

[Shri Harish Chandra Singh Rawat]

necessary amendments in the Cantonment Act and Civilian population living in Ranikhet and Lansdowne may be permitted to form separate Municipal Boards.

15.30 hrs.

[SHRI GULSHER AHMED in the Chair]

(ii) Need for measures to meet shortage of water and famine conditions in certain parts of Bihar.

SHRI RANJIT SINGH (Chatra): Acute shortage of water and famine conditions prevail in the district of Palamu especially portions of Panki, Lesliganj, Manatu, Balamath Latehar, Chandva and in Hazaribagh district, Hunterganj, Partap Pur, and Chattra areas and in the district of Gaya, Mohanpur, Barachatti, Imamganj, Sumaria, Fatehpur and Wazirganj areas in Bihar. The people of the districts of Palamu, Hazaribagh and Gaya are facing starvation and acute shortage of water. Earlier their Bhada crops were damaged due to heavy rain and now there is scarcity of rain, all the crops of paddy have suffered and faded away. The area is now facing famine and large number of people in the villages are facing starvation. The plight of cattle is too miserable, the rations are not distributed from the Government side to serve the people from starvation.

Urgent measures are to be taken to provide relief to the cultivators and other suffering people; manual works should be started to provide employment to starving people, tube wells should be provided to get drinking water to parched fields so that Kharif may be grown. Long term plan like constructing a dam for regulating the flow of rain water and assuring irrigation facilities should also be drawn up for the area.

(iii) Crisis in silk Industry due to rise in price of silk yarn.

SHRI ZAINUL BASHER (Ghazi-pur): The Silk Industry in the country and particularly at Varanasi is facing severe crisis due to the unprecedented price hike of silk yarn. The silk yarn price which was Rs. 400 per kg. in the month of July, 1981 has gone up to the all time high record of Rs. 775 per kg. by the end of October, 1981. The result has been very disastrous to the silk weavers.

More than five lakhs of silk handloom weavers in Varanasi alone have been forced to close their looms. Weavers are suffering from untold miseries and about half a million people are at the verge of starvation.

While the State of Karnataka has the upper hand in the production of silk yarn, but more than 60 per cent silk yarn produced there is utilised in Varanasi. More than 50 per cent of silk yarn from all sources in the country are being utilised by the weavers of Varanasi. While only 10 per cent of the silk yarn production has suffered due to the infection of 'Uzi Flies', the prices have abnormally increased due to the auction system introduced by the Silk Exchange Board of Karnataka. The bidding system has helped giant yarn stockists and capitalists to enter into auction and corner the stocks. The speculative traders found their paradise in investing and holding silk yarn stocks where the prices have raised to almost 100 per cent within a course of two months time.

The severe crisis faced by silk industry calls for the immediate action by the Central Government. It is, therefore, suggested that the following steps may kindly be taken up immediately by the Government to save millions of silk yarn weavers throughout the country and particularly in Varanasi:

1. A crash programme for immediate arrangement of import of silk yarn from China, Korea, Brazil be made in bulk and should be released

to the weavers without levying any import duty. In addition to this, arrangements for import of silk yarn under open General Licence as well as under Actual User's Scheme be made available so that the Exporters as well as Handloom Weaving Organisations may avail the facility to import the yarn directly.

2. The role of the Karnataka State Silk Marketing Board as well as Silk Marketing Federation should be completely scrapped for monopoly purchase and the Development Commissioner for Handlooms, Government of India, must have a say in guiding both the above organisations for setting up their purchase policies. This may be applied to all the Sericulture departments in all the States where a floor price should be earmarked in consultation with the Development Commissioner for Handlooms that whenever the yarn price falls from the floor-level price, then only the State Governments Marketing Boards may intervene for procurement, otherwise the market should be left to take its own natural course.

3. The auction system introduced by the Karnataka State Government should be completely stopped and other sericulture departments of State Governments of Jammu and Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh may also be directed to abolish the auction system.

4. All types of Sales tax imposed by the State Governments on Silk Handloom goods as well as on silk yarn and Octroi duties on Silk goods levied by the Metropolitan Municipal Corporations should be removed forthwith.

5. The imported yarn should not be distributed through private dealers, but it should be distributed to the actual weavers who are behind the looms through Government agencies.

6. The imported silk yarn should not be equally distributed among different States, but it should be distributed on the basis of historical use in different States.

(iv) Need for measures to control Goitre

DR. VASANT KUMAR PANDIT (Rajgarh): Sir, under rule 377, I beg to mention the following matter of urgent public importance.

The national goitre control programme is in a mess. Goitre is a nutritional disease. It can be prevented and controlled. Yet, after nearly 30 years, the problem of goitre is where it was due to the callousness of the Centre and the State Governments, and administrative bottlenecks at all levels.

As many as 40 million suffer from goitre today. In the Fifth Plan, only Rs. 56 lakhs was allocated for goitre control. Of this amount—much less than what was needed—Rs. 10 lakhs was not spent at all.

About 7 lakh tonnes of iodised salt, which prevents and controls goitre, is needed to cover the goitre areas of the country.

But the installed capacity of the 12 iodisation plants in the country—all gifted by UNICEF—is only 3.76 lakh tonnes a year, while the actual annual production is a little over 1 lakh tonnes (1978-79 figure).

The iodisation units do not get enough railway wagons for the transportation of iodised salt. The programme has not been properly supervised and evaluated the State level, because there are no goitre cells in the health directorates of the affected States.

The goitre-affected States often do not lift their salt quota. There is no co-ordination between the State and health departments and civil supply departments.