

[Sh. Janardan Misra]

agriculture it declined to 27.5% during the Seventh Five Year Plan. Although the amount spent on these four heads has increased a lot, there is a sharp decline so far as the percentage is concerned. Government has been following a policy of providing foodgrains to urban consumers at subsidized prices. But it is not justified to fulfill this objective by fixing the support prices of the agricultural produce at a level which does not even help the farmers to sustain themselves.

(vi) Need for early commissioning of Electronic system in Bahrain Kumarapalayam Telephone Exchange of Periyar district in Tamil Nadu

[English]

SHRI P. G. NARAYANAN (Gobichettipalayam): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, A new Cross Bar Telephone Exchange started functioning in Bhavani, Periyar District of Tamil Nadu from 4th February, 1993, and since then almost all the telephones have become dead resulting in hardship to the business community leading to a heavy loss. Previously when this system was installed in Namakkal exchange, the people of the area also had the same experience. From this one could infer that the Cross Bar Exchange system is not going to enhance the efficiency of the functioning of the telephone system.

It is understood that this system will function till switching over of Electronic Exchange. The general public of Bhavani and Kumarapalayam, who have been the source of major income to the Telephone Department, feel that the interim arrangement of this Cross Bar Exchange system should be given up by switching over to the old system with immediate effect. They also expect that certain measures, such as, removal of untrained staff manning the exchange, cancellation of rental charges for the period where telephones remained dead, should also

be taken.

I urge upon the Minister of communications to take steps for the switching over to the old telephone exchange system and early commissioning of the Electronic Exchange in Bhavani-Kumarapalayam Telephone Exchange.

(vii) Need for a separate railway zone at Muzaffarpur in Bihar for development of North Bihar.

[Translation]

SHRINAWAL KISHORE RAI (Sitamarhi): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the House towards a very important issue.

Bihar is the most backward state. Even there, the condition of Northern Bihar is grave. There is neither any big industry nor railway network. Every year the railway fares and freight charges are increased but no improvement is made in the system. The coaches in North Eastern Railway are in shambles. The condition of the three Tier sleeper coaches is very bad and most of them do not have proper door locks. The glass panes and windows are all broken. The steps are generally broken. The rate of food items served by railways has been increased but their quality has further deteriorated. No attention is paid to sanitation and cleanliness. Concerned officials should be asked to make surprise checks. Therefore, I demand that a separate railway zone should be constituted at Muzaffarpur in Bihar for the economy and industrial development of Northern Bihar. All infrastructural facilities required for building a Headquarters are available.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now, the House will take up Legislative Business. Shri Paban Singh Ghatowar.