

[Shri Pratap Bhanu Sharma]

The water level of the wells has gone down there due to scanty rains during the previous year, water level of the rivers is also going down sharply. The Central Government as well as the Madhya Pradesh Government is, therefore, requested to take steps on war footing to explore new resources of drinking water for all the problem villages of Vidisha, Raisen and Sehore districts and to instal hand-pumps in the hilly areas with the help of deep-boring machines. The above-mentioned three districts should be declared as drought-affected areas.

In Gulabganj, Pathari, Gyaspur, Udaipur, Begumganj, Gairatganj, Salamatpur, Devari, Chhipaner, Kasbatal, etc. the sanctioned water supply schemes should be properly implemented so as to provide drinking water facility to the villages urgently.

[English]

- (ii) Need to Construct of houses for workers employed by Public sector undertakings and collieries in and around Ramagundam

SHRI G. BHOOPATHY (Peddapalli): In and around Ramagundam public sector undertakings there is a Super Thermal Power Station at Ramagundam. The Fertilizer Corporation of India, a Cement Factory and Coal Mines are situated in Gedavarikhani which is not very far from Ramagundam. Manda Marri, Ramakrishnapuram and Bellampalli, all of which are a part of Singareni, Collieries, are located very nearby. About 50,000 persons are working in these undertakings.

Since this entire belt happens to be a very backward area. These 50,000 and odd workers have no proper accommodation. It is a grave problem which they are facing now. So far, no steps have been taken by any undertaking to provide quarters for their staff.

Hence, I request the Government of India to take up construction of houses on a massive scale, so that it can serve the needs of the workers of all the establishments situated in the area.

[Translation]

- (iii) Reported abolition of Freight equalisation scheme with respect to Iron and Steel and need to withdraw the order or compensate the state of Kerala

*SHRI V.S. VIJAYARAGHAVAN (Palghat): There are press reports that the Central Government has decided to abolish the freight equalisation scheme with respect to iron and steel. This decision will adversely affect a State like Kerala. It is estimated that when the freight equalisation scheme is withdrawn, the steel that is brought to Kerala with cost between Rs 700 and Rs. 800 more than the present price. This will very badly hit the industries in Kerala.

The Government of Kerala has expressed its concern over it to the Central Government. I would request the Government that either the Government should drop the decision to abolish the scheme or compensate the loss to the State in some other way.

- (iv) Need to review the support price of opium to help opium-growers

PROF. NIRMALA KUMARI SHAKTAWAT. (Chitorgarh): Under Rule 377, I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Finance Minister to the problem of opium-growers of the country. Opium is exported and used in life-saving drugs but the condition of the opium-growers is quite deplorable. The maximum number of these growers are in Kota and Chitorgarh districts of Rajasthan and Ratlam and Mandsaur districts of Madhya Pradesh. These farmers cultivate this delicate crop of opium with great difficulty. A little