

(viii) Need to provide seeds, fertilisers and diesel to farmers in the country, particularly in Azamgarh, Uttar Pradesh

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAM KRISHAN YADAV (Azamgarh): Mr. Chairman, Sir, ours is a country of farmers. 80 per cent of the total population is engaged in agriculture directly or indirectly. Agriculture is the main source of income in our country. It is very essential to increase the agricultural production for the development of the country. Central Government and State Governments are committed to the welfare of the farmers. But I regret to say that at this time of sowing and irrigation neither seeds nor fertilizer nor diesel or petrol are available for irrigation in Azamgarh, Uttar Pradesh which is my constituency due to which a serious situation has arisen before the farmers. I would like to draw the attention of the Government to this and urge upon them to provide seeds, fertilizers, diesel and petrol immediately to the farmers.

15.25 hrs.

PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE BILL —
CONTD.

[*English*]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, we are going to take up the next item; Bills for consideration and passing. Now, we take up further consideration of the following motion moved by Shrimati Maneka Gandhi, on the 4th January, 1991, namely:-

"That the Bill to provide for public liability insurance for the purpose of providing immediate relief to the persons affected by accident occurring while handling any hazardous substance and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto, be taken into consideration."

The time allotted is two hours for this Bill. We have already taken 52 minutes. Only one hour is left. This Bill is to be passed today itself. Therefore, I request the hon. Members to cooperate with the Chair and try to be very brief and within the time available, try to finish the speech.

Now, Shri Kumaramangalam to continue, Try to be brief.

SHRI P. R. KUMARAMANGALAM (Salem): I will be very brief. Mr. Chairman, Sir, when I was on my feet last time, I very categorically welcomed this Bill. We wish to welcome this Bill as not only refreshing, a welcome measure but also a revolutionary measure in the sense that we have had a series of accidents due to hazardous substances including the Bhopal Gas Leak accident. We have seen that even now the matter is pending in litigation. Relief is not only needed but also a welcome measure. Sir, under Clause 8(1) of the proposed Bill it is clearly laid down that the relief will be in addition to any other right to claim compensation in respect thereof under any other law for the time being in force. However, under 8(2) it is made clear that if any persons is liable to pay compensation under any of the law, the amount of such compensation shall be reduced by the amount of relief paid under this Act. This, I do feel is a little unfair essentially because the schedule lays down very small amount of Rs. 25,000 in the case of death, fatal accidents and Rs. 12,500 in other cases. This is rather unfortunate because this amount is so small that it should be really treated as relief. I would, through you, Sir, draw the attention of the hon. Minister that in many cases where death takes place—especially under Workmen's Compensation Act—it is commonly known that funeral expenses and other immediate expenses as relief are never considered as part of the compensation. It is always dealt with separately. If this is going to be dealt with at the same level that this is an immediate relief that is being provided, I would request that Sub-Clause 2 to Clause 8 be deleted. If the hon. Minister could consider it, it would be a welcome measure. Then, the