

[English]

- (ii) Need to lift ban on creation of new posts or filling up existing vacancies in Government Departments, especially the worst-hit P and T Department.

PROF. NARAIN CHAND PARASHAR (Hamirpur) : The continuous ban on the creation of new posts and on the filling up of existing vacancies in the various Government Departments has caused extreme hardship to the people in general and various public offices in particular. The worst hit in this respect are the Departments of Posts and Telecommunications where expansion has resulted in the deterioration of the quality of service, as these Departments have to manage with the existing personnel in spite of the manifold increase in work load. I, therefore, request the Minister of Finance either to lift the ban or to exempt the recruitment to operational posts in these Departments from the purview of the ban as was the case with the ban imposed in 1974-75.

- (iii) Need to re-start work on the suspended Darbhanga-Samastipur broad gauge line-project and to take up construction of Sakri-Hasanpur line also.

DR. G. S. RAJHANS (Jhanjharpur) : Railways in North Bihar need special attention because of the fact that it is one of the most backward areas of the country. More than ten years ago the former Railway Minister late Shri L. N. Mishra had announced that Darbhanga-Samastipur metre-gauge would be converted into broad-gauge. This was reiterated by another Railway Minister late Shri Kedar Pandey. In fact, he laid the foundation-stone also. People of North Bihar, particularly Mithila, heaved a sigh of relief when the work started on this project. But, to our great disappointment, the work has been stopped and there is no progress in this regard. It has only added to the miseries of the people of Mithila because even the road transport is negligible there and the roads are in a horrible condition.

Besides, Darbhanga is very close to Nepal and passengers for Nepal disembark here.

In view of the above, it is requested that the suspended work on Darbhanga-Samastipur broad-gauge should be started

immediately. Along with this, work be started on Sakri-Hasanpur line also so that people of Mithila feel relieved.

- (iv) Need to ensure reasonable price for cardamom and take all necessary steps to increase its export.

PROF. P. J. KURIEN (Idukki) : The Cardamom industry is in real and serious crisis due to the steep fall in prices. Cardamom is the queen of the spices, which earns us considerable foreign exchange. Last year, we exported cardamom worth Rs. 70 crores in foreign exchange. This year the total production in the country may be to the extent of 5000 tonnes and unfortunately there are no buyers for cardamom in the country.

The cost of production of one kilogram of cardamom turns out to be about Rs. 200 per kg. But the domestic price is now less than Rs. 150/- per kg. and hence the growers are forced to give their cardamom at throw away prices. This will affect the industry and the growers may abandon cardamom and switch over to other crops, which ultimately will be detrimental to the interest of the country, in that, we will lose valuable foreign exchange earning item.

I therefore urge upon the hon Commerce Minister to immediately intervene in the matter and direct the STC and Cardamom Trading Corporation to enter the market and buy cardamom at a reasonable price, so as to sustain the industry in this difficult period. I also request that a floor price of Rs. 300/- per kg. may be announced on the basis of which STC and CTC may enter the market. The Government should also take all steps needed to export maximum amount of cardamom to our traditional buyers namely the Gulf countries and also explore the possibility of finding new markets.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Prof. Saifuddin Soz. Only the approved text will go. You please read only the approved text.

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ (Baramulla) : I agree with you, but I should have the option to discuss with you. I can raise it tomorrow in the Zero Hour.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Basirhat) : Why are you telling him what you are going to do tomorrow ?