

12.15 Hrs.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

[English]

- (i) **Need for a fixed policy for marketing and pricing of cotton to save farmers from ruin**

SHRI RANJIT SINGH GAEKWAD (Baroda) : The cotton growing farmers are anxious about the price of cotton this year. Their main difficulties are marketing and downward trend of the price structure. In 1982-83 the cotton production slumped due to the price crash in the previous year, due to an excellent crop of 84 lakh bales, against the next year's crop of only 6 lakh bales. Then the Government imported the same cotton at a higher price due to the shortfall, costing the exchequer very precious foreign exchange. A fixed policy should be formulated every year, according to the need of cotton and prices fixed accordingly.

When the cotton season ended last year in August, the price of leavy staple cotton per candy was around Rs. 7,000, but now the prices have come down to Rs. 5,500 per candy. That means approximately a loss of Rs. 150 to Rs. 200 per quintal. The Price of cotton is fixed by the cotton growing States on the basis of cost of producing the crop. With the sudden fall in prices, the worst sufferers are the poor farmers. Besides that, their returns are never paid to them on time. As the season is fast ending, the Government should take immediate steps to rectify the faulty policy for cotton marketing and save the cotton farmers from ruin for all times for doing their work too well.

- (ii) **Need for immediate clearance for establishment of Railway Coach Factory at Palghat, Kerala**

SHRI K. KUNHAMBUR (Adoor) : An Export Committee was appointed to identify land for establishing a railway coach factory in Kerala. The Kerala Government indicated Palghat as a suitable place as water, electricity and railway lines were easily available. The Expert Committee, which went into the question, had expressed their satisfaction as to the

suitability of Palghat for such a factory. The former Minister of Railways had also given assurance to establish the factory at Palghat in Kerala.

Unfortunately, some people are making efforts to get the site of the railway coach making factory changed from Palghat. Today Kerala does not have any heavy industry related to railways. Therefore, I would request the Government to give immediate clearance to start work on this railway coach factory at Palghat in Kerala.

- (iii) **Need to reconsider the decision to retrench surplus employees of Delhi Milk Scheme**

SHRI LALIT MAKEN (South Delhi) : About 800 workers, who have worked for a number of years in the Delhi Milk Scheme, are going to be thrown on the roads, just because a State Inspection Unit, consisting of some officers, who are not well acquainted with the functioning of the organisation, has found these employees to be surplus. These employees, who have given their entire life to the organisation, have been found all of a sudden to be surplus. This has caused strong resentment among the other employees. The Central Government must intervene and save the jobs of these 800 employees; otherwise, the situation may go out of control.

The Delhi Milk Scheme is an essential service. The retrenchment of 800 workers will lead to labour unrest. This is against the well established policy of Government. The Government should not do anything which may render hundreds of workers jobless.

I, therefore, request the Minister to intervene so that these workers may be saved from being retrenched.

[Translation]

- (iv) **Need to take steps to save the pulses crop in Vidisha Parliamentary Constituency areas affected by pests**

SHRI PRATAP BHANU SHARMA (Vidisha) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, pulses crops in thousands of acres of land of nearly 90 percent villages of Udaipura, Badi Budani and Nasarullah Development blocks in the

Vidisha Parliamentary constituency have been adversely affected by pests, as a result of which the farmers of the area are very much concerned. I, therefore, request the Central as well as State Governments to declare the aforesaid areas as pest-infected immediately, to provide the farmers with pesticides at fair prices. And the Government should make arrangements for aerial spray of pesticides on war footing. I hope the Union Agriculture Ministry would take immediate steps in this regard.

[English]

(v) **Need for central assistance for construction of hill-highways in Idukki District of Kerala**

PROF P. J. KURIEN (Idukki) : Idukki in Kerala is one of the most undeveloped districts in the country. Perhaps this is one of the few districts where there is no industry worth the name.

Idukki is a hill district where much of the cash crops of Kerala namely cardamom, ginger, pepper, rubber etc. are grown. Thus this district contributes enormously to the foreign exchange earnings of the country. The idea behind formation of this district was to ensure the development of the hilly region of Kerala. But no significant development has taken place there.

One of the reasons for its backwardness is lack of roads. A major chunk of Idukki district such as Devikulam, Peerumedu, Udumbumchola etc. is in the high ranges of the Western ghats. In the absence of roads, effective communication is absolutely impossible and this has hampered trade and other activities. This area is inhabited by settlers and plantation labour, whose hard work has made it possible for the country to earn valuable foreign exchange. For the development of this district, construction of a hill highway is very essential. This hill-highway can connect all the important cash-crop growing areas in the district.

But the financial condition of the State is not such as would enable it to undertake such a costly project. Therefore, I would request the Centre to allot sufficient funds

so that this hill-highway could be constructed at the earliest.

12.24 hrs,

[Shri Sharad Dighe *in the Chair*]

(vi) **Need for changing rules so that loan can be given to various States including West Bengal for providing tubewells**

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE (Panskura) : It is well known that States in the Eastern region, including West Bengal, are not yet developed in irrigation facilities as are necessary. Apart from big irrigation projects they also have to depend on the underground water resources in a big way.

For extending the network of deep and shallow tubewells the West Bengal Government applied for a loan of Rs. 10 crores from the Life Insurance Corporation of India. The West Bengal Government also pointed out that the same tubewells can be very well used for pure drinking water as well.

Unfortunately the LIC refused on the ground that they can give loan only for drinking water projects.

I draw the notice of the Finance Minister to this matter. Since the L.I.C. has substantial resources at its command and this is a problem of national importance, I urge that if necessary the rules be changed so that loan can be given to various State Governments, including that of West Bengal, for such projects as would meet both irrigation and drinking water requirements which are of prime importance for developing agricultural production.

I urge the Finance Minister to examine this question and help the West Bengal Government to get this loan of Rs. 10 crores.

(vii) **Relief for cyclone-hit areas of Andhra Pradesh**

SHRI P. PENCHA- LAIAH (Nellore) :