

[*Prof. P. J. Kurien*]

Government to take immediate steps in this regard.

- (vi) Need to set up T.V. Relay/Transmission centres in Balasore and Baripada districts of Orissa during the current financial year.

SHRI CHINTAMANI JENA (Balasore): Sir, the district of Mayurbhanj in Orissa, being purely a tribal one and the district of Balasore in the State of Orissa being a flood prone and cyclone-affected district, establishment of TV Relay/Transmission centres is most essential to educate the illiterate tribals and the rural masses of both these districts. In addition, the district of Balasore has been well-placed on the defence map of the country, due to the location of biggest Proof and Experimental Establishment, observation centre, and the unique National Test Range, which is the second of its kind in the world and needs special priority in the matter of TV net-work and telecommunications. The State Government of Orissa has requested the Centre to establish one low-power TV transmission/relay centre at Balasore, the headquarter town of Balasore district and at Baripada, the headquarter town of Mayurbhanj district in the 7th Plan period, giving topmost priority.

In such circumstances, I would request the hon. Minister for Information and Broadcasting to sanction low-power TV Relay/Transmission Centre—one each at Balasore and Baripada in the State of Orissa in the current year, to fulfil the long-cherished demand of the users, who have purchased hundreds of TV sets from 1982 and kept them idle.

- (vi) Need to direct the Reserve Bank of India to remit the old debts of co-operative Banks to benefit the small and marginal farmers of West Bengal.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE (Panskura): Before I raise it, I want to draw the attention of Mr. Janardhana Poojary to this.

Due to repeated natural calamities such as devastating flood in a large area of West

Bengal in 1978, severe drought in the said State in 1982-83, serious crop damage due to pests and insects and widespread flood in 1984, a very large number of small and marginal peasants have become defaulters to cooperative banks and other nationalised banks and are being deprived of any further benefit of loans and other assistances. The situation has been greatly aggravated by the fact that in many cases the debts have become three times more than the principal and consequently have gone beyond the capacity of repayment by the poor debtors. Most distressed are the marginal farmers who are often below the poverty line, as they are deprived of almost all benefits of subsidy schemes and are totally thrown at the mercy of moneylenders. The situation in many other States is also not very different.

In view of this critical situation, I urge upon the Minister of Finance to direct the Reserve Bank of India to remit the old debts of cooperative banks at least for the marginal farmers so that the cooperatives can free the marginal farmers from remaining defaulters. I also urge that the old debts of marginal farmers in other banks also be re-examined and such debts be remitted. In any case as the preliminary step where the interest has become more than the principal for the small and marginal farmers, the interest must be remitted. For this purpose, if necessary, funds should be released from the Central Debt Relief Fund. I earnestly request the Finance Minister to consider this question urgently.

- (viii) Need to set up a steel plant at Vijaynagar in Karnataka.

DR. V. VENKATESH (Kolar): A decade ago, our late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi laid the foundation stone of a steel plant at Vijayanagar in Karnataka. But unfortunately one reason or the other is given and the work on the steel plant is delayed. There is absolutely no problem of infrastructural facilities like water, electricity etc. In fact the Chief Minister of Karnataka has announced in the State Assembly on 6th April, 1985, that he is prepared to supply the required quantity of electricity at any moment as per the demand by the