

Branches have been proposed by these Banks. Though the New Branch Licensing Policy was announced by the Reserve Bank of India in 1985 to coincide with the beginning of the Seventh Five Year Plan, yet many of the proposals are still pending for clearance by the RBI. Even the proposals which are submitted to the Reserve Bank after proper survey and approved by the District Consultative Committees and by the State Governments, are again sought to be re-examined, resulting in heavy delay in the opening of these Branches. The Hill Areas including the State of Himachal Pradesh are the worst affected in this regard, more so the Districts of Hamirpur, Bilaspur and Una which are still uncovered by any Garmin Bank and the District of Kangra where a number of proposals are still pending for the sanction of licences for opening new Branches by the Himachal Garmin Bank.

Now that the new 20 Point Programme has been announced by the hon'ble Prime Minister on 20 August, 1986, the role of the Banks and more so of the Branches in the rural areas for the successful implementation of the anti-poverty and various other programmes is very crucial. I, therefore, request the Minister of Finance to intervene personally and ensure the early sanction of licences by the Reserve Bank of India to the Branches of the various Nationalised Banks and the Gramin Banks proposed for opening in these four districts in particular and in Himachal Pradesh in general. The Reserve Bank of India should fix reasonable time limit say, three months within which the licences are granted after the date of the submission of the proposal by the sponsoring Banks.

[*Translation*]

(xxi) Need to approve the irrigation projects proposed for Ghosikhurd, Chandrapur, Garhchiroli and Bhandara in Vidarbha region of Maharashtra

SHRI VILAS MUTTEMWAR (Chimur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the subjects of irrigation and floods come under the State list in the Constitution and as a result of it, many projects remain incomplete due to the decisions of the local leaders. The C.W.C itself cannot take any decisions and it has to look to the State

Governments. There should be improvement in this situation. Central Government provides most of the funds for flood relief and irrigation projects. So, if the Central Government itself takes up all the responsibility regarding floods and irrigation, then on the one hand it can remove the growing imbalance between States and on the other hand situation can be improved so far as frequent and every day changes in projects due to the pressures by local leaders are concerned. It will also lead to the proper utilisation of national resources and full returns of the investments made.

The people are facing floods due to discontinuance of the work on the proposed irrigation projects of Chandrapur, Bhandara and Garhchiroli districts of Vidarbha region under the Forest Conservation Act, 1980. The forests cover more than 69 per cent area on an average in the above districts. The above forest area in these districts has become a curse for the local population. The farmers there suffer losses regularly caused either by the floods due to excessive rains or as a result of famine due to rains at all. The projects of Ghosikhurd (Indira Sagar), Bawanthadi, Tultuli, Human, Sattinala and Pratapgarh have been pending with Central Water Commission for the last many years. The work on these projects was started in anticipation of approval and crores of rupees have already been spent. The population there has not been benefited in any way by this investment.

Even this year, 14 persons have lost their lives and crops worth crores of rupees have been destroyed because of floods in Chandrapur, Bhandara and Garhchiroli. The water of Godavari is raising the level of water in Vanganga and its tributaries. A dam is required to be constructed there.

Initially Ghosikhurd Project was formulated with an estimated outlay of Rs. 230 crores which has now gone up to Rs. 460 crores and if the present laxity continues, then the outlay is expected to rise upto Rs. 1000 crores. I, therefore, request the Government to grant immediate sanction to the pending projects of Chandrapur, Garhchiroli and Bhandara so that these projects could be completed in public interest.