

(v) Need for early completion of Irrigation Projects in Orissa.

SHRI SOMNATH RATH (Aska) : The country has faced the worst drought unprecedented in the living memory. Countless millions require basic needs and succour. Our esteemed Prime Minister is the first man in the country who expressed concern on the appalling drought and made an extensive tour throughout the length and breadth of the country to make an on the spot assessment.

Orissa has been badly affected by the drought. Ganjam district of Orissa is the worst affected. The visit of our Prime Minister to Ganjam has regenerated strength amongst the people to fight this drought. But the follow up action has been very much tardy. Members of Parliament have demanded that there should be allocation of Central funds for drought at the District level instead of State level for effective utilisation of central grants. There should also be effective supervision on the spending of Central grants.

The District of Ganjam is also facing acute drinking water problem. Immediate measures are required to be taken to meet the situation.

Construction of Nurpalli and Pipalpanka major irrigation projects should start. Construction of Harabhangi project should be expedited spending available five crores rupees.

Bilumara and Kupati minor Irrigation projects should be undertaken. The work in Baghua project is dormant for the last 15 years. Only salaries are paid to the employees of this project since then. The work should be taken up in right earnest.

Union Government should give sufficient funds for permanent irrigation projects and to fight the acute drought in Orissa. Good seeds for Rabi crop should also be provided to farmers.

(vi) Need to reconsider the decision to close down the Government of India Stationery Depot at Calcutta and its branches at New Delhi, Bombay and Madras.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur) : It is a matter of grave concern

that the Government of India has decided to close down the Government of India Stationery Depot at Calcutta and its branches at New Delhi, Bombay and Madras on the plea of decentralisation of the work relating to procurement and distribution of stationery items. This will not only totally upset the well-established and well-coordinated system prevailing over a long period for proper procurement and distribution of stationery items but will result in retrenchment of 1200 employees including officers, except a very few employees who may be given other employment. It is significant that the main work of the stationery office, namely, supply of printing and other varieties of paper to the Government presses will now be done in a centralised manner by the Directorate of Printing at New Delhi ; thus, the result will only be abolition of an existing office and termination of employment of 1200 persons, causing untold suffering to them and their families.

I strongly urge upon the Government to revise its decision and permit the continuance of the stationery office at Calcutta and its branches at other places.

(vii) Need for laying a natural gas pipe line in Assam.

SHRI M.R. SAIKIA (Nowgong) : Large quantities of natural gas is being flared in Oil India Ltd. and Oil and Natural Gas Commission's oil fields in Assam. This is a wastage of a natural asset. A scheme should be taken to lay a natural gas pipeline from Duliajan via Moran, Geleky, Nasira, Sibsagar, Jorhat, Gauhati, Goalpara and Dhubri along the national highway. This will be Assam's life line to progress because it would cater for a refinery cum petrochemical complex at Mesenga, a fertilizer plant each at Jorhat, Nowgaon, Goalpara and Dhubri. From Jakhlabandha a branch line can be taken to the North Bank through the Bhumuraguri Bridge over the Brahmaputra and a fertilizer plant could be set up in the jute land area of Mongoldoc.

(viii) Need to exercise check on prices of essential commodities and ensure their availability.

SHRI JAGANNATH PATTNAIK (Kalahandi) : Price rise in different commo-