. Concessions have been given, but at the same time, they have got some extra facilities also. Yet, they seem to press for more which cannot possibly be complied with by the Cor-

poration. I only wish that all should co-operate with the Corporation in giving them success.

So far as flood control is concerned, I suggest that a high-power commission be appointed to go into the question and find out where the defect really lies and how they are not able to carry out the flood control measures effectively. They should find out what are the drawbacks and the failures. All this must be examined by a separate commission. If you ask the Corporation itself to go into these things, being the parties to it, they may not possibly discharge their function in an impartial way. Therefore, I may suggest that a committee of three Members of Parliament may be constituted to go into the question, apart from other committees which are going into the question. For instance, the audit report has to be gone into by the Public Accounts Committee. Only with regard to the administration, I want to point why it has not been possible for them to carry out the mandates given under the Corporation Act. Therefore, I want a committee to be appointed to go into the question and see that such havocs as have now been created by floods and the monsoon do not recur in the future.

Mr. Chairman: Motion moved:

"That this House takes note of the Annual Report of the Damodar Valley Corporation for the year 1957-58, laid on the Table of the House on the 29th August, 1959."

Shri C. K. Bhattacharya (West Dmajpur): Mr. Chairman, Sir, coming after the recent devastating floods in West Bengal, the discussion today is over-shadowed by the effects of those floods in our minds. In the beginning, we should remember that this valley has an area of 9,000 sq. miles and a population of a little less than five million. This is the area and this is the mass of population that we are concerned with.

During the last floods, somehow an impression got ground, and it was voiced in the press and by some experts in engineering as well, that a part of the responsibility for these floods lay in the defective construction of the DVC or some failure in its working. I am not competent enough to go into these facts as stated by experts. I only state the overall impression that has been created in the minds of the people by what appeared from the experts' views as well as from other quarters.

**Mr. Chairman:** I find that there are altogether seven Members wishing to speak, including those who have tabled the motion. I think each Member should not take more than 10 minutes.

**Shri C. K. Bhattacharya:** I thank you, Sir. That would be enough for me. It has even come out in the press that over this matter there has been a difference between the DVC and the irrigation experts of West Bengal Government, and there has been a tussle as to who was responsible and to what extent and what are the remedies to be adopted now to check recurrences of such floods in future. The DVC authorities, of course, have claimed—Mr. Ghosal, the General Manager, held a Press conference and made the statement—that DVC not only checked the floods, but had there been no DVC, the floods would have been more devastating. That is their claim. So, this matter requires enquiry.

It is contended that just before the floods came, the water level in these dams was much higher than what it should have been in the usual circumstances. Figures have been published showing that the record of water level should have been less in anticipation of the floods that were coming. More than that, there is now a demand for the construction of the other dams that have been left unfinished in the entire Plan. It was

contended that, when the DVC was constructed, floods of this type could not be expected during the next 50 years and so the DVC would be working to help the people and relieve them from the devastations caused by the floods. That was what was expected by the people living in the Damodar valley, viz., these dams would save them from future floods.

In this connection, I would like to mention the sudden release of water from Durgapur on October 1, which caused widespread inundation. People suffered not only from floods, but also from waterlogging caused by this sudden release of water. This kept an area of about 50 miles in length and 3 to 4 miles in breadth constantly under water for about 3 weeks, leading to a total destruction of crops and the destruction of a large number of houses in the trans Damodar area, on the right bank of Damodar. In the previous floods, water never remained held up so long. The reason for this is that the channel of Damodar has not been maintained in a way so that the water could be quickly drained out and so it is alleged that DVC has failed to maintain the flushing condition of the Damodar channel. That would be about 500 cuacs throughout the eight dry months of the year, as recommended by Mr. Voorduin, for preventing rapid drying up of the Damodar channel. In the absence of steady flow of water, vegetation has grown up in the river bed and surreptitious encroachments have also taken place. Unless this is checked in time in a few years, the Damodar would be dying out. So, the highest priority should be given to the flushing of the river and then to irrigation, industry, generation of hydel power and navigation. The first priority should be given to maintaining the channel of the Damodar in a proper condition so that in case of floods the water may be quickly drained out. That is my first submission. Of course, I am glad to state that the Prime Minister also

[Shri C K Bhattacharya]

said in a statement in Calcutta "I am allergic to dams, I want arrangements to be made so that water may be quickly drained out" That was his view as well

I have suggested an enquiry It should be a thorough enquiry into the administration and actual working of the DVC, including the effective capacity of the dam, the design and usefulness or otherwise of the distributaries in order to ascertain how DVC has been administered and how far the project has succeeded in fulfilling the object for which it was designed Something more It should also be enquired whether all the recommendations of Mr Voor-dum have received proper treatment at the hands of those who were ultimately responsible for the execution of the scheme or is it that his recommendations have been implemented only in part and this partial implementation is responsible for the condition we find today

Then, three expert committees had been appointed before—the Kanwar-sain Committee of 1956 the Lower Damodar Investigation Committee of 1957 and the Kongar Committee of 1959 The reports of these committees are yet to see the light of the day What are their recommendations? Is it a fact that had these been implemented there would not have been the serious condition which we find today?

Against the background of this year's flood the flood control capacity of Damodar has come to the fore front, and this should be properly enquired into and decided upon Lastly I shall have to come to Farraka It is now a patent fact that if floods have to be prevented in Bengal, the channel of the Bhagirathi has to be cleared up Ultimately, it is the Bhagirathi which can drain out water into the sea if its condition is properly maintained

DVC, I learn, have already appointed a committee The Chief Minister of Bengal has suggested a committee of experts on geographical and geological conditions Our Prime Minister has also suggested a Committee which can quickly decide upon the causes I would only suggest that all these three may be taken together and a committee may be appointed to enquire into the causes which I have just now submitted before you for this House to consider

Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri (Berhampore) Damodar was known as the river of woes Now the Damodar Valley Corporation has become the corporation of woes, at least so far as Bengal is concerned I read here from a report prepared by Mr Riegel one of the two American engineers who were appointed to examine the Voorduin Report on Damodar Project Mr Riegel expressed the view that it was his considered view that we should utilize the Damodar river for the combined purpose of flood control irrigation and power generation as much as practicable That is to say everybody was agreed including the experts that the three prime purposes of the DVC would be flood control irrigation and power And if we take all these three objectives one by one we shall find that so far as flood control is concerned the havoc created by the floods of 1956 and 1959 are standing demonstrations of what DVC has achieved So far as irrigation is concerned the Financial Advisor's comments included in the report under discussion give certain figures as to that In 1957-58 the kharif irrigation area was to have been four lakh acres and the rabi irrigation area was to have been 50 lakh acres The actual area irrigated

The Deputy Minister of Irrigation and Power (Shri Hathi): Is that 50 lakh acres?

Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri: No, 50,000 acres I stand corrected

But the intended water supply that year was to have irrigated 1,91,000 acres, and 86,005 acres was the area actually irrigated. Compare the 4 lakh acres with the 86,005 acres actually irrigated. That is a standing demonstration of the achievements of the greatly tom-tommed DVC with regard to irrigation.

As regards power, because of shortage of time I need not cite figures but already everybody knows that thermal power with Bokaro, Durgapur and other things will far overshadow or surpass that what is produced by hydel. That is to say that in all these matters, in all the three primary or main objectives of the DVC, the DVC has completely failed and, as you, Sir, know being a distinguished citizen from West Bengal, about 5 million people have suffered and at least one million of them have become homeless as a result of the recent floods in DVC command area and the economy of rural Bengal has suffered a shock from which it will not recover very easily.

Coming to the flood control aspect of the DVC, I will say that Shri Chapalakanta Bhattacharya—he is very, very cautious in attacking others or in making criticism.

**Shri Hathi:** Sober

**Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri:** But I am rather uninhibited. So I would just place before you one thing which is on record and which has been published in the papers. Shri N. Das Gupta, who is at present the Principal of the Assam Engineering College and who had made special studies of flood control and reservoir operations in the Tennessee Valley Authority and who subsequently worked as Project Officer on flood control studies in the Damodar Valley Corporation, has recorded this:

"It had been planned, with the advice of the DVC consultants, that during the flood season, June 15 to October 15, the reservoir levels at Maithon and Panchet Hill would

never be allowed to exceed 460 feet and 410 feet respectively, so as to ensure an adequate flood cushion for the maximum recorded flood of 650,000 cusecs observed at Anderson Weir, Rhondia. I do not, therefore, understand why the reservoir levels were allowed to go up to 484 feet and 415 feet at Maithon and Panchet Hill, respectively, on October 1, 1959, as given in the DVC Press Note."

That is what Shri Bhattacharya was hinting at. Why was the flood cushion, which is obligatory, allowed to be encroached upon? Would not the public of Bengal be justified in coming to the conclusion that this flood which occurred was completely a man-made flood—a flood made by the people who were placed in charge of the operation of the reservoir by their policy of water release? We want to know as to who are responsible for this. At whose instance it was done? Is it the Irrigation Department of the Government of West Bengal? Or the DVC engineers? There is dual control so far as the canals are concerned. They are under the control of the West Bengal Government. So far as reservoir operations are concerned, they are under the administration of the DVC, that is ultimately, under the control of the Central Government. We want to know, this House wants to know and the people of Bengal rising as one man want to know who are responsible for this state of affairs, who are responsible for rendering at least five lakhs of people completely homeless by sudden discharge of water which caused the recent floods. If you go to the villages you can see for yourself that they are now nothing but dump heaps. You cannot enter the villages. Old mud houses have collapsed. People are shivering in cold. In this winter season you can easily imagine what the condition is. Crops have been damaged, and neither the DVC authorities nor the irrigation authorities of Bengal have been gracious enough to assure us that there would be no repetition of such floods.



[Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri]

Therefore I repeat the demand already voiced by our distinguished friend Shri Bhattacharya, that there should be a high power commission to go into the whole thing, flood control in the DVC area, and also I want to make one thing clear. Let it not be a committee of experts because a committee of experts on the work done by experts will only ultimately exonerate the experts, and the report will not see the light of day as Shri Bhattacharya said. We want it to be a public enquiry. The people of Bengal and people competent to judge should be allowed to give their opinion on these things. Everybody is not a layman. For example, Dr. B. C. Guha, who is himself a distinguished scientist and was a member of the DVC, has made certain charges in a recent statement. I do not have the time to quote all these things, but very serious charges have been made, and people are absolutely cursing the DVC. Although that is not relevant, they are also cursing the Canada dam of the Mayurakshi Project for which also the Central Government supplied the funds. If you go to the villages, you will find that "Save us from the dams, save us from the canals" is the cry rising from all sides in rural Bengal today. That is why I suggest that there should be a high power commission. It should be appointed immediately. I do not know why there is so much delay in appointing such a commission. That commission should also include some members who would not be technical experts or engineers, but who would have sufficient scientific or technical background to understand things.

Shri C. K. Bhattacharya: If he would permit me to interrupt, let there be a committee of experts and non-experts.

Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri: I entirely agree. I agree, but let it not merely be a committee of experts to go into what the experts have done, because ultimately crowd does not take crow's meat, and that way everybody would be exonerated,

and the recommendations would not see the light of day. We do not know what recommendations were made by the experts on the 1956 floods. We have absolutely no faith in the so-called experts and their performance as demonstrated by the performance of the DVC.

Shrimati Renuka Ray (Malda): The DVC has been a matter of discussion in this House almost from its very inception. I remember it, expenditure and method of giving contracts figured in the first Estimates Committee's report presented to the House. Before going on to other matters I would like to mention that even in the last report placed before the House, Audit says:

"The procedure followed by both the Corporation and the project manager cuts across the principles of competitive tendering and is open to grave abuse. The procedure followed was highly objectionable and sacrificed a salutary principle for a negligible saving."

This was a matter which was a subject of contention long ago and again we find that these contracts have been given in a way that Audit does not endorse.

I do not want to go on regarding the Audit Report, nor have I the time, nor do I want to make any carping criticism. I realise in any work that human beings do, there are things that go wrong and when we point out every detail it is not always a quite fair and factual picture. Nevertheless, there are certain important things on which we have to focus our attention.

I do not agree with the last speaker in saying, nor am I so certain about it as he is, that all the dams that have been built are not going to be of any sort of use at all. The contention made by the DVC authorities that if during the time of the floods, the dams had not been there, the floods might have been of much greater intensity, is probably correct. I am not contending against many of these things, but, at the same time, I have with infinite re-

gret to bring up certain points. And the first of these points I bring up from the audit report itself.

The audit report has pointed out that in the interests of saving, of course, that certain drawings were made of a bridge and an aqueduct which were wrong and, therefore, had to be changed later. Audit has pointed this out because some expenditure went wrong. But I am pointing this out because it is a very serious matter, that the drawings should go wrong. Luckily, the mistake was discovered before the actual aqueduct was built; but supposing there is no proper caution in these things, and the drawings go wrong, and something is built in such a way that it does not fulfil its purpose, then it is a very serious matter, and that is what I would like to bring it to the notice of the DVC authorities as well as of the Central Government.

Now, I come to the main point which I would like to emphasise, and that is in regard to the terrible suffering that has been caused as a result of the intensity with which the DVC waters were let out during the recent floods in West Bengal.

I understand, and the annual report also mentions, that there is a meteorological unit attached to the DVC with certain specific functions, which include scrutiny and tabulation of meteorological and climatological data according to the requirements of the DVC and the analysis of weather charts etc.

I would like to point out that it must have been pretty obvious to them by the second week of September that the dams and reservoirs were full. This must have been within the knowledge of the meteorological experts. The intensity of the rains had also been very great in West Bengal, and people had suffered tremendously. So, why was not this water let out at an easier flow at that time? Why did they wait till the first of October? By that time, the cyclone had come, and the floods were of much greater intensity, and they had to let out the water at a tremendous

rate, with the result that those crops which had not been destroyed till then were destroyed at that time as a result of this.

I do not agree with the last speaker that all the crops were destroyed in these districts and that all that happened was the fault of the DVC, but I do claim that the DVC authorities did not exercise their foresight; they did not let this water out at a more even flow earlier. When the waters were let out, I think warnings came on the 1st of October and on the 2nd of October, but by the third, the intensity of the discharge was reduced. But by the 3rd of October the crops which had not been destroyed till then were destroyed. I had gone via Burdwan to Nabadwip at that time, and I saw with my own eyes how crops were destroyed; crops which were standing in spite of what had happened up to the 30th September were destroyed by the 3rd. I do say that the DVC authorities are responsible for this. This matter needs thorough investigation. Did not the meteorological unit inform them in time? They gave warnings on the 1st, but why did they not let out the waters in the second week of September? This is a very important matter which needs examination.

I am not an expert on dams, and I do not want to say that the dams have been built wrongly or anything of that kind. That is not my point, and that is not my contention. But I do agree with Shri C. K. Bhattacharya that not only the DVC matter but the entire flood control system for the rivers in West Bengal has to be looked into properly by experts and others. But I do not say that these floods were the fault of the DVC entirely. Obviously, they are not the fault of the DVC. Perhaps if the DVC dams had not been there, most likely, as the experts say, the discharge would have been over eight million cusecs instead of over four million cusecs. But that is not the point. The point is that they did not carry out their duties. That was

[Shrimati Renuka Ray]

a matter of judgment where they failed. That is the first thing.

16 hrs.

Secondly, obviously the dams are not sufficient whatever they are, to deal with an unprecedented flood. Thirdly, it is not only the DVC area that is involved. Up till today no attempt has been made to control the Bhagirathi and the Farraka Barrage Scheme has not yet gone beyond the stage of paper consideration. It is because of that that we are in this plight. The Ajoy river is also silting up. Then there is the Roopnarayan river. The whole thing needs to be looked into. Something has got to be done on all these points.

An Hon. Member: Ajoy river.

Shrimati Renuka Ray: I mentioned that. Then there is the Bhagirathi and Roopnarayan. The Mayurakshi is also there; of course, they have done something there. But it is mainly these rivers. I understand that there has to be a canal,—I am not an expert,—between the Damodar and the Ajoy. All these things have got to be done as soon as possible and I do hope that they will be taken up.

It is a great pity that it was because the main flood caused by the fact that the Bhagirathi has not been controlled at all by reason of the lack of the Ganga Barrage coming up that this unprecedented flood took place. There is no time to describe to this House, to the Members who were not there, what terrible misery the people there have gone through, how many homes have collapsed in many areas, not only in Kandhi, about which Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri knows well, but in many other parts, in the Murshidabad district, in Nandia, in 9 districts of West Bengal. I hope that the hon. Minister will take some action. I do think that it is a terrible fault on the part of the DVC in having let the flood waters at that intensity. Some action should be taken so that this mistake is not repeated. This sort of complacency will not do. They wait

and wait even after danger point is reached and then the answer is that they did not know, when the people of West Bengal knew that, in any case, the things were in a bad way.

Shri H. N. Mukerjee (Calcutta-Central): Mr. Chairman, I have no desire to be captious, particularly because the DVC is one of the prize pieces of our planning and we all wish it well. But the country has received, for the second time and in a greater measure, a terrible shock and disillusionment about the capacities of DVC.

I have here a government publication distributed to us in 1957 which said that when the Panchet Hill Dam was completed, it would assure the Lower Damodar Valley of "complete protection" against floods. This is an avowal made in a government publication. Very grave disillusionment has followed and that is why when the Prime Minister went to Calcutta, he noticed the anger of the people in regard to the dams and he spoke about his own allergy thereto. But I am grieved to notice that even the Prime Minister's own suggestions made after the floods of 1956 have not been implemented by the powers that be.

I feel that there is something very wrong in the working of the DVC. Actually in regard to costs, I learn that the original estimate by Mr. Voorduin in regard to the cost of the four dams on the basis of the alternative structure theory was about Rs. 15 crores, while actually it went up to Rs. 41 crores and more. Now, the prices of things had certainly increased. But that is not perhaps the whole explanation.

In the administration again, I find that in 1957 when in this House Shri C. K. Bhattacharya and I had asked questions about financial irregularities which were exposed in the papers with photostat copies, the then Minister just dismissed those charges. And we find that the financial report here looks askance at the expenditure of Rs. 78,288, which was the cost and

other expenditure on certain boats purchased from Patnaia, for God knows what reason Sir, I find in the administration, the official element is now entirely in the ascendant and since the death of the late lamented Phulan Prasad Varma, no non-official is there at all in the directing councils of the DVC I do not wish to make any aspersion on officials as such I find it difficult to believe, though I understand Mr Chaudhuri's sentiment, that officials can be so perverse as to produce a flood and have a man-made flood and that sort of thing I do not wish to make any aspersions on them but at the same time their ways of work and their capacity of responding to public sentiment and public requirements are very inadequate There is no doubt about it That is why I feel that when the recent flood devastation took place in West Bengal affecting nearly five million people, a terrible disillusionment has come over our country and something has got to be done about it In 1956, the Flood Enquiry Committee had stressed the urgency of improving and subsequently maintaining the existing drainage channels It also suggested other long-term and short-term measures but Government has not moved Mr Voordun had originally recommended that the original channels should be flushed and kept deep but that suggestion was not implemented Therefore, the main drainage channels which now are the Bhagirathi-Hooghly system including the Jalangi, Mayurakshi and Dwaraka system, the Ajoy with its tributaries, the lower Damodar with its spill channels and the Darukeshar, the Rupnaram with its tributaries and the Subarnarekha—all these have got to be taken into consideration if we are going to repair the damaged which the DCV in its inefficiency has produced

In any scheme of flood control again, the proper training of the Bhagirathi-Hooghly river system and the regular maintenance of its drainage capacity are of the utmost importance But we find that even in regard to its own canals there has

been defective alignment on the part of the DVC It is a very serious position which has got to be corrected as soon as ever it can be done

Planning implies co-ordination of requirements and possibilities but that seems to be completely absent in the DVC Irrigation, power-generation and flood control are the three objectives but they seem to pull in different directions Let there be an impartial investigation I add my voice to the voices already raised against what has happened so that we can find out what exactly took place Is it possible to rely only on monsoon rain and provide for all these three needs? Why is it that the DVC's meteorological unit is so very much at fault? The Press had reported and the DVC's General Manager had admitted that the meteorological reports could not be communicated in time because the posts and telegraph communications had been disrupted But elsewhere in the world for any comparable undertaking, such a corporation would have its independent system of communication

The matter has been mooted and I wish to add my voice to this point that the operation of the reservoirs has shown, according to all accounts which have come to us—much has been withheld from us—a great deal of defect Possibly there is some bias in the minds of the people who are there in favour of hydro-electric generation Possibly, the electricity department interfered with the reservoir operation on the ground of increasing hydel-generation during the dry period This point has been mentioned by Mr Chaudhuri very strongly I wish the Minister to consider why is it that even though it is not provided for in the water management plan drawn up by the DVC in 1958 on the recommendation of an expert committee, even though it is not provided for, why is it that the electricity department interfered with the reservoir operations and monkeyed about with

[Shri H. N. Mukerjee]

the flood cushion idea, on the ground of an increasing hydel-generation during the dry period. This is why I feel that Government has to take a very serious view of the situation, and the way Members of the House have spoken so far surely should make Government feel that very strong steps are in requisition.

I find a great deal of talk about Ayar Dam, and an impression is being sought to be created that when the Ayar Dam is constructed after wasting a few crores of rupees, everything would be lovely in the garden. Perhaps, Sir, the Ayar Dam will do some good, but it will not be enough. It will not be enough because I find I can reinforce my arguments from what my hon. friend the Deputy Minister himself said in an interview with *Yojana*, the Government periodical. He said that the experience so far gained in India has brought out forcibly the importance of "an integrated basin-wise approach to the problem of flood control." He also said that a step taken at one place to solve a local problem might have serious repercussions downstream or even upstream—a very sound idea. I wish him to stick to this and not to think only of one isolated dam which some engineers are suggesting for. God knows what reasons of their own.

The Ayar Dam, of course, might be a good thing, and if it is a necessary thing let it be constructed. The Farakka Barrage which has been in the offing for so long has been dangled like a carrot before the asses, so to speak, of this country. I hope the Farakka Barrage turns out to be something of a reality in the future, as soon as ever that is possible. But they seem to be sops given by Government to the life and economy of the people of West Bengal; not only of West Bengal but the whole of India, because Damodar Valley is the Ruhr of this country and if West Bengal dies who lives in the rest of India?

Therefore, I feel that the problem has got to be examined very seriously by experts mainly but surely with the assistance of non-official elements, and the idea should be accepted by Government that the DVC's acts of omission and commission can only be rectified when there is a really constructive basin-wise approach to the whole question.

The momentum of flood discharge, I read in an engineering article, is a function of slow and mean hydraulic radius, and on this ground the Damodar and Rupnarain floods are far greater in momentum than the Bhagirathi floods. Pending construction of the Ganga Barrage—and even, perhaps, after the construction, because the Barrage may not bring all the fruits we are hoping for—it is necessary to do something to see that the lower Hooghly which is getting choked up is improved. The lower Hooghly is getting choked up for lack of flushing action which the Bhagirathi floods alone cannot provide. It was once speculated by an eminent engineer that perhaps King Bhagirath deliberately diverted Damodar at right angles at Jamalpur to pour its floods into lower Hooghly to keep the mouth clean of silt.

My hon. friend the Deputy Minister has told us in Parliament, referring to the report of the Lower Damodar Investigation Committee, that the idea is to flush through the waters of the Rupnarain and Damodar the route from Calcutta down to the sea so that all the problems which are now linked up not only with the floods, not only with the DVC operations but with the entire future of Calcutta Port and the economy of a large part of our country, might very well be tackled.

I feel, therefore, that an integrated approach to the problem is necessary. Government should realise that there is great anger in West Bengal over what is considered to be the default of DVC. Government should find

out what exactly was done in regard to the reservoir operation. Government should do away with any special bias in favour of hydro-electric generation if that goes against the whole idea of a multi-purpose project. Therefore, Government should accept the demand voiced in this House by different parties in regard to the formation of an enquiry committee consisting of experts as well as non-officials.

**Shri Aurobindo Ghosal (Uluberia):**

Mr. Chairman, Sir, when the DVC project was started it was declared and we also hoped that Damodar, the river of sorrow will be transformed into Damodar, the river of prosperity. But during the last 11 years of our experience, we have found that, as has already been stated by Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri, this project has added woe and misery to the people who were expecting prosperity in the near future. Unfortunately or fortunately, the whole of the lower Damodar passes through my constituency. With the last two floods, the one in 1956 and the other during this year, about three-fourth of my constituency has been washed away by these floods. In the beginning, the people were so much assured that three-fold purposes would be served by this project, namely, that flood will be controlled, water-supply for irrigation will be made and that power will be produced. Now, we are to see how many of these three purposes have been fulfilled. Already, the previous speakers have stated that neither water for irrigation could be supplied as we promised earlier, nor the floods could be controlled nor have the people got any interest in the power produced.

There have been two great floods already in the Damodar—one in 1956 and the other this year. These floods have created such a havoc in this area that not only the common man is getting furious day after day but even the experts and engineers have begun thinking whether the DVC project has failed utterly. So, a doubt has naturally arisen in the minds of the

people as to why we have spent so much of our hard-earned money on this project, because from no aspect the project can be called a success.

We know the origin of this project. Other speakers have stated that the experts have committed mistakes, but in this case, I submit that even the expert's recommendations have not been accepted nor implemented. The original planner was the Chief Engineer of the Tennessee Valley Authority, Mr. Voorduin. His main recommendations were five-fold. Firstly, construction of eight reservoirs at Maithon, Konar, Tilaiya, Panchet, Belpahari or Deolbhari, Bokaro, Ayar and Bermo. The capacity of holding water of these reservoirs was said to be one million cusecs. Secondly, there was the recommendation to set up eight hydel power stations at these reservoirs with a total capacity of producing power to the extent of 2 lakh kilowatts. The third recommendation was the setting up of only one thermal power station at Bokaro which will produce power to the extent of 1,50,000 kw. The fourth recommendation was that he estimated that it would be possible to supply irrigation water for 7,60,000 acres of land. Fifthly, he recommended that the lower Damodar should be excavated and dredged for maintaining the normal flow of water all the year round for purposes of navigation and irrigation. Of course, there are other minor recommendations also. These recommendations were not only examined and approved by two United States experts but also by Indian engineers like Shri Khosla and Shri Narasimhan. In pursuance of this, the DVC Act was passed in 1948. But, in the last 11 years, from 1948 to 1959, much change has been made in these original recommendations and schemes.

The main non-implementations are these: firstly, only four reservoirs were set up instead of the eight as recommended. The present capacity of holding water of these four reservoirs is 6,50,000 cusecs. Secondly, the lower Damodar has neither been

[Shri Aurobindo Ghosal]

excavated nor dredged as a result of which the lower Damodar remains completely dry for about eight months in the year

In para 13 of the Data Book of June, 1956 of the DVC, the DVC themselves have stated or admitted thus:

"It follows that the four dams will not guarantee complete protection from floods".

It has been admitted by them that the bed of the river has not even the capacity of holding any water even though its volume has reached to 2.5 lakh cusecs near Runda

The present capacity of the lower Damodar to carry water is only 2,75,000 cusecs. If this 2.5 lakh cusecs of water is added with the water of the lower Damodar, there is bound to be flood in almost every rainy season. The holding capacity of the waters of these 4 reservoirs at present is 15,90,000 acre ft. If the minimum quantity of water, which shall be always retained in these reservoirs, which is 5,99,000 acre ft is excluded, only 9,93,000 acre ft of water is available for maintaining the regular flow in the Damodar river, whereas Mr. Voordum has recommended in his estimate to keep 22,70,000 acre ft to maintain regular flow in the lower Damodar. On the other, although Mr. Voordum estimated to have 15,90,000 acre ft for irrigating 7,60,000 acres of land, the DVC authorities have increased it to 10,44,000 acres. Mr. Voordum estimated the water for paddy cultivation and rabi crops, but the DVC authorities have extended it to double cropping, even with this low volume of water.

Even the hon Irrigation Minister of West Bengal, Mr. Ajoy Mukherjee, has already admitted that if there is drought for 2 consecutive years, it will not be possible for the DVC to supply water for irrigation. Regarding the production of power by hydro-electric plants and thermal plants, he recommended for the setting up of 8 hydro-

electric plants and only one thermal plant. He recommended it, because of lower capital cost of additional capacity installation at hydro-electric stations as compared to thermal stations, as well as lower operating costs, the installation of thermal plants should be kept to a minimum, consistent with the requirements for continuity of service.

I do not know why the changes from the original recommendations have been made. In the case of power also, I beg to submit that power is not given to small industries or village industries at cheap rates like T.V.A. power, but it is being completely utilised by the big capitalists and industrialists who are allowed to make more profits out of it. DVC has been turned into the electricity corporation. DVC sells power to the CEC at 1 anna per unit, whereas the CEC, a middleman, a foreign company, sells it to the customers at 4 annas per unit. Even then DVC makes a huge profit. Even Mr. Voordum said in the beginning.

"If the proceeds of these commodities were allowed eventually to find their way into the hands of a few operators, the population of the area will not be benefited and the purpose of the development would be largely defeated."

Now that has come true after 11 years.

So, I request the Government to set up a high commission for making an inquiry not only into the DVC projects, but also into the conditions of all the rivers of West Bengal, which have jointly brought this havoc to the people of West Bengal. Let the people know that their hard-earned money has been spent properly.

Shri A. C. Ghosh (Barasat): Sir, I still recollect the resounding words with which the then Minister, Shri Gadgil, finished his peroration over the passing of this Bill. He assured us that "milk and honey would flow

down the river Damodar and its tributaries". After 11 years, I sadly admit that the people of West Bengal have been awfully disappointed regarding the performance of the DVC in improving the economic condition of either West Bengal or of the DVC basin. Much has been said by several Members about the responsibility of the DVC so far as preventing the floods of this year at least is concerned. As pointed out even by the Minister of Irrigation, this year the floods have been unprecedented in living memory. It requires a real enquiry, a very high-powered enquiry to look into the responsibility of the DVC and find out how far the dams over the rivers and tributaries of the DVC Mayotakshu were responsible for aggravating the damages this year. After having spent about 117 crores of money I only wish that it would not deserve all the blame and, all the curses that are now showered on it by the people of West Bengal in their awful condition after the recent floods. So, I would suggest humbly to the Government to take immediate steps to set up a real enquiry committee, not wholly composed of experts, but an enquiry committee composed of public men to look into the affairs of DVC, particularly with regard to its capacity to prevent floods. The original idea, which necessitated the report of Mr Voorduin, was to have DVC for the prevention of floods. It seems that that idea has now been practically abandoned.

The statement made by the General Manager or the Secretary of the DVC, after the recent floods, only reveals his care-free nature about the responsibility he has taken as General Manager of the DVC. Including the Ministers of the West Bengal Government, the general public have been clamouring that the DVC and its dams have been largely responsible for the seriousness of the floods. He, just in a care-free manner, said: "No, that is not true". He has not taken the trouble of going into the technical examination of that aspect.

As far the other things, the main achievement of the DVC after these eleven years is only the power supply. But for that I do not think a river valley scheme is necessary. Out of 1,74,000 kw. of power supplied by the DVC, about 60,000 kw. come from the hydel power and more than 1,10,000 kw. comes from the thermal plant. For a thermal plant, a river valley scheme is not necessary. Even the Calcutta Electricity Supply Corporation or any other Electricity Supply corporation can do that. The DVC has not taken appropriate interest in developing hydel power in that region.

Then, as has been pointed out by my friend who preceded me, this power also is not being utilized for the development of local industries, particularly small-scale industries. Power is given to big companies like Tatas, Martin Burn and Company and the railways. At what rate? Is DVC making a good profit out of this? It has invested about Rs 67 crores for power installation, and the receipts in 1957-58 is just about Rs 3½ crores from the sale of power. The overhead charges, the maintenance charges and interest would come to about Rs 2½ crores. So, on an investment of Rs. 67 crores, the Corporation is getting only just one crore. You can calculate the percentage of profit. That is not a good investment for any commercial enterprise.

Coming to irrigation, it was assured that DVC would irrigate about 11 lakh acres in West Bengal and may irrigate about one lakh or two lakh acres in Bihar. Now, after 10 years, we find that only 1,46,000 acres have been irrigated. That is to say, about one-eighth of the promise or assurance that was given on behalf of the Government or the Corporation as regards irrigation has been performed during these 11 years. So, there also ...

Mr. Chairman: The hon Member's time is up.

Shri A. C. Guha: I think I have started only six or seven minutes ago.



[Shri A. C. Guha]

There also the performance of the DVC has been very, very miserable.

Then as far as encouraging small-scale industries is concerned, I find two industries have been set up with a total capital of near about Rs. 3 lakhs borrowed from the Central Government. Now those two industries have been handed over to the Bihar Government. But was this the idea of the Damodar Valley Corporation that in eleven years they could start only two small industries in that area? That was also an assurance and a prospect given and that has been belied.

It has been stated by the hon. Mover of this Resolution, Shri Swamy, that the headquarters be shifted from Calcutta to the operation area. I do not understand as to what is the particular point in that. Calcutta, I know, is over-populated. There are other difficulties also in Calcutta. But I am sure the other places suggested would be more inconvenient for the offices to operate from than Calcutta. I think the Government should not come to any hasty decision on any impulsive motives, but they should carefully judge the issue as to where the headquarters should continue to be. Calcutta is surely the most suitable place from many points of view.

In this respect I should like also to submit that I find that there has been an impression in this House that the West Bengal Government has been making undue demands. Of the total investment of Rs. 117 crores, I think the contribution of West Bengal is Rs. 67 crores, the contribution of the Central Government is only Rs. 28 crores and the contribution of the Bihar Government is Rs. 21 crores. West Bengal has made more than 50 per cent of the total contribution. So, if West Bengal makes some claim for the control of the DVC, I think that is not quite unjustified.

According to the provisions of the Act all assets created by the DVC

would vest in the Corporation. No asset should accrue to the Government of West Bengal or to the Government of Bihar. But then I cannot understand how the West Bengal Government will repay the debt. It has also been stated that the profit could be distributed among the States and that also only profits accruing on different heads will be distributed. It says:

“Profits, if any, attributable to each of the three main projects, viz., irrigation, power and flood control shall be credited to the participating Governments.”

There cannot be any profit at all on flood control and there the West Bengal Government's investment is near about Rs. 22 crores. Then for irrigation also, I do not think there is any prospect of any profit in the near future. So there also the West Bengal Government would not get any share. The profit is coming only from power and that also upto now would not be more than Rs. 1 crore annually, that is, net profit. So I cannot understand wherefrom the West Bengal Government can repay the loan which it has taken from the Central Government for making its contribution to this Corporation. If the West Bengal Government demands some control and authority over the management of the DVC it is quite justified. It has contributed about 60 per cent, or more than that, of its capital. Any asset that would be created out of this investment will not accrue to the West Bengal Government but will vest with the Corporation and the Corporation is not expected to make any profit in the near future. This is a very dismal picture for the West Bengal Government and I think the House will also take into consideration that aspect when any suggestion about the financial responsibility of the contributing Government is made in this House.

**Mr. Chairman:** I think the hon. Member has finished.

**Shri A. C. Guha:** Yes, I think I have finished. I have nothing more to say except one point.

The annual interest charged is being paid by the Corporation at the rate of more than Rs. 5 crores and the Central Government is taking the interest from the Corporation. I do not know for how long it will be possible for the Corporation to pay this Rs. 5 crores annual interest without getting a similar amount from the Central Government to repay the interest. The Corporation would not have any income of its own to pay the interest. That is also a serious thing which this House should take into consideration and the Government also should devise something to put the Corporation on a proper footing.

**Mr. Chairman:** The hon. Minister.

**The Minister of Irrigation and Power (Hafiz Mohammad Ibrahim):** You can give another Member an opportunity to speak if you want, I will take shorter time.

**Mr. Chairman:** I think the hon. Minister should speak now, because the Mover also will have to get some time for reply.

**Hafiz Mohammad Ibrahim:** I am prepared to share. I said I could take shorter time if another hon. Member wanted to say something.

**An Hon. Member:** We want your reply.

**Shri Goray (Poona):** We want to know what he has to say about it.

**Shri N. R. Muniswamy:** We want a reply to all the points raised by us.

**Hafiz Mohammad Ibrahim:** I have heard with rapt attention the speeches which have been made during the discussion by the hon. Members.

At the outset, I join them in expressing my feeling of sorrow at the calamity which befell this year in the shape of floods in West Bengal. I

myself had been to Calcutta and also to certain flood-stricken areas and seen some things there. The conditions were very acute, and I expressed my feelings on the spot also speaking before the persons who had gathered there. So, I share those feelings which the hon. Members have, and I assure them that not only myself, but as they already know, the Prime Minister, my Deputy Minister and this Ministry are fully conscious of the situation and the calamity which has befallen there, and we are quite prepared always to place every service at their disposal and to do whatever is necessary to be done for the purpose of relieving the conditions there.

During the discussion certain points were raised. Some things have been said against the DVC. I got certain material and I tried to find out certain things in the light of the points which were indicated with the motion, but after hearing the speeches here I came to the conclusion that probably I need not go into all of them and say very much about each and every thing which has been said here in this connection. What is at present working in my mind is one proposal which has been made during the discussion. That proposal relates to the setting up of a commission. Had I not heard the things which have been said here probably I would have refused the request point blank without any further consideration, but now I feel that I should get an opportunity to understand what has been stated here.

16.39 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER in the Chair]

I want to understand the situation there on account of which the necessity for the setting up of a commission is felt. So, I would request, through you, the hon. Members from Bengal to enlighten me more on this subject to come to me and tell me and to place at my disposal every necessary thing which may be required in this connection, so that Government may determine and come to its final

[Hafiz Mohammad Ibrahim]

decision whether this action should or should not be taken

**Shrimati Benuka Ray:** In view of that, could we have an extra day to discuss flood control measures, because he has suggested that we should give more points

**Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri:** The hon Minister sometimes convenes conferences of Members from different States on plan and power projects, flood control and other things. If he would convene a special convention of Members from West Bengal, they would place all their problems, all their difficulties and views before him

**Hafiz Mohammad Ibrahim:** But may I tell one thing through you to the hon Member that I will do that also as he states, but before that I also want to have certain discussion with some Members who may be pleased to come to me and tell me some things and throw more light so that I may feel better convinced

**Shri D. C. Sharma (Gurdaspur):** Will the hon Minister give us dinner?

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Order, order

**Hafiz Mohammad Ibrahim:** Oh, yes, always. My house is in his hands, he can come at any moment, and he can take as much as he likes

One thing was said about which I want to say something, and that is in relation to the delays which occurred in connection with the appointment of the secretary. Hon Members have probably heard already that the appointment of the second secretary in place of the first was delayed by six months, and the next appointment was made two months after the retirement of the second secretary. The next appointment was made after the expiry of fifteen months. As far as the period of six months and two months is concerned, that is an ordinary period which is always occupied in the case of such appointments, and, therefore,

there cannot be any complaint against it. But as far as the fifteen months' period is concerned, I shall place one position before hon Members here.

At that time, when the appointment was going to be made, it was brought to the notice of the DVC that the secretary there should enjoy more powers than he had been enjoying before. This was one thing. Another suggestion was that he should possess utility and experience. On account of these two things, a search had to be made, and that search took time, because a suitable person was not available till Mr Ghosal was found and he became available, he was in employment elsewhere, and he was then taken as the secretary. So, it was only under special circumstances that that inordinate delay in regard to the appointment of the third secretary took place.

As far as the utilisation question is concerned, I fear hon Members may not agree with me, but I assure them that as far as DVC is concerned, I am also very keen that the entire irrigation which is provided should be utilised.

**Shri Goray:** What is the percentage that is utilised now?

**Hafiz Mohammad Ibrahim:** The percentage is not with me.

The utilisation was 4,46,000 acres in 1958.

**Shri Goray:** I want the percentage, and not the acreage.

**Hafiz Mohammad Ibrahim:** I have said already that that figure is not available with me now.

**Shri A. C. Guha:** Was it 4,46,000 at the end of 1958? At page 6 of the report, we find that at the end of 1957-58 it was 1,46,000 acres.

**Shri Goray:** Yesterday, while answering one of my questions, the Deputy Minister had stated that in

certain States, the utilisation was as high as 80 to 90 per cent I would like to know whether the DVC was one of those

**Shri Hathi:** No

**Hafiz Mohammad Ibrahim:** As far as the complaint is concerned, it is not particularly against the DVC, it is a complaint which is of an all-India nature, against every State. Probably, Members are aware that two engineers were particularly appointed for the purpose of making a tour throughout the whole of India, State wise, in order to find out the causes and also to suggest what remedial measures should be adopted in order that there may be quicker utilisation of the irrigation which is provided. So those two members made a tour of India and have given their reports. Those reports have been considered so far in regard to certain States by the Commission. On the basis of those reports, the States have been informed of what action they have to take in this connection. Understand that Bihar is also included in it. So that has been done.

**Shri Goray:** Will that report be made available to us?

**Shri Hathi:** We are placing a summary on the Table of the House.

**Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri:** What about the Khungar Report?

**Hafiz Mohammad Ibrahim:** I am coming to that. The Khungar Committee has been interested in one thing. As far as the floods in Bengal are concerned, it has been asked to find out the remedies, what has to be done.

**Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri:** I am not referring to the work which will be entrusted to the new Khungar Committee. This is the new Khungar Committee. I am referring to the old Khungar Committee's report relating to the utilisation of the water resources of the DVC. Will that report be made available to us?

**Hafiz Mohammad Ibrahim:** That report is not submitted yet. That is to come by the end of this month. After that, it may be considered whether it should be made available to someone or not. At present, I am not in a position to say whether it may be made available or not.

But a Committee has been appointed to deal with the question of floods in West Bengal. That Committee is headed by Shri Khungar. The questions which have been discussed here and the doubts which have been expressed will be taken into consideration by that Committee also. As far as I am concerned, I have already said that we may consider that and try to find out what can be done in that connection, if it is at all necessary.

There was one point mentioned with which unfortunately I disagree, and I request those hon. Members to give me an opportunity to talk to them. They may come prepared to make me understand that point also. That point is that in the reservoir of the dam water was stored and then released. Thus both the things were detrimental.

**Shri A. C. Guha:** The main point we made was that the water was not released in easy instalments. Instead of allowing the water to accumulate to a considerable height beyond the danger point, the water should have been released in easy instalments.

**Hafiz Mohammad Ibrahim:** But there is one thing. Hon. Members know that the floods came unexpectedly.

**Shrimati Renuka Ray:** Not unexpectedly.

**Shri A. C. Guha:** It was not unexpected. Rains were continuing for weeks.

**Shrimati Renuka Ray:** If you will excuse me, by the middle of September, the danger point had almost been reached. Why was not water released from that date instead of waiting when the water was almost practically past the danger point?

**Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri:** Moreover, the charge has been openly made by a very competent engineer who was associated at one stage with the working of the DVC that the flood-cushion was allowed to be encroached. There is a certain level beyond which the reservoir level should not go but it was allowed to be encroached. Why was that done? That's the suspicion in the public mind. That charge has been made openly in the pages of a responsible paper such as *Statesman* and that charge remains unanswered, till now.

**Hafiz Mohammad Ibrahim:** If there were rains before, it would have been most imprudent on any one's part to release more water. It would have added to the calamity there.

**Shri A. C. Guha:** We have made certain suggestions about that and we hope the Minister will examine them technically and see why water was not released earlier. It may not be possible for him just now to reply to our points but these should be examined technically. Why was water allowed to accumulate to such a height and why was not water released earlier?

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Members have expressed certain doubts and they desire these points should be examined by the Ministry. The hon. Minister may examine them and then answer.

**Shri Prabhat Kar (Hooghly):** There is no question of doubt. It is a question of fact.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** He will examine all these things and will be able to reply to that point.

**Hafiz Mohammad Ibrahim:** I have already said that I will discuss these points with the hon. Members. That is why I did not give answers to these points raised here. I am reserving everything and my mind is open. Hon. Members may meet me and convince me of anything they like.

**Shrimati Ha Palchoudhuri (Nabadwip):** The Minister has already placed

a statement on the Table of the House. Let there be a discussion on that and let that statement be taken into consideration.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** He has invited Members to sit with him and he will discuss with them and then we will see afterwards whether any further discussion is needed or not.

**Hafiz Mohammad Ibrahim:** I have answered some points. Probably I should not say this now but I have to say this now because of the pressure of the Members. I am making a statement tomorrow and I shall place it before the House. In spite of that still there is any point, I have got my mind open and I am prepared to be convinced of anything.

**Shri A. C. Guha:** Let us have a discussion with the Minister later on.

**Hafiz Mohammad Ibrahim:** That is what I suggested.

**Shri N. R. Muniswamy:** I am very happy for having initiated this debate with a view to bring certain facts to the notice of the Government so that they may take remedial measures in order not to get the same thing repeated again. Some questions were put by hon. Members here as to why the level was allowed to be passed and they said that as a result of that there was this catastrophe. I remember to have read in the newspapers that the people living down the streams were informed.... (Interruptions.)

**An Hon. Members:** That was too late.

**Shri N. R. Muniswamy:** The existing capacity is inadequate and something more has to be done. Down below the canals should be deepened and there should be catchment areas in the upper regions. Of course, there had been slight lapses on the part of the administration and so there has been this sorry tale. Our sympathy goes to the affected people. I am happy that the hon. Minister was kind enough to invite suggestions from all the hon. Members so that he could take remedial measures.

One point which I suggested at the time of sponsoring the motion was that the Corporation was given ample powers to do anything necessary to carry out its functions under the Act. But it looks as though the administration does not take into account even the views and suggestions given by the financial advisers. I wish that the financial adviser who has been appointed there would look into all kinds of expenditure incurred. If the Corporation has got wide power, it is beyond the control of anybody. The financial adviser should thoroughly examine every item of expenditure. If that is not done, there would always be difficulties. I raised this point at the time of moving the motion. The hon. Minister in his reply has not indicated what steps he proposes to take to see that these things will not be repeated.

I also made out a point that the participating governments do not carry out the instructions. There is a separate clause under which these things could be referred to arbitration and the decision of the arbitrator will be binding on the participating governments. There have been cases where both the participating governments have not accepted the suggestions given by the Corporation. At no time was any reference made to any arbitrator to see that things are settled.

I request the hon. Minister to see that not only this power is exercised but proper steps are also taken to see that the views expressed by the Financial Adviser are given due consideration. It is the Financial Adviser who has to see that the expenditures made properly. Several instances have been pointed out by the Public Accounts Committee in their Fourteenth Report

of 1956-57. Both the Corporation and the Administration should not ignore the views expressed by the Financial Adviser. I would say that the Financial Adviser also has failed in the discharge of his duty in not bringing these things to the notice of the Government in time so that they could take proper action and see that things are rectified.

I would once again say that I am glad that the hon. Minister has an open mind in this matter, he proposes to invite suggestions from Members and also hold conferences to see that these things do not happen and the Corporation functions in such a way that the three objectives for which the Corporation has been set up are fulfilled.

**Mr Deputy-Speaker:** The question is:

"That this House takes note of the Annual Report of the Damodar Valley Corporation for the year 1957-58 laid on the Table of the House on the 29th August, 1959."

*The motion was adopted*

## BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### FORTY-FOURTH REPORT

**Shri Rane (Buldana) Sir,** I beg to present the Forty-fourth Report of the Business Advisory Committee

16.58 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Friday, November 20, 1959 | Kartika 29, 1881 (Saka).*