

[Shrimati Usha Choudhary]

Maharashtra is a leading State in the country in the matter of producing cotton. The life of the farmers there, specially of the farmers of the Vidarbha region, is dependent on the cotton yarn. In Maharashtra, cotton monopoly scheme has been considered as a welfare scheme for the farmers. Under that scheme, farmers' cotton is to be purchased through Marketing Federation. This year, on the one hand, production of cotton has increased and on the other hand due to higher prices of cotton there in comparison to other States, certain quantity of cotton was brought there for sale from other States also. In the absence of cotton monopoly scheme in the surrounding cotton producing States, this thing has always been happening. With the result that such a good scheme is not properly implemented. This year the Federation had to purchase more cotton and as such it was short of funds to make payments to the farmers. The cash-credit obtained by the Federation from the Reserve Bank should have been more this year due to larger procurement of cotton so that the Federation could get more loan from the Cooperative Banks and other institutions.

The National Textile Corporation is to pay Rs. 20 crores to the Maharashtra farmers as arrears. If this amount is given to the Federation, then the poor farmers who have not been able to get payment of their crops even after 3 to 4 months of selling their cotton, will be able to get their payment immediately. The Maharashtra Government have also appealed to the Centre to this effect.

If the Central Government do not take this matter seriously and do not provide financial help to the Maharashtra Cotton Federation and also do not provide justice by paying full attention to their work, then the possibility of sowing cotton by the Maharashtra farmers, specially by the farmers of Vidarbha, is bleak.

In conclusion, I demand that for immediate payment to the farmers of Maharashtra for their cotton crops, the Cotton Federation should be provided financial help in same way.

- (iii) Need to ensure adequate and early payment to the farmers for their produce purchased by F.C.I. through its various agencies.

SHRI HAFIZ MOHD. SIDDIQ (Moradabad) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Food Corporation of India procures foodgrains itself as well as through several agencies. For purchases made by the Food Corporation of India, the payment is made promptly to the farmers, though in the matter of prices the farmers have to face some losses and difficulties; but in the matter of purchases made through P.C.F. and the Cooperatives, the farmers neither get fair prices nor timely payment. The Cooperatives make baseless excuses while purchasing foodgrains and in this way compel the farmers to go to the touts who purchase the agricultural produce at lower prices by saying that prompt payment therefor would be made. These touts pay very meagre prices to the farmers on the excuse of the wheat being of inferior quality. One of the reason for this is the payment of illegal money to the Food Corporation for getting the grade of the foodgrains passed. Thus the farmers are doubly exploited. PCF makes payment to the Cooperatives after receipt of the commodities. Therefore, the Cooperatives are able to make payment usually after 5 days. The farmers need money immediately. Therefore, they are compelled to sell their foodgrains to the touts. Later on, the Purchase Centres purchase the same foodgrains on increased prices from the touts and the difference in the prices is shared by both.

The process of wheat procurement is going to start soon. I, therefore, demand from the Government to pay immediate attention to this aspect and save the farmers from exploitation.

- (iv) Need to declare Raval Jaunpur areas of Uttarkashi and Tehri districts of Uttar Pradesh as tribal areas.

SHRI BRAHMA DUTT (Tehri Garhwal) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, Ravalta scheduled tribe has been living in six development blocks of Uttarkashi and Tehri districts in the Yamuna valley. This area