

the Irrigation Ministry and I am not in a position to give at present.

The hon. Member raised the question about the set norms. Yes, there are set norms. Even then the Central Team goes to the State. They assess the situation. Then there is a high-level committee also which considers all the aspects which are reported by the central team and in the light of these they take the decision that this much amount should be given by way of relief to the State Government.

So far as the backward regions and backward people are concerned, that is also is taken into consideration while deciding this help to the State Government and the Government of India, whenever they provide assistance, they make separate allocation for the weaker sections also ; that is, preferential treatment is given to the weaker sections of the society.

So far as transport is concerned, yes, that is a main bottleneck for the growers of oranges and other horticultural fruits. It is, of course, for the Railway Ministry, but I can recommend to the Railway Ministry. I will write to the Railway Ministry and I can assure the House and the hon. Member that I will write to the Railway Ministry if they can help the farmers by providing some concession in the freight charges, etc. But I can say on my behalf and on behalf of my Agriculture Ministry that we try to organise co-operatives of growers so that the transport and marketing can be taken up by the co-operative societies and individual farmers may not feel helpless.

But here also there is one constraint. We have gone in a cooperative society so far as the milk production is concerned and we supply milk also. But there are Members who claim themselves as Socialists and their party also as a democratic socialist party, but every now and then they write against the cooperative societies. They do not want us to do the work of the cooperative societies, because they are more concerned with the private milk collectors. They are more concerned with those who exploiting the farmers.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Are you referring to the DSP ?

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : Yes. Almost each and every Member of the Democratic Socialist Party has written to me against the milk cooperative societies. Now I have decided to take them to my District Khaira to show them what the cooperatives are doing in my District. I will also show them the Amul Dairy and other things.

Sir, in order to help the farmers, we entered into the marketing of oranges. The West Bengal Government approached us for the marketing of oranges and for the first time the West Bengal growers of Oranges in Darjeeling got three times the cost of the growing of oranges. As we entered into the marketing of oranges, there has been a great resistance from the other side. So, I would request the Hon. Members to cooperate with us and to help us so that we can help the farmers and the growers of fruits and other things. I want their cooperation. If they cooperate with us, then I can go into the collection of vegetables from the small farmers and can supply to the people in Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and elsewhere so that the farmers can get more money. We can go in the cooperative marketing of the oranges and other fruits similarly. So, if they cooperate with us then we are there to take everything in cooperation. But the problem is that they are not cooperating. Their cooperation is required in this direction.

14.53 hrs.

LEPERS (DELHI, ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS, LAKSHADWEEP, DADRA AND NAGAR HAVELI AND CHANDIGARH REPEAL) BILL*

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI) : Sir, I beg to move for leave

to introduce a Bill to provide for the repeal of the Lepers Act, 1898, as in force in the Union territories of Delhi, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakhadweep, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Chandigarh.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The question is :

“That leave be granted to introduce a Bill to provide for the repeal of the Lepers Act, 1898, as in force in the Union Territories of Delhi, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Chandigarh.”

The Motion was adopted.

SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI : I introduce the Bill.

ELECTRICITY (SUPPLY) AMENDMENT BILL*

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY (SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR SINGH) : Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Electricity (Supply) Act, 1948.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The question is :

“That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Electricity (Supply) Act, 1948.”

The Motion was adopted.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR SINGH : Sir, I introduce the Bill.

14.54 hrs.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

- (i) Re : Article published in ‘Caravan, under the Caption “Did the Army Chief blackmail the Prime Minister.”

SHRI R.S. SPARROW (Jullundur) : Sir, I was shocked to go through an article which has appeared in the April issue of Caravan under the caption ‘Did the Army Chief Blackmail the Prime Minister ?’ The House is well aware of the fact that on the 25th January, 1983, the Defence Minister made an announcement about new concessions to the Armed Forces amounting to over Rs. 30 crores, particularly with reference to free rations, educational facilities, separation allowance, etc., which has been welcomed by the Armed Forces personnel, as well as by all Members of Parliament during the course of discussions on the Demands for Grants pertaining to the Ministry of Defence. However, all these appreciations by the Armed Forces personnel and the representatives of the people have been totally ignored and the journal has now come forward with an article, which has painted the Army Chief in the darkest hue, inasmuch as it has tried to show that the Army Chief had gone to blackmail the Prime Minister on the 25th January, 1983. The article further states that the Army Chief told the Prime Minister that, “if all the demand already sent to her were not conceded, his resignation be kindly accepted after the Republic Day function.”

As an ex-General Rank officer, I can assert that no Chief of Army Staff will lower either his own dignity or that of the armed forces by making such an unpatriotic statement. I shall be happy if the Defence Minister will take the House and the country into confidence and let us know the facts.

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN) : May I intervene, Sir ?

On my attention being drawn to the article referred to by the Hon. Member, I have verified the facts from the Chief of Army Staff.