

LOK SABHA

Tuesday, the August 1, 1972/
Srayana 10th, 1894 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven
of the Clock

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Lowering of Voting Age

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*21. SHRI S. A. MURUGANAN-
THAM :

SHRI ARJUN SETHI:

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to reject the proposal regarding the grant of voting rights to the youth at the age of eighteen; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE
MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE
(SHRI NITIRAJ SINGH CHAUDHARY):

(a) No decision has yet been taken in the matter.

(b) Does not arise.

SHRI S.A. MURUGANATHAM: May I know from the hon. Minister why the Government have not yet taken a decision on this question when a series of representations have been made by students and youth federations asking for reduction ? Why is there delay even after the Joint Committee of Parliament and the Petitions Committee of the Fourth Lok Sabha had suggested reducing the voting age to 18 ?

SHRI NITIRAJ SINGH CHAUDHARY: The matter was considered by the Cabinet and further information sought by the Cabinet is being collected and will be submitted. Thereafter a decision would be taken.

SHRI S. A. MURUGANANTHAM: Is he aware that his party included this in the election manifesto ? Will this assurance given to the people be implemented ?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE AND PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI H.R. GOKHALE): The question is not merely one of amending the articles of the Constitution and bringing down the age from 21 to 18. The physical impact of such a reduction in the voting age has also to be considered along with this. Tentative, preliminary enquiries have already been made. It appears on the basis of these preliminary figures that nearly four crores more voters will be there. That itself is not a deterrent because there are other facts which are going along with this. The number of constituencies will also increase. It is not possible unless we make one constituency so big. Today's constituencies are quite big and on an average they have round about 11 lakhs. If this proposal is implemented, it will be 12 or 13 lakhs which will again become too big. It would become necessary to consider whether the number of constituencies should be increased. It will also mean increase in the number of polling booths, because roughly speaking for a strength of 800 voters you have a polling booth. So, the number of polling booths have to be increased. apart from the question of increase in staff, expenditure and other things. Government are not set for it or against it at the moment but Government have to consider all the aspects before a decision is taken.

SHRI ARJUN SETHI: May I know from the hon. Minister whether the Government do not consider that the joint Parliamentary Committee had exceeded its scope in making proposals about the voting age ?

SHRI NITIRAJ SINGH CHAUDHARY: It is true that there was no such point referred to the Joint Committee; yet they have made that recommendation.

SHRI POPATLAL M. JOSHI: Each constituency has about 11-12 lakhs of people but the voters are half that number. By enrolling people of 18 years of age, perhaps voters may increase but the constituency has nothing to do with it.

MR. SPEAKER: This is not a supplementary question; you are putting before hon. Minister some theoretical propositions.

SHRI POPATLAL M. JOSHI: I am saying that the population of a constituency has nothing to do with this. By raising the strength of the voters will there be any difficulty ?

MR. SPEAKER: That is the point that he was at pains to explain in his previous reply.

SHRI M RAM GOPAL REDDY: The Minister has expressed so may difficulties but he has not said one thing. I want to know whether these immature boys will rightly exercise these votes or not ?

MR. SPEAKER: You should exercise your right to put a supplementary question properly.

श्री पन्नालाल बाबूपाल : क्या माननीय मंत्री जी से मैं यह जान सकता हूँ कि सन् 1971 की महुँ मशुमारी के अनुपात में भविष्य में लोक-सभा और विधान सभा में जनसंख्या के आधार पर सीटें रखी जायेंगी ।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : यह इससे नहीं उठता ।

Decisions taken at Conference of States
I & P. Ministers at Srinagar (June,
1 72)

*22. **SHRI P. NARASIMHA REDDY:**
SHRI K.M MADHUKAR.

Will the Minister of IRRIGATION
AND POWER be pleased to state:

(a) the main decisions taken at the Conference of State Ministers of Irrigation and Power at Srinagar in June, 1972.

(b) whether any decisions were taken in regard to the laying down of a National Water Policy treating water as a National asset and for setting up a Central Power Generation Board to take charge of construction of all power projects including those now under execution by different Governments; and

(c) the action proposed to be taken by Central Government thereon ?

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE
MINISTRY OF IRRIGATION AND
POWER (SHRI B.N. KURBEL):** (a) to (c).

A statement giving the information is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) The decisions taken at the Sixth Conference of State Ministers of Irrigation and Power are indicated in the statement laid on the Table of the House. [Placed in Library See No LT—3204 172]

(b) The Conference noted that as a result of increasing use of water resources of the country and the programmes of larger utilizations in future, there was need for evolving a national water policy so as to ensure a continuous appraisal of the needs for water and the most beneficial and equitable allocation of available water for different uses in the interest of the country as a whole.

As regards power generation by the Central Government, the Conference was of the view that for the Fifth Five Year Plan, the generation by the Central Government would be for large inter-State power projects or by way of supplementing the power generation by the States. The Conference recommended that the policy of generation might be further reviewed for power projects in subsequent Plans.

(c) The various aspects involved in framing a National Water Policy, including the legal considerations, are under study.

As for power generation by the Central Government, it is proposed to take up some projects in the Central Sector during the Fifth Plan period to supplement generation by the States. The question of setting up a Power Generation Board for the Central Power Projects is also under examination.

SHRI P. NARASIMHA REDDY: The statement says :

"In order to derive full benefits as early as possible from the continuing projects on which substantial progress has already been made, the State Governments may provide full requirements of funds to complete these projects".

May I know whether Government proposes to supplement the resources of States like