

Mr. Speaker: Now that the matter has been cleared up, there is no need to give my consent to the adjournment motion. Anyhow, there is an assurance that Government will always look into it.

Shri Tyagi (Dehra Dun): In this connection, will the Government make a statement after interrogating the Chinese?

Shri Morarji Desai: May I plead for some appreciation of Government's difficulties in this matter? It is a matter which is very delicate. When we interrogate a person, any kind of information may come. We may have different meanings in it; others may have different meanings in it. To disclose what they have said, to the people or to others, would be a very dangerous game. I think in the matter of borders Government ought to be trusted. Either the Government is trusted or it is not trusted. Sir, may I say that it is not the intention of the Government to keep back any relevant information from the House, unless it is necessary to do so? But in a matter like this I think a public discussion like this is not going to be useful.

Shri Tyagi: Nobody wanted a public discussion.

Since that news has been printed in the papers, I want to know whether the Government is at least prepared to contradict it so that there may not be any misgivings in the mind of the public.

Shri Morarji Desai: I have already contradicted it.

Shri D. C. Sharma (Gurdaspur): Why should these papers publish such alarmist news and spread panic in the country?

Mr. Speaker: You cannot avoid that.

Dr. Samantsinhar (Bhubaneshwar): What about the statement of the Defence Minister that we would not have war on the Himalayas?

Mr. Speaker: This is not the subject matter of discussion now.

12.09 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

SETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES IN DANDAKARANYA

Shri Ajit Singh Sarhadi (Ludhiana): Under Rule 197, I beg to call the attention of the Minister of Rehabilitation and Minority Affairs to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon:—

“The reported inadequate response from the West Bengal refugee population to settle down in Dandakaranya Reclamation area.”

The Minister of Rehabilitation and Minority Affairs (Shri Mehr Chand Khanna): Sir, the Dandakaranya Scheme was started specially to provide opportunities for the resettlement of displaced persons from East Pakistan residing in camps in West Bengal, the other important object being the promotion of the welfare of the local population of the area which consists mostly of tribals.

The Government of India have up to now sanctioned an expenditure of Rs. 15.43 crores on the development of the area in Dandakaranya; the estimated expenditure up to March 1961 being about Rs. 10.54 crores. Machinery and other equipment costing about Rs. 4.7 crores have been purchased, the foreign exchange involved in this purchase alone being about Rs. 2.68 crores. A budget provision of Rs. 7.00 crores has been proposed for the scheme for the next financial year (1961-62).

The movement of camp families from West Bengal for settlement under the scheme commenced with the dispersal of 170 families to the area in March, 1959. Up to the end of February 1961, 2023 families have been moved from camps in West Bengal; of these, 1498 families were moved upto March 1960, 66 between April and September 1960, and 459 families during the 5 months from

October 1960 to February 1961. These figures would reveal that the movement of camp families for a whole year has been intermittent and very slow.

In March 1960, the question of the movement of camp families from West Bengal to Dandakaryanya, which was making good progress, suddenly became complicated and assumed unexpected importance. The West Bengal Government proposed a re-appraisal of the manner in which camp families should be required to move to Dandakaranya, as also the manner of their employment there pending resettlement on land, with the result that the movement of families came almost to a complete stop from April, 1960 onwards. The subject was also debated at length in the West Bengal Assembly.

The position was comprehensively reviewed during April to June, 1960.

Mr. Speaker: How long is the statement?

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: It covers five pages. I may lay it on the Table. [See Appendix III, annexure No. 61]. and give a gist of it.

Mr. Speaker: Yes.

Shri D. C. Sharma (Gurdaspur): Let him give the precis in 50 words.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: When this matter was agitated in the West Bengal Assembly and the Chief Minister of West Bengal also made a statement in the West Bengal Assembly, I invited him, along with a number of his Ministers and Secretaries to visit Dandakaranya and see things for himself. He went there. I also invited a number of Members of the West Bengal Legislature representing all parties. They also went and visited Dandakaranya; so did a number of editors of the leading papers from Delhi as well as from West Bengal. They all came to the unanimous conclusion that this was a good project and that it was practical, feasible and

offered much incentives and potentialities for the rehabilitation of displaced persons from East Pakistan in Dandakaranya.

Then, certain demands were made. The demands were that the Government of West Bengal should be associated with the project like the Governments of Madhya Pradesh and Orissa, that there should be a whole-time Chairman and that this Authority should be given a substantial amount of autonomy. All these three demands were conceded.

Then, a meeting was held between the hon. Prime Minister of India and the Chief Minister of West Bengal where certain other decisions were also taken to the satisfaction of the State Government. The question then arose whether the voluntary system, which was being resorted to by the Government of West Bengal and had practically failed, should continue or whether notices should be served. The Chief Minister of West Bengal was of the view that he should be given an opportunity to continue with the voluntary system.

Then a meeting of the Chief Ministers of Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal and Orissa was held in September 1960 and again this question was mooted. Again, it was suggested that we should carry on with the voluntary system. Then we found that nothing was happening and it was suggested by the Government of West Bengal that a Dandakaranya Week should be organised and the displaced persons in camps in West Bengal appraised of all the facilities that they will get in Dandakaranya. This was also done. In spite of all that, we have found that the pace of movement has been very slow.

Then I myself discussed the matter with the Chief Minister of West Bengal and a decision was taken that notices should be served. About a month ago the new Chairman, that is, the wholetime Chairman of the D.D.A.

[Shri Mehr Chand Khanna]

wrote to the Chief Minister of West Bengal drawing his attention to the fact that during the whole year 1960-61 not more than 500 families had gone there though he had made the demand three months ago that at least 2,000 families should be sent immediately and that this flow should continue. The hon. Prime Minister also wrote to the Chief Minister of West Bengal. I also wrote to the Chief Minister of West Bengal and the Chief Minister in a letter to me, which he sent only a few days ago, has said, "We are doing our level best, but there is opposition among the displaced persons in camps in West Bengal to go to Dandakaranya and nobody is in a position to say at the moment as to how many of them will go or will not go to Dandakaranya".

The position today is this. We have incurred expenditure to the extent of Rs. 10 crores on Dandakaranya. We are making a budgetary allocation of Rs. 7 crores for the year 1961-62. On the other hand, for the upkeep and maintenance of camps in West Bengal alone the Government of India have spent Rs. 48 crores on giving doles upto now. This state of affairs cannot be allowed to continue any longer. This project is a national project. The entire resources are being found by the Government of India. Lands are being given by the Governments of Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. So the displaced persons should go there and rehabilitate themselves. If they do not want to go there, we cannot continue these camps indefinitely. We hope to take a decision in this connection shortly.

Shri D. C. Sharma: Sir, from the statement.....

Mr. Speaker: Papers to be laid on the Table. Shri Morarji Desai.

Shri S. M. Banerjee (Kanpur): On a point of order, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: There is no point of order. We are hardpressed for time

today. We must finish the general discussion on the General Budget today.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: Sir, you are pleased to admit calling attention notices on matters of immediate importance. But now my impression on hearing the gist, which is longer than the statement itself, is that the hon. Minister wants to clarify his position vis-a-vis the West Bengal Government. This is most unfair.

Mr. Speaker: What is the point of order?

Shri S. M. Banerjee: The point is whether such an unimportant thing should at present be allowed on a calling attention notice. I do not challenge your discretion but....

Mr. Speaker: There is no point of order against the hon. Minister. Hon. Members talk with two voices. We have spent Rs. 10 crores on Dandakaranya and then Rs. 48 crores have already been spent on camps in West Bengal. Not a single Session passes without a number of questions being asked here. To avoid all that I wanted to have a comprehensive statement in respect of a matter which was agitating the minds of many and in which thousands of families are involved. Far from inviting this, if he is interested in this matter, he calls to question my discretion to have allowed this to come up....(Interruption). I allowed this definitely to clear any misunderstanding and to know as to what exactly has been done. Human factors are involved here. It is not material factors that are involved. Those families are there. They ought to be housed properly and so on. I am happy that he has made a comprehensive statement. Hon. Members will look into it and when we take up consideration of the Rehabilitation Ministry's Demands, they may make whatever suggestions they want to make. They have got information in advance now.

Now papers to be laid on the Table.