

## 20. Rural Irrigation :

The Public Representative of Gaylegphug stated that irrigation water for Gaylegphug is lifted from Maokhola. However due to problems in Assam, the supply of electricity has become erratic which hinders the operation of the pumphouse. As such, cultivation is greatly hampered without regular water supply. Therefore, the government is requested to take measures to supply irrigation water directly from the river without having to depend on the lift irrigation system.

In response, the Director General of Agriculture said that the Department of Agriculture has been giving due importance to the improvement of irrigation facilities for agricultural development in Gaylegphug. At present, the Department has earmarked Nu. 62 lakhs for the construction of new irrigation channels and repairs of the existing channels.

With regard to supply of water directly from the river source without a lift system, the Director General explained that when conducting the feasibility study in the IVth plan, it was found that the supply of water directly from the river source by gravity was not possible because of the hilly terrain and the porous nature of the soil. Again, the construction of a new irrigation channel would involve huge expenditure. Secondly, repairs of the channel would have to be done continuously and consequently the yearly budget would be very high. Therefore he said that it was not feasible to supply water by using gravity direct from the source as requested. Moreover, the southern parts of the country received heavy rainfall which damaged the channels resulting in regular repairs. He however added that irrigation facilities would be developed in the high-yielding areas of Gaylegphug. In this connection, the Government was also studying the possibility of developing agriculture with the aid of underground water and rainfall. A team of experts from Japan to study the availability of underground water was scheduled to visit between November and December of this year. In light of this, he stated that the government had no plans to establish new channels for the Gaylegphug area.

The Public Representative of Gaylegphug expressed his gratitude to the Royal Government for the detailed information on the matter.

## 21. Construction of Irrigation channel no. 2 :

The Public Representative of Gaylegphug stated that the construction of irrigation channel no.2, which was started in 1981 was abandoned by the Project in 1983 without it being completed. Therefore, the Government is requested to kindly complete the construction of the channel as it would greatly benefit the public of Gaylegphug Naya Busti and Bhur area.

In response, the Director General of Agriculture said that during the Fourth Five Year Plan an area development project was started in Gaylegphug. Under the project, construction of two irrigation channels were planned. The construction of irrigation channel no. 1 which was started in 1978 was completed in 1983 at a cost of Nu. 1.85 crores with a capacity to supply 40 cusecs of water. The construction of irrigation channel no.2 was taken up in 1982 but was abandoned in 1985 without being completed. If the channel was completed it was expected to supply 80 cusecs of water. When irrigation channel no.1 was commissioned, it was found that adequate water could not be supplied through it because of the porous nature of the soil. Besides, the intake tanks at the source were often filled with sand and silt which had to be regularly dredged.

He said that in order to establish a new pumphouse for a two and half kilometers long channel, it would cost Nu. 477 lakhs according to the estimate of 1985, which is equivalent to 900 lakhs at the present value. If irrigation channel no.2 is to be commissioned, it is calculated that a tax of over Nu. 1000 per acre per year will have to be levied to meet the cost of electricity for operating the pumphouse. Since irrigation channel no.2 was perceived to be more of a liability than benefit, the construction work had to be discontinued.

In the absence of any other alternative, the National Assembly endorsed the statement of the Director General of Agriculture.









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