

Chief Guest's Speech

By

D. P. Chattopadhyay

I am very glad to have been invited by you to attend this Seminar rather the Inaugural Session. In the action of developed economy and society, we are often told of significant role of economists and other scientists but very significant role that is being played and what is more, I think, profitably played indeed by engineers, have not been adequately highlighted. The modern *big roar of development deems* participation of engineers and technologists of the country.

It is for the engineers and technologists to combine their theoretical wisdom with down-right practical requirements. So it is just, when the highly gifted theoretical and academic engineers speak of their practical problems regarding the quality, quantity and availability of the materials necessary for different sorts of development works. Certainly, I shall be excused if I cannot speak anything which is of professional interest to you because I am hopelessly incompetent to contribute any sort of discussion which might be of professional interest to you. I am sure, you will excuse me, for such incompetency. Because I am a lay man in this regard, but it is relevant to feel that lay man of India lives mostly in rural areas. Urban dwellers in towns and cities are highly organised either in the party banner or some Chambers of Commerce or some Association like this one. They speak of their demand, place it and sometimes secure it. But most of the rural people are not literate, not to speak of education. They don't know even what they are entitled. I think it is the time for us to

think in terms of their requirement and we should gear up development works and activities according to their demands. Unless technology could know how it is bearing upon the development of rural areas, engineers and other technicians are irrelevant to the national life. Just to have engineering college or engineering associations are not good enough if the millions of people living in the villages find that their life is not served with the influence of technological know-how of the cities.

It is too nice to hear that you are thinking for viz., problems of road, building etc. From one point of view, it is purely a technical problem. But it has other aspects. The success depends on the properly balanced development. We shall have to consider first the delivery of materials and desirability of having net-work of roads communication for the overall balanced development of different spheres of society-rural and others. I like to draw your attention to one of the facts in this connection. You often read news paper. It is rather disturbing that Government money earmarked for Ministries is not being spent or utilised—Rural Electrification for example. The performance in West Bengal is the less said the better. It is in West Bengal the number and quality of the engineers, who can very effectively participate in work, is higher, rather the highest I may say. But as a matter of fact, money allotted for works remain unspent not this year but year after year. My own experience is that the money

made available by Central Ministry of Health and Family Planning to the Health Department in West Bengal is not being spent or rather could not be utilised by the fag end of the year.

There is cry and clamour that there is no fuel. I think it is certainly in somewhere, the responsibilities lie, to look into the problem. The problem of this management comes from the mal-administration. There is very important problem—the problem of bureaucratic dictatorships. The engineers do not get the materials and equipment which they require. The problem is solvable. Last week some friends invited me to attend the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce. They raised same question. They cannot do many things for want of materials. This is being referred to ministries time without numbers. All the time there is non-availability of materials and if it is made available that is being delayed.

The problem is largely the problem of administration. So I would request you to high light this in this Seminar. What I like to impress upon you is that a minister can intervene when things are brought to his notice. So we should think in terms of gearing up and improving the administration and bureaucracy. The things which we cannot get due to weakness of the economy etc. we need not lament over that. But there is cause of lamentation if the problems are solvable but not solved. These things should be probed into their depths. You will discuss not from the administration point of view but to draw attention of the people to the shortcomings, failures and defects in running a Government and the machines. I hope the deliberations discussions and the decisions arrived at, will help us in choosing the line. I am very glad indeed, for you have invited me to be amidst you. I thank you once again.

Presidential Address

By

M. L. Khanna

I am thankful for inviting me to preside over the deliberations of the seminar on Rural Electrification. I will speak from my experience in Haryana, where we had in the beginning of the year 1968-69, about 22000 applications for installation of tube wells. These were pending mostly because of lack of electricity. In some case, electrical connections were found unjustified according to financial norms of about Rs. 750 for each H P of connected load. To tackle the situation, we issued demand

notice to all the applicants who are within the radius of 3 miles of net work. The decision accelerated the rural electrification programme so much that within 3 years, we connected 60,000 more tube wells in the State. To surpass the complexities of financial justification, we increased the agricultural tariff from 9.38 paise per unit to 15 paie per unit and the farmers gladly accepted the revised tariff, because they got the connection. We do not charge anything for the service line. The