

(c) whether Savings Bank facilities in those Post Offices have also ceased to operate; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by Government to put Post Offices in rural areas into proper working order ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SHER SINGH) : (a) It cannot be said that P & T services in the rural areas are not functioning well.

The postal services in rural areas are maintained through the Extra-Departmental system under which persons with independent vocations in life or with an independent income like landlords, school masters, shop-keepers etc. are entrusted with the postal work on payment of an allowance which is related to the volume of postal transactions and the hours for which the post office is kept open. Wherever justified, the E. D. postmaster is allowed the assistance of an E. D. delivery agent for the delivery work and an E. D. mail carrier for mail conveyance.

An E. D. postmaster is generally expected to provide his own accommodation for the post office. He is, however, supplied with the essential furniture and equipment for the post office work and the necessary forms. He is also given an allowance for the stationery expenses.

(b) and (c). This is not correct.

The extent to which savings bank facilities provided by the Post Office are utilised depends on the public,

(d) A committee has been appointed by Government to review the general working of the Extra-Departmental system and suggest measures for its improvement.

The experimental rural post offices are estimated to be working at a recurring annual loss of nearly 80 lakhs. The P&T Tariff Enquiry Committee had suggested tightening up the condition for the opening and retention of such post offices in rural areas but it was decided that any such restriction would not be desirable in the

present state of development though the condition that a post office at the time of its opening should have a reasonable expectation of producing revenue at least up to 25% of its costs was accepted.

Consultation with State Governments regarding Distribution of Surplus Land to Landless Farmers

3226. SHRI CHENGALRAYA NAIDU :
SHRI R. BARUA :

Will the Minister of FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have consulted the State Governments regarding the distribution of surplus land to the landless farmers in the country;

(b) If so, the views of the state Government in this regard; and

(c) whether any uniform policy in this regard has since been formulated by Government and if so the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AGRICULTURE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION (SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE) : (a) and (b). State Government were consulted with regard to the various aspects of land reforms including schemes relating to priorities for settlement of surplus land at the time of formulation of the Second Five Year Plan. It was recommended in the Plan that in the settlement of land acquired in consequence of the application of ceilings; tenants displaced as a result of resumption of land for personal cultivation, farmers with uneconomic holding and landless workers should receive preference. It was also suggested that settlement should be made on co-operative basis as far as it is feasible to do so. These suggestions were taken into account by the State Governments while formulating their proposals for ceiling on holdings.

(c) in view of variation in local conditions it has not been possible for the State Governments to adopt a uniform scheme of priorities for settlement on surplus lands. State Government have however, given priority for members of scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.