

[Shri Surjit Singh Barnala]

four teams of A.F.C. and Bank officers to visit the cyclone affected districts of the State. The teams were also represented by officers from the concerned Departments of State Government and State Cooperative Bank. The teams have since submitted their report. They have recommended, among other things, conversion of short-term loan to medium-term loan, rescheduling of term loan, opening of camp branches by Banks to dispose of applications for 1979 kharif loans, etc. ARDC is being requested to give loans on soft terms. These steps will help in rehabilitation of farmers in the affected areas.

Any action taken by the Central Government is inadequate if the State Government does not come forward to meet the challenge imposed by such calamities. I must say that the State Governments have acted promptly to meet the situation. I express my appreciation of the efforts made by them.

I would also like to record a note of appreciation for the assistance given by the Members of the Armed forces in giving relief to the cyclone victims. The Army and Air Force did a splendid job in reaching the marooned villages and air dropping food, providing medical supplies and medical aid in adverse conditions. We are indeed very grateful to them.

Any efforts by the State and Central Governments cannot succeed unless there is a spontaneous response from the people and other voluntary organisations engaged in relief work. I would like to express my appreciation for the fortitude and courage shown by the people of the affected areas in facing the calamity. I hope and pray that they will be resettled soon in their normal vocations and will be able to overcome the tragedy which has befallen them.

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH (Nandyal): Sir, this cyclone has caused

greater havoc than the previous cyclone and thousands of acres have become unfit for cultivation. These recurrent cyclones are more devastating in that part of Andhra Pradesh. The State Government has proposed to construct a wall as a preventive measure so that these areas will not get damaged from time to time, whenever there is a cyclone. This involves expenditure, and they have approached the Central Government for adequate financial assistance to prevent these areas from getting damaged by the effect of such cyclones. They have asked for more funds. I would like to know whether such a request has come.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU (Diamond Harbour): Sir, a case has been made out by the Tobacco Board . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Now we take up Statements under Rule 377.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: I will take only half a minute.

MR. SPEAKER: No, I am not allowing it.

12.42 hrs.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

(i) REPORTED SHORTAGE OF POSTAL STATIONERY AND STAMPS IN AGRA DISTRICT AND REFUSAL BY BANKS IN AGRA TO ACCEPT CURRENCY NOTES OF LOWER DENOMINATIONS.

SHRI SHAMBU NATH CHATURVEDI (Agra): I wish to mention the following matter of urgent public importance.

There is virtual famine of postal stationery and stamps in the Agra District and elsewhere because of which the public is very much exasperated and business is coming almost to a standstill. Envelopes and inland letters had been in short supply—virtually non-available—for the last four months. Postcards followed suit

and now even postage stamps to be affixed on them cannot be had at the Post Offices. Only stamps of Rs. 2/- and above are available.

This is causing no small amount of inconvenience to the public and also hampering business transactions as Banks are refusing to accept outstation cheques as they are unwilling to pay Rs. 4/- for a registered letter instead of Rs. 2.65 because of the non-availability of stamps of lower denominations

The situation in Agra is further complicated and aggravated by the fact that Banks have, in the last two or three months, been refusing to accept notes of lower denominations than Rs 100/- or Rs. 50/- in payment or by way of deposits. Non-acceptance of legal tender is an offence. Even so, nobody seems to be bothered about it. This matter was raised in Parliament during the last Session, but still there is no relief. Only vague assurances were given, which remain to be implemented.

These blockages in the free flow of communications and business dealings have very adversely affected both trade and industry, and therefore, I call for immediate remedial action.

(ii) FAMINE CONDITIONS IN MAHARASHTRA DUE TO DELAY IN MONSOONS.

श्री कोशचरारब चौधरी (नांदेड) : सदर मासब, मैं नियम 377 के द्वारा अत्यन्त महत्वपूर्ण मामला आपकी अनुमति से यहाँ पेश कर रहा हूँ। आज देश में और महाराष्ट्र में अनाबन्धि के संकट से वेहाती क्षेत्र में अकाल (फेमिन) की परिस्थितियों का निर्माण हो चुका है। लोगों और जानवरों को पीने के पानी की किस्मत की वजह से भीत का सामना करना पड़ रहा है। भखमरी की मौत आ गई है। बीया हुआ बीज भर चुका है। बास की कमी से जानवर मरने के रास्तें पर हैं। बैकारी और मूँगाई के संकट से गरीबों को इस अनाबन्धि के कारण जिन्दा रहना मुश्किल हो गया है। लोग अपने घरों से भाग रहे हैं। मानसून की देरी से वेहाती किसान मजदूरों पर स्काइनेब की कबायत बरस रही है। इनकी फौरन मदद करना मासन की जिम्मेदारी है। मगर मासन शास्य और सीनीबाप बन कर निष्क्रिय बना हुआ है। जनता में बहुत

असन्तोष बना हुआ है। मैं मासन से गुज तरिया करता हूँ कि इस संकट से जनता को बचाने के लिए फौरन सहायता कार्य शुरू करें। जय प्राति।

12.45 hrs.

LOKPAL BILL—Contd.

MR. SPEAKER: Now we come to Legislative Business.

The House will now take up further consideration of the Lokpal Bill, 1977, as reported by the Joint Committee.

Out of the twelve hours allotted by the House itself, for all the stages of the Bill, one hour and twenty-five minutes have already been taken up. If the House agrees, we may have seven hours, including one hour and twenty-five minutes which have already been taken up, for general discussion, four hours for clause-by-clause consideration and one hour for the third reading. I hope this is acceptable to the House.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU (Diamond Harbour): Sir, in the last Session we had taken a decision to have a debate on the racist British Government . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Bosu, is there any method for it? We are now on legislative work.

Mr. Durga Chand was speaking; he may continue.

SHRI KANWAR LAL GUPTA (Delhi Sadar): Sir, I want to submit that this is a very important Bill that we are going to discuss but, unfortunately, there is no quorum in the House. When such an important Bill is being discussed, at least the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs should see to it that there is quorum. This is a most important Bill and it has been pending for such a long period.