

[Shri Uttam Rathod]

in Maharashtra is being reduced by Rs. 50 per quintal. This statement has upset the cotton growers throughout the State of Maharashtra.

During the last one and a half years the prices of fertilisers and insecticides have gone up by 20 per cent, but the guaranteed prices of cotton have been kept at the same level. Even the APC did not bother to increase the prices of cotton though they knew that the prices of fertiliser and insecticides had been increased substantially. The Government of India is urged to see that the guaranteed prices prevailing last year under the Cotton Monopoly Purchase Scheme in Maharashtra should be increased by at least 20 per cent than that of the last year.

(vi) NEEDED TO RESTORE THE WORKING OF POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS OFFICES ON SUNDAYS AND OTHER PUBLIC HOLIDAYS.

*SHRI D. S. A. SIVAPRAKASAM (Tirunelveli): In the P & T Department there are 20 public holidays. Till recently, only on a few Sundays in a year the Post offices used to be closed completely. On public holidays the Post Offices used to work for two hours. On such days, there used to be one delivery and one despatch.

Some months ago, an order was passed to close the post offices on all Sundays and on all holidays completely. On Sundays there is no working of post offices at all. The employees of P & T Department working on holidays used to get overtime. Now there is no overtime for them, since they do not work on holidays. It is felt that to avoid overtime payment to the employees, the post offices are now not working on holidays and Sundays.

Like the Railways, and the Electricity Department, the P & T Department is also an essential utility service for the people. On Sundays the trains run. On Sundays there is no stoppage of power supply. Whether it is for avoiding overtime payment or for some other reason, the post offices are not working on holi-

days and, naturally, the people's interests suffer.

Now there is no Express Delivery system. The amenities to the public are getting depleted. There is a gradual decline in the P & T Service to the people.

In the interest of service to the common people, I demand that the system of making Post Offices work on Sundays and other public holidays for limited hours should be restored.

(vii) RESTORATION OF PIGMY DEPOSIT SCHEME.

SHRI T. R. SHAMANNA (Bangalore South): Sir, for a long time the banks are having a scheme to collect money for savings from the poor and middle class people, who will not normally open a deposit account in a bank. Unlike F.D.A., Current Account and S. B. Account, where depositors have to go to the bank to pay money into their account, in the case of Pigmy account for small depositors, the banker (through authorised agents) will go to the depositors and collect Re. 1/-, Rs. 2/-, Rs. 5/- and Rs. 10- daily or weekly and credit it to their Account. A small interest will be paid on the deposit. The agent (Pigmy Collector), will get a commission on the basis of the deposits collected.

The merits of the Pigmy Deposit are:

1. The money collected to Pigmy, if not collected, it would have been spent for non-productive purposes.
2. The Agent gets a commission, which will go a long way to make a living in these hard days.
3. The Banks will have deposit. It may not be a big amount, but a large number of small accounts will give a big amount.
4. The Pigmy depositor will get a big sum after one year or so. He can use this for his business or it may help him to pay back money borrowed by him etc.

This kind of deposits, even though they may not be heavy, the bank will have done some service. The Pigmy Deposits do not give high profits and involve work to bankers. Now the banks have the permission of the Reserve Bank to stop the opening of new Deposits, which means virtually closing the Pigmy deposits.

The worst sufferer is the Pigmy collector and, to some extent, the depositor. The Pigmy Collectors, who are more than 6,000 to 8,000 in Karnataka alone, will be rendered jobless and will have to starve. The bankers will lose an opportunity to serve the weaker sections.

On behalf of a large number of unfortunate Pigmy Collectors, I am making this demand, because they have requested me to get them relief at an early date. This Pigmy Deposit will help the success of the 20-Point Programme of the hon. Prime Minister.

(viii) NEED TO AUTHORISE THE RELEASE AND SUPPLY OF LEVY/NON-LEVY CEMENT TO THE COMPANY AND FACTORY AT KYMORE.

SHRI GULSHER AHMED (Satna) : Asbestos Cement Limited has a factory at Kymore, Tehsil Murwara, Distt. Jabalpur, M.P., a notified backward area of Madhya Pradesh, where it has been manufacturing asbestos cement building products, since 1934. It employs more than 1000 workers.

Ordinary Portland Cement (OPC) is one of the major raw material required for the production of asbestos cement products, and that is why Asbestos Cement Limited established its factory at Kymore, adjacent to ACC Ltd. which was started in the year 1920. The Company has been obtaining its supplies of OPC from the adjacent factory of the Associated Cement Companies Ltd. (ACC Ltd.) right from the inception of its manufacturing activities.

The ACC Ltd. discontinued the supply of cement to the Company from 26th August, 1982, and the Company was, therefore, forced to effect lay-off of the factory from the 2nd September, 1982. The ACC Ltd. have advised that it is unable to supply cement to Asbestos Cement Ltd. for a few months because it has to meet

its obligations of supplies in the levy quota and does not have OPC available for supply to non-levy consumers or the market.

The Company has been increasing its activities in Kymore to help in the development of this backward area. Initially in 1934 the Company started operations with one machine. In 1957 it doubled its capacity by commissioning a second machine. It also progressively introduced the manufacture of pipes.

To overcome the problem the Hon. Minister is requested to authorise the release and supply of levy or non-levy cement to the Company's factory at Kymore.

This measure will enable the Company to lift the lay off and to recommence production.

(ix) COMPLETION OF MAHATMA GANDHI BRIDGE IN BIHAR.

श्री राम बिलास पासवान (हाजीपुर) :
उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, पटना हाजीपुर के बीच नवनिर्मित महात्मा गांधी सेतु बालू तो हो गया लेकिन उसका एक भाग ही बन पाया है। फलस्वरूप दुर्घटनाओं की बाढ़ सी आ गई है। एक तो किसी तरह से बनाए गए इस पुल की फिनिशिंग नहीं हुई है, दूसरे यह पुल सबसे अधिक व्यस्त पुल हो गया है। यदि अविश्वस्य दूसरे हिस्सों को नहीं बनाया गया तो बरदान के बजाए यह अभिशाप हो जायेगा।

प्रश्न: केन्द्र सरकार स्वयं विलचस्पी होकर इस पुल के अग्ररे कार्य को पूरा कराने और आवश्यकता हो तो बिहार सरकार की आर्थिक सहायता भी दे।

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now we shall take up Legislative Business for consideration and passing.