

workers jobless. In this way about 10,000 workers have become jobless and their families are on the verge of starvation. The bonus due to the workers for the year 1982 and 1983 has also not been paid to them.

The Government should take steps to ensure that the bonus and arrears of wages due to the workers are paid to them immediately, the three closed units of Modi Spinning and Weaving Mills be restarted immediately and partially running two units should be run on full capacity, otherwise all the five units of the above Mill should be nationalised by the Government immediately so that the families of 10,000 workers can be saved from starvation.

- (iv) Demand for financial relief to the drought-affected people of Vidarbha and Maharashtra and clearance of Irrigation schemes of Maharashtra pending with Central Government

SHRI VILAS MUTTEMWAR (Chimur) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, this year due to poor rains, the entire Maharashtra State, particularly the Maharashtra and Vidarbha regions have been badly affected by drought. Now the condition is so acute that the inhabitants of these areas are facing a drinking water crisis.

The State Government is helping the victims with its limited resources, but that help is quite negligible. The State Government has requested the Central Government to provide a grant of Rs. 400 crores for this purpose, but as Central Government has not provided this grant the people are feeling disappointed and distressed.

The Central Government has forced the people of Maharashtra to depend completely on nature for irrigation purposes. The irrigation schemes which have been sent to the centre for approval, are pending for so many years. These schemes have not been finalised due to the objections of the Environment department or the Forest department or sometimes on the pretext of non-availability of funds, otherwise Maharashtra State would have been a leading State in agricultural production.

A very important Gosikhurd Irrigation scheme in Vidarbha is being neglected on

various pretexts. If this scheme is completed, about five lakh acres of land can be irrigated and the problem of drinking water in Chanderpur, Bhandara and Garhchiroli districts of Vidarbha region can also be solved to a great extent. Therefore, I humbly request the Hon. Prime Minister to provide sufficient funds to the famine stricken people of Vidarbha and Maharashtra and a special team be constituted to finalise the pending irrigation schemes in the Vidarbha region.

[English]

- (v) Need to notify the Dhobi community in Andhra Pradesh as Scheduled Caste

SHRI V. SOBHANADREESWARA RAO (Vijayawada) : The Dhobi community in Andhra Pradesh is socially, economically and educationally worse than the scheduled caste community. The Dhobi community occupy the lowest rung of the society since time immemorial. Taking into consideration its backwardness, its lowest status in the society and other disadvantages it suffers from, the Government of India included Dhobi community in the list of Scheduled Caste in 16 States of the country. But the Rajakas i.e. Dhobi of Andhra Pradesh are not included in the list of Scheduled Castes. Recognising this injustice done to the Dhobis of Andhra Pradesh, the Government of Andhra Pradesh has recommended to the Central Government to take necessary steps for inclusion of Rajakas in the list of Scheduled Castes. The Minister for Welfare has informed through his reply to my unstarred question No. 548 on 26th February, 1986 that the proposal is being considered along with similar other proposals in the context of the proposed comprehensive revision of the list of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. The scheduled caste is a case notified under Art. 441 (1). The object of Art. 341(1) is to provide protection to the members of such notified castes having regard to the economic and educational backwardness from which they suffer. It is on this criteria the Dhobi community were included in the list of scheduled caste of India. Therefore, I urge the Government to notify Dhobi caste in Andhra Pradesh as scheduled caste.