

The average number of social security pensioners were 6 to 7 per cent of the population which the new dispensation has brought down to 2 per cent. The poor beneficiaries have agitated to secure the ends of justice. Their plight beggars description.

I, therefore, urge upon the Central Government to intervene and prevail upon the Bihar Government to restore the earlier 'old age pension scheme'.

(iv) Need to extend retirement benefits to the casual labour working on Indian Railways.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR SAHA (Vishnupur): Sir, I want to draw the attention of Government to a peculiar problem facing the casual labourers working in the Railways. As per the statement of the Minister during the presentation of the Railway Budget, there are about 2,50,000 casual Labour in the Indian Railways and only 25,000 casual labourers in all zones are being confirmed as per the existing rules. As per the present yardstick it will normally take more than a decade for a casual labourer to be confirmed as regular employee. Therefore, when a casual labourer dies in harness even after serving for more than a decade without being confirmed, he is deprived of retirement benefits like gratuity, pension, etc. His family only gets the P. F. contribution of the employee. On the other hand, a regular employee becomes eligible for retirement benefits if he completes a few years of service. This lacuna or injustice meted out to casual labourers can be removed if supernumerary posts are created so that these posts will lapse as and when these casual labourers vacate these posts. This will benefit a casual labourer to get retirement benefits. I urge upon the Government to consider this suggestion sympathetically and save many casual labourers working in the Railways from being deprived of their legitimate retirement benefits due to the lacuna in the rules.

(v) Need to provide alternative cattle feed because of rice bran and cotton seeds being used for extracting oil.

SHRI A. SENAPATHI GOUNDER (Palani): The cattle wealth of our country is going on depleting year by year. We have been feeding cattle with rice bran and cotton seeds. But, now that we have started extracting oil from rice bran and cotton seeds, these two nutritious feed have become scarce for cattle. Also the stalks of high-breed

varieties of paddy being very short, the quantity of hay stalk available to cattle has also lessened. Thus, for the benefit of man, the cattle feed has been curtailed. Previously there was an Animal Welfare Board and even that has become defunct.

There were vast grazing grounds in dry areas and in every Village. After conversion of many dry areas into wet areas, the grazing grounds have become non-existent. Therefore, wherever dry lands are there, grazing field should be given exemption under the Land Ceiling Acts.

Production of green fodder just like N.B. 21 etc. should be increased and supplied at subsidised rates. The present rate of subsidy given is insufficient. Since we need to make oil from rice bran and cotton seeds, we have to find some alternatives as cattle feed.

I request the hon. Minister of Agriculture to take drastic steps for the care of the cattle which is very precious for our economy which is still predominantly agricultural.

(vi) Irregularities and inefficiency in the Handloom corporation and need for importing the lot of weavers.

श्री बी० डी० सिंह (फूलपुर): सभापति महोदय, उत्तर प्रदेश के पूर्वी जिलों में लगभग नब्बे प्रतिशत हेण्डलूम की इकाइयां हैं जो हेण्डलूम कारपोरेशन में ब्याप्त अनियमितताओं तथा उसकी अक्षमता के कारण बन्द पड़ी हैं। इसके अतिरिक्त कारपोरेशन के अधिकारी पावरलूम की धीतियों को खरीद कर सस्ते कपड़े की दुकानों पर मज देते हैं तथा होने वाले लाभ को स्वयं हथिया लेते हैं। परिणाम यह होता है कि हाथकरघा के बुने हुए माल का विक्रय नहीं हो पाता है और हाथकरघा इकाइयों को बाध्य हो कर बन्द करना पड़ता है। जिन गरीबों को हाथकरघा खरीदने के लिए ऋण दिया गया है, उन्हें भुगतान करने में असमर्थता हो रही है। हाथकरघा उद्योग में बिचौलियों का भी अकुश कठोर होता जा रहा है। वे बुनकरों के घरों में करघा लगवा कर उनसे कपड़ा बुनवाते हैं तथा उन्हें अपर्याप्त मजदूरी देकर स्वयं मालामाल हो रहे हैं लगभग 80 से 90 प्रतिशत तक हाथकरघे बिचौलियों