

[Shri Subodh Hansda]

- (2) A statement showing reasons for delay in laying the above Notification.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT-5404/73].

EMPLOYEES' FAMILY PENSION (SECOND AMENDMENT) SCHEME, COAL MINES FAMILY PENSION (AMENDMENT) SCHEME AND TWO STATEMENTS

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRI G. VENKATSWAMY): I beg to lay on the Table—

- (1) (i) A copy of the Employees' Family Pension (Second Amendment) Scheme, 1973 (Hindi and English versions) published in Notification No. G.S.R. 186 (E) in Gazette of India dated the 31st March, 1973, under sub-section (2) of section 7 of the Employees' Provident Funds and Family Pension Fund Act, 1952.

- (b) A statement (Hindi and English versions) showing the reasons for delay in laying the above Notification.

[Placed in Library See No. LT-5405/73].

- (2) (1) A copy of the Coal Mines Family Pension (Amendment) Scheme, 1973 (Hindi and English versions) published in Notification No. G.S.R. 423 in Gazette of India dated the 21st April, 1973, under section 7A of the Coal Mines Provident Fund, Family Pension and Bonus Schemes Act, 1948.

- (ii) A statement (Hindi and English versions) showing the reasons for delay in laying the above Notification.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT-5406/73].

12.06 Hrs.

COMMITTEE ON PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

THIRTIETH REPORT

SHRI G. G. SWELL (Autonomous Districts): I beg to present the Thirtieth Report of the Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions.

12.6½ hrs.

STATEMENT RE: FOUR INTERIM REPORTS OF NATIONAL COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE AND SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT RECOMMENDATIONS MADE THEREIN

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI F. A. AHMED): I beg to lay on the Table a statement regarding the submission of four more Interim Reports by the National Commission on Agriculture.

Statement

As Members are aware, the National Commission on Agriculture set up by the Government of India has been asked to make interim recommendations on such items of the Terms of Reference given to them as it may deem fit. The Commission has hitherto submitted 14 Interim Reports on different subjects. Copies of all these Reports have been placed in the Library of Parliament.

The Commission has presented today to the Government of India four more Interim Reports on the following subjects:—

1. Reorientation of Programmes of Small Farmers' and Marginal Farmers' and Agricultural Labourers' Development Agencies.
2. Poultry, Sheep and Pig Production through Small and Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers for supplementing their income.

3. Sericulture.

4. Social Forestry.

These Reports as well as the summary of the important recommendations made in these four Interim Reports are placed on the Table of the Sabha.

I have directed that these recommendations may be examined urgently to enable Government to take further action in the matter.

Summary of the important Recommendations made in the four Interim Reports submitted by the National Commission on Agriculture.

The National Commission on Agriculture has submitted to the Government today four more Interim Reports dealing with—

- (1) Reorientation of Programmes of Small Farmers and Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers Development Agencies;
- (2) Poultry, Sheep and Pig Production through Small and Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers for Supplementing their Income;
- (3) Sericulture; and
- (4) Social Forestry.

A summary of the important recommendations made in these Reports is given below:

I REORIENTATION OF PROGRAMMES OF SMALL FARMERS AND MARGINAL FARMERS AND AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES

In its Interim Report on Reorientation of Programmes of Small Farmers and Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers Development Agencies, the Commission has, both from the points of view of production and of reduction of poverty, suggested certain modifications in the existing schemes of Small Farmers

Development Agencies (SFDA) and Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers Agencies (MFAL) so as to fit them into the strategy of the Fifth Plan. It has recommended that the distinction between SFDA and MFAL projects should be given up and in future each Agency should have a compact area approach to cover the small farmers, marginal farmers and agricultural labourers in its area of operation.

The basic approach to the programme of small and marginal farmers should be to improve their crop production. Assistance would have to be directed towards development and utilisation of irrigation facilities, introduction of water harvesting techniques, land development and adoption of improved technology of farming both in irrigated and rainfed areas. In order to ensure a more equitable distribution of limited groundwater, considerable emphasis has been placed on group-owned well system and community irrigation, wherever possible, for the benefit of small and marginal farmers. Through consolidation, the scattered holdings of small and marginal farmers are to be brought together to form compact blocks to enable preferential irrigation by the State Governments.

The Commission has suggested that State programmes of irrigation development should be undertaken in areas where surface water schemes or large-scale groundwater schemes are possible, so as to benefit substantially the small and marginal farmers. States would also be expected to take up on their own, programmes of water harvesting, soil conservation, etc. in the rainfed area, on a substantial scale. In order that farmers can take to improved farming practices and necessary technical guidance is available to them, the strengthening by State Governments of their extension network in the selected areas has been proposed. The Report has suggested the formation of as many Farmers' Service Societies as possible (recommended in the Commission's Report on Credit Services for Small and Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers) to make a

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beginning towards the development of an integrated credit structure.

The Commission has recommended the extension of the programme to 160 Agencies including the existing Agencies and indicated the distribution of additional Agencies among the States. Each Agency on an average is supposed to cover 70,000 small and marginal farmers preferably in the ratio of 1 : 3 to conform to the all-India pattern and to ensure that the programme would have the necessary tilt in favour of marginal farmers who are more numerous. As a result of the extension of the programme, about 11 million small and marginal farmers are likely to be covered during the Fifth Plan. In addition, the investment programme and the much more intensive crop production programme, both under irrigated and dry farming conditions, would give increased labour opportunities to agricultural labourers. Since crop production alone may not yield incomes sufficient to raise many small and marginal farmers above the minimum need level, the Commission has suggested the superimposition of subsidiary occupation programmes to be undertaken and financed separately on a substantial scale in such of the Agency areas which have been included in the list of districts identified for individual subsidiary occupations in its Interim Reports on Milk Production, Poultry, Sheep and Pig Production and on Sericulture. It has been recommended that the entire programme should be time-bound and target-oriented and implemented with a sense of urgency.

The Commission has estimated that a sum of Rs. 241 crores would be required in the Central Sector of the Fifth Plan for this programme. It has recommended that in future, the State Governments should bear the cost of staff subsidy to institutions and the cost of staff of the Agency, the staff of the Farmers' Service Societies and additional extension staff of the State Governments in the project area costing in all Rs. 40 crores over the Fifth Plan period. The Commission has recommended the continuance of the subsidy of 25 per cent of the cost

of investment to small farmers and 33-1/3 per cent to marginal farmers; at the same time, it has suggested certain modifications in the pattern of risk fund subsidies being given under SFDA/MFAL schemes.

II. POULTRY, SHEEP AND PIG PRODUCTION THROUGH SMALL AND MARGINAL FARMERS AND AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS FOR SUPPLEMENTING THEIR INCOME

The Report on Poultry, Sheep and Pig Production through Small and Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers deals with the need and scope for augmenting the production of eggs and poultry, mutton and wool, and pork and pork products by harnessing and developing the facilities available with the small and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers. It has been observed that livestock rearing has remained mainly as by-product industry of the rural areas in the country and it is practised as a mixed farming complement alongwith crop production. Most of the people engaged in raising poultry, sheep and pigs in the rural areas belong to the category of small and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers. The Commission feels that improvement in the productivity of livestock such as poultry, sheep and pigs and their raising through weaker sections of the population can be relied upon as a major instrument for effecting social change by improving the income of these people. Such a development would also offer great potentiality for providing employment to the producer, and their family members and also to a number of village artisans. Increased production of animal products such as eggs, poultry, meat, mutton and pork in the rural areas would also lead to increased home consumption of these products by the producers, thus ensuring better nutrition to these people. It has been recommended that these development programmes should be formulated on a package basis providing for all inputs such as better breeding and feeding, proper management, disease control, credit and services such as extension, remunerative marketing and other facilities.

The Commission has recommended that while formulating the size of the poultry programme in each district not only due consideration should be given to marketing facilities but it should also be ensured that as large a number of families as possible would be benefited. Each selected family should be assisted to start a poultry unit of 50 layers and that in each district at least 3,000 families of small and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers should be identified and enrolled under the programme which should be taken up in 167 districts covering about 5 lakh families.

Programmes have been suggested for sheep development for improving the quality and productivity of sheep in regard to wool and mutton production by the small and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers. This is proposed to be obtained by gradual replacement of indigenous types of sheep with these people by crossbred progenies having exotic inheritance produced by the farmers themselves and/or to a limited extent by supply of crossbred ewes and rams from other sources. One hundred and forty districts have been recommended to be taken up for the sheep development programme, at least 3,000 families being assisted in each district. This would help over 4 lakh families.

The Commission has drawn attention to the fact that pig keeping is mainly in the hands of the backward communities and with tribals and that such pig breeders deserve special assistance for improving their pig rearing practices. It has recommended that the main plank for improving the economy of pig producers should be the replacement of indigenous pigs by crossbred pigs, produced mainly by the breeders themselves. It has been proposed that about 2,000 families of pig farmers should be assisted in each district and that pig production programmes should be undertaken in about 100 districts which will help about 2 lakh families to improve their economic status.

For the production and supply of cross-bred poultry, sheep and pigs to particu-

lar farmers and agricultural labourers, the Commission has emphasised that intensive crossbreeding schemes should be implemented in selected areas where such work has already been found popular and successful. It has also suggested that the farmers selected for these poultry, sheep and pig development programmes should be extended subsidy to meet the costs of capital expenditure such as purchase of stock, rearing upto production stage, housing, equipments, etc. A total subsidy of Rs. 71.40 crores has been indicated during the Fifth Plan period.

The Commission has laid special emphasis on organising these programmes on cooperative basis mainly consisting of producers belonging to small and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers. In view of their backwardness and low economic status, it has been recommended that Government and the credit agencies should liberalise the terms of financial assistance in the form of loans.

III SERICULTURE

The Interim Report on Sericulture deals with development of mulberry silk which accounts for about 79 per cent of the total silk production in the country and is concentrated in Mysore, West Bengal, Jammu & Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh. The Commission has suggested a plan of action and identified certain districts for the development of sericulture in these major silk producing States as a first step towards modernising the sericulture industry, particularly keeping in view its beneficial impact on the economy of small and marginal farmers.

The Commission has recommended that instead of relying on the development of sericulture based on local races, a phased programme should be taken up for the introduction of bivoltine hybrids in the irrigated mulberry areas of Mysore, particularly Kolar and Chennappa, where the method of rearing bivoltine hybrids developed by the Central Sericultural Research and Training Institute could be followed.

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The entire area under sericulture in Mysore has been proposed to be covered during the Fifth Plan with the package of practices including new methods of leaf chopping, etc. developed by the Central Institute as these lead to less mortality of silk worms and a higher cocoon to leaf ratio. Further, cooperative chawkie rearing-cum-reeling units have been suggested in the villages where there are large groups of rearers. For raising mulberry under irrigated conditions, the Commission has recommended that small and marginal farmers be given 25 percent Central subsidy on digging of wells under the sericulture development programme to be financed by the Central Silk Board.

A crash programme has been recommended in West Bengal to test the suitability of heat resistant strains developed by the Central Research Station Berhampore, for their introduction on a wide scale through a phased extension programme. With the evolution of new races, the farmers could get four crops consisting of two local and two bivoltine races in a year as against four crops of local races at present. Considering the scope for taking up mulberry cultivation under irrigated conditions in the districts of Bankura, Purulia and Birbhum, the Commission has emphasised that pilot field stations of the Berhampore Central Research Station should be set up in these districts to establish the suitability of mulberry cultivation and explore the possibility of introduction of bivoltine hybrids.

Jammu & Kashmir State is concentrating on univoltine races which give only one brood per year. The Commission has emphasised the need to undertake suitable research to identify the races or strains which can be introduced in the State so as to raise three broods in a year. In order that the three-brood programme is adequately supported by a bush mulberry programme, surveys have been suggested to identify suitable areas in the Karowas in Kashmir Valley as also in Jammu.

In regard to Uttar Pradesh, it has been considered desirable to introduce bush mulberry provided the number of broods can be increased to at least three against two at present in a year. For this purpose, immediate steps to carry out applied research as also to develop bivoltine hybrids suited to the area in the State have been suggested.

The Commission has felt that the entire process starting from the raising of mulberry to the disposal of the raw silk should be taken up on an integrated basis for the purposes of credit support and for developing an economically viable programme of sericulture. It has indicated that for achieving best results, functional cooperatives will have to be organised, which should get their finance from a single source for the entire chain of operations.

Endorsing the recommendation of the Price Stabilisation Committee set up by the Central Silk Board for a Raw Material Bank at the Central level with regional banks in the major silk producing States to ensure a fair price to the primary producer and supply raw silk to the consumer at a stable price, the Commission has recommended that the Central Silk Board should assist in financing the operations of the regional banks as also in the setting up of the chain of testing houses required to operate the price stabilisation system.

Employment potential in silk industry at the end of 1978-79 at the all-India level is estimated at 4 million, of which rural activities are expected to account for 3 million. A quick survey to collect more reliable estimates of employment in the silk industry has been suggested in the silk producing States.

IV. SOCIAL FORESTRY

The Interim Report on Social Forestry deals with farm forestry, extension forestry, re-forestation in the graded forests and recreation forestry and has suggested

an action programme during the Fifth Plan. The programme is designed to bring social benefits to the population in the form of increased supply of fuelwood (thereby releasing cowdung for manure), small timber and fodder as well as of recreational facilities.

The Commission has recommended extensive plantation on the bunds and boundaries of the fields of the farmers for which the forest extension units would develop the nurseries for the supply of seedlings. A pilot scheme for development of farm forestry has been recommended to be taken up in the Central Sector in 100 selected districts—60 districts in areas with advanced agriculture where fuelwood and timber are scarce and 40 in dry and arid zones.

Mixed forestry has been proposed to be taken up on waste lands, panchayat lands and village commons in drought prone areas for which a survey of waste lands and village panchayat lands has been proposed for preparing land-use plans based on a village or a group of villages as a unit. Development of fodder and grass is to be an important component of mixed forestry so as to increase their supply and benefit the weaker sections of the population who may be encouraged to take up animal husbandry programmes. Emphasis has, therefore, been placed on the organised production and distribution of seed involving local farmers. The Commission has proposed that an area of one lakh hectares should be covered through pilot projects of mixed forestry in the Central Sector.

With a view to preventing damage to agricultural crops, agricultural lands, roads etc. through wind erosion, the Commission has suggested the establishment of shelter belts in hot and arid areas. The programme is to cover one lakh hectares distributed among the States of Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Mysore and Maharashtra with 50 per cent Central assistance. In addition, the Commission has recommended

planting of trees on lands on the sides of roads, canal banks and railway lines as a commercial investment with an annual target of not less than 8,000 km. of planting. Moreover, 3 lakh hectares have been proposed to be covered by re-forestation programmes in degraded forests with a view to increasing the supply of fuelwood and small timber and preventing unauthorised removal from and easing the pressure on valuable commercial forests. To supply fuelwood and small timber for agricultural implements at fair rates, State subsidy has been proposed for the first 15 to 20 years.

The Commission has advised that the State Governments should make a study of the problem of recreational needs of the urban areas and dedicate some forests or establish tree groves near such areas for recreational purposes. Moreover, green belts, around towns and cities, wherever necessary, should also be created.

The Commission has laid considerable emphasis on appropriate training in extension methodology and technology for officers selected for implementing the programme. Agricultural Universities are also to include in their syllabi a course in social forestry for the agricultural graduates. A large number of field demonstrations with the participation of panchayats, cooperatives and village school staff have been suggested for popularising social forestry. Field assistants are proposed to be recruited from the local people in the programme areas to secure involvement of villagers. The Commission also recommends that all social forestry programmes should be executed by engaging local labour and not through contract system.

For implementing the programmes during the Fifth Plan, a total expenditure of Rs. 80 crores is visualised, including the cost of extension organisation, research and survey. The share of the Central Government has been estimated at Rs. 34.50 crores.