

3. Cumbum-Uthamapalayam inter-dialing.

4. Cumbum - Madurai - Madras-New Delhi-Bombay STD facility.

5. Cumbum-Theni STD.

6. TAX circuit to Cumbum.

7. One more trunk line from Cumbum to Kumuli.

8. Installation of U.H.S. system between Cumbum and Theni.

(ix) ASSENT TO THE KERALA LAND REFORMS (AMENDMENT) BILL.

SHRI A. K. BALAN (Ottapalam): A Bill as passed by the Kerala Legislative Assembly was forwarded by the Governor to the Government of India on 30-4-1980 for obtaining the assent of the President to the Bill. The Bill seeks to omit section 60 of the Kerala Land Reforms Act, 1963. Section 60 was inserted in the Act by the Kerala Land Reforms (Amendment) Act, 1979 (27 of 1979) in order to give protection to certain persons who have obtained leases of lands after 1-4-1964 and effected substantial improvements in such lands, in spite of the provision contained in section 74 prohibiting the creation of tenancies after 1-4-1964.

The Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, had raised certain objections to the Bill and Kerala Government sent the reply thereto. The then Chief Minister explained the necessity of the legislation, and requested the Home Minister to take urgent steps for obtaining the assent of the President to the Bill. Government of India had suggested to reconsider the matter stating that the Bill is *ultra vires* the provision of articles 31A and 14 of the Constitution. The contentions of the Government were also met by Government of Kerala. A further communication from the Government of India has also been received seeking certain clarifications on the status of

the tenants protected under section 60 of the Kerala Land Reforms Act and a reply to that communication is being sent to the Government of India.

It is suggested that the Government of India should see that assent is given to the Bill at an early date.

(x) INQUIRY INTO DEATH OF A NURSE FROM KERALA IN PRATAPGARH DISTRICT OF U.P.

SHRI P. K. KODIYAN (Adoor): I wish to draw the attention of the Government and the House to the highly suspicious circumstances under which a nurse from Kerala posted at the primary health centre at Lalganj in Pratapgarh district of Uttar Pradesh had died on 24 November, 1981.

It is said that a doctor at the PHC had an evil eye on her and she had thwarted all attempts to molest her and as a punishment she was transferred to Bhojpur village 15 km away from Lalganj. It is also said that she used to return to the hostel at Lalganj every evening even though her stay had been arranged in a house in the village whose owner was known to be a bad character. It was also alleged that there was attempt to evict her from the hostel and force her to stay in the village residence on 24 November. On that day when her friend returned from duty, the door of her room was found half open. On entering, she found that the deceased was lying unconscious. She informed the doctor in charge and the BEE (Block Extension Educater) about her condition.

It is alleged that she was removed to the hospital at Pratapgarh only after two hours. She died in the hospital at midnight.

It was also alleged that proper postmortem was not done on her body. An attempt has been allegedly made by the doctor-in-charge and the clerk to make out a story that

[Shri P. K. Kodiyan]

she had committed suicide. Attempts are made to hush up the case.

Sir, this is the fifth incident in which a nurse has died in suspicious circumstances in this district. Earlier, four nurses had met with their end in similar circumstances. All these deaths have taken place within the last few months especially after the present CMO had taken charge of the Centre.

On December 6th, 200 nurses posted in 15 primary health centres in the district took out a procession in Pratapgarh, demanding CID inquiry into the death of the nurse and punishment of the culprits.

The nurses working in the district, who have come from far away Kerala, are feeling insecure. It is a known fact that an organised gang has been working around the hospitals and primary health centres in the area, who have become a threat to the nurses and girls working there.

I request the Central Government to take immediate steps to institute a proper inquiry into the death of the nurse and bring the culprits to book as early as possible and to ensure security to life and honour of nurses, who are working in Pratapgarh district and other areas in Uttar Pradesh.

(ix) PEST INFECTION OF WHEAT CROP IN NORTHERN BELT OF MADHYA PRADESH.

DR. VASANT KUMAR PANDIT (Rajgarh): An alarming situation is facing the farmers under the wheat production belt. The virus deadly disease, called "Karnal Bunt", has widely affected wheat crops in the northern belt of Madhya Pradesh. The percentage of incidence during this season is over 40 per cent. This has disturbed the agriculturists who stand to suffer heavy losses.

This disease has also spread to other 8 to 9 States, particularly Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and parts of Bihar, Gujarat, Jammu and Kashmir and Delhi. There is a fear that widespread loss of wheat crop will gravely endanger the agricultural economy.

A minor disease till 1968, this virus of "Karnal Bunt" has increasingly spread to almost the whole wheat zone in the country. Even the agricultural scientists are looking helpless and alarmed at the first increasing percentage of this disease in the country. In the last decade the incidence was only upto 30 to 35 per cent. But this year it appears to be more by 10 to 15 per cent. The sad part of this sordid incidence of "Karnal Bunt" is that the crop becomes unfit for human consumption. Further, the disease causes a foul smell, like that of a rotten fish, which spreads to the entire crop, making it unacceptable for milling or whole meal. The disease is two-pronged, being initially soil-borne and also air-borne.

It is indeed beyond imagination that the Government has done precious little to contain this disease and to educate the farmers on weedicide and pesticide method. Since the last ten years the interests of wheat farmers are being neglected. Government must act positively and quickly. This issue has now become a national cause of worry. The scientists of the Indian Agriculture Research Institute must act on a war-footing. The suffering wheat producing farmers must be given subsidy and assistance to fight this disease. If this is not done, this vital crop will suffer badly.

I call upon the Government to immediately appoint an Expert to assess the spread of this disease and to invent methods to contain it, giving it wide publicity and demonstrations. Unless something is done