

most backward areas where there is a lot of unemployment and drought due to which these people are struggling for one square meal per day. The unemployed youths are not getting loans from the banks due to indifferent attitude of the banks causing a lot of concern and harassment for the youths. The weaker sections of these areas are being deprived of the said facility of loans due to lack of conviction on the part of bank officials. Keeping in view the helplessness of the people of Tirupati, I request the Government to consider setting up a public sector industry or an ordnance factory in Tirupati.

12.13 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the chair*]

**(vii) Demand for Converting Bitragunta Loco Shed into an Electric loco POH shed in Andhra Pradesh**

SHRI B.N. REDDY (Miryalguda): Bitragunta loco shed is located on the line from Vijayawada to Madras in Nellore district, A.P. State. This loco shed is one of the oldest with an investment of Rs. 50 crores; but it is being wasted as railways have not made out any plan for its utilisation. So the loco shed has become redundant and is to be closed. The shed could have been utilised by the railways by converting it for some other useful purpose, such as Periodical Overhaul Shed (POH) for electric engines. A demand to convert this loco shed into electric loco POH shed was made as early as in 1980 but nothing has been done so far. As there are plans to electrify the entire Vijayawada Division, it would be better if this loco shed is converted into Electric Loco POH shed. I request the Minister of Railways to look into it.

**(viii) Demand for re-opening the Ashok Paper Mills, Darbhanga in Bihar**

DR. G.S. RAJHANS (Jhanjharpur): After the closure of Ashok Paper Mills in

Darbhanga a few years ago, Mithila region of North Bihar has virtually become industry less. This was a joint venture of the Governments of Assam and Bihar. Whereas the Assam Unit of Ashok Paper Mills has been rehabilitated after the implementation of Assam Accord, the Bihar Unit has been left in the lurch, throwing nearly four thousand workers out of job. Because of the closure of Ashok Paper Mills nearly thirty thousand people of Mithila region are on the verge of starvation. We have been urging upon the Central Government for the last two and a half years to make arrangements for the reopening of this Mill. Nearly a year ago, we were assured by the Union Government that serious efforts were being made to reopen this factory in collaboration with the Bihar Government and some financial institutions. This had made the people of Mithila region very hopeful, but nothing definite has been heard since then. I, therefore, earnestly request the Central Government to make serious efforts to rehabilitate Ashok Paper Mills and save thousands of people from starvation.

12.15 hrs.

**PAYMENT OF GRATUITY (AMENDMENT) BILL—contd.**

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I wish to inform the House that we will take up item No. 7 motion for appointment of a Joint Committee immediately after the lunch break. Now we are taking up item No. 8, further consideration of Payment of Gratuity (Amendment) Bill moved by Shri P. A. Sangma on the 30th July, 1987. Shri K. N. Pradhan may continue his speech.

[Translation]

SHRI K.N. PRADHAN (Bhopal): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the other day also while speaking on the Bill I was drawing the attention of the hon. Minister towards the fact that he has fixed the amount of