

has restricted the movement of heavy transport vehicles on the Okhla Road from 7-00 A.M. to 8-30 A.M. and 1-30 P.M. to 2-30 P.M. to ensure the safety of school children during the hours of their arrival and departure from schools. Further, restrictions on speed limits have been imposed on the entire stretch of the Okhla Road at 34 K.M. per hour for all types of motor vehicles, as against the normal speed limit of 40 K.M. per hour and above.

(d) The information required is being collected and will be laid on the table of the Sabha, when received.

Setting up of Diamond Banking Service

2540. SHRI P. K. DEO : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to establish specialised Diamond Banking Service in the country ;

(b) if so, whether any decision has been taken in the matter ; and

(c) if so, the benefits likely to be derived therefrom ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YESHWANTRAO CHAVAN) : (a) to (c). The question of improving the existing banking facilities for the diamond trade is under examination.

Opening of Lead Banks in Districts

2541. SHRI JAGANNATH MISHRA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have allowed a lead bank to be started in each of the Districts of the country to help increase in agricultural products ;

(b) whether such a bank is in operation in the district of Darbhanga in Bihar ;

(c). to what extent agriculturists have been benefited by the said bank :

(d) whether Government propose to open its branches at Sub-Divisional level also ; and

(e) if so, the time limit for its implementation ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YESHWANTRAO CHAVAN) : (a) to (e). Under the lead bank scheme formulated in December, 1969, almost all the districts of the Indian Union including the District of Darbhanga in Bihar have been assigned to one or two existing major banks, (mostly public sector banks) for assuming the main responsibility for quickening the pace of banking operations in each district.

One of the major functions of the lead bank is to survey the concerned districts and identify areas of credit gaps and formulate schemes for extending credit to the neglected hitherto sectors including agriculture.

It is too early to assess the extent to which the lead bank scheme has benefited the agriculturists of a particular district. The first task of lead bank is to identify growth centres which are in urgent need of banking facilities so that plans for opening bank offices in all such centres can be drawn up. Assistance to Agriculture and other sectors would follow the opening of bank branches in the interior of the district.

Central Bank of India is the lead bank in the District of Darbhanga. Darbhanga had 17 commercial bank offices in June, 1969 ; now it has 24 offices of commercial banks of which 9 are of the lead bank. 10 more offices are proposed to be opened by the commercial banks in the district in 1971, of these 4 will be opened by the lead bank.

There is no proposal to open offices of lead banks on a sub-divisional basis as such. The lead banks are, however expected to have effective representation in their districts to enable them to discharge their responsibilities adequately.