

LAY THE FOUNDATION FOR A REGIME OF PROSPERITY FOR THE POVERTY-STRICKEN MILLIONS OF THE COUNTRY

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar delivered a speech on 3rd January 1945 at a conference held in the Bengal Secretariat, Calcutta.

He said,

Government of India wished to evolve a policy which would utilize the water resources of the country to the best advantage of everybody and put them to the purposes which they were made to serve in other countries. The Government of India have in mind Tennessee Valley Scheme operating in the United States of America. They are studying the Scheme and feel that something along that line can be done in India if the provinces offer their co-operation and agree to overcome provincial barriers which have held up so much of their progress and their prosperity.

As a preliminary step for securing the best use of the water-ways of the country, the Government of India have created a Central Organisation called the 'Central Technical Power Board' and are contemplating to create the Central Water Ways Irrigation and Navigation Commission.

The two organisations had been established to advise the Provinces as to how their water resources could best be utilised and how a project could be made to serve the purpose other than irrigation. Damodar river is the first project along that line. It would be a multi-purpose project. It will have the object of not only preventing floods in the Damodar but would also have the object of irrigation, navigation and production of electricity. The authority which would be in-charge of the Damodar Valley Project, after it was complete, would be more or less modelled on the Tennessee Valley Authority. It would be a co-operative undertaking in which the Centre and the Provinces of Bengal and Bihar would be partners. I hope Conference would leave aside all sectional points of view and proceed to its business

with a determination to agree upon the best solution and open a way to the inauguration of a new policy in regard to the water-ways and lay the foundation for a regime of prosperity for the poverty-stricken millions of the country.

The Government of India were anxious to give shape, form and life to the project and were also anxious that no time should be lost in doing so.

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