

[Shri R. K. Sinha]

- (2) Forty-ninth Report on action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in their Thirty-sixth Report on the Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture)—Special Programme for Weaker Sections and Employment.

12.57 hrs.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

NINETY-NINTH REPORT

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU (Diamond Harbour): I beg to present the Ninety-ninth Report of the Public Accounts Committee on action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in their Ninety-first Report on the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year 1970-71, Union Government (Civil) relating to Ministry of Supply.

12.57 ½ hrs.

COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES  
SEVENTH REPORT

SHRI H. N. MUKERJEE (Calcutta—North-East): I beg to present the Seventh Report of the Committee of Privileges.

12.58 hrs.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

(i) REPORTED DECISION OF GOVT. OF ASSAM TO IMPOSE ASSAMESE LANGUAGE ON STUDENTS BELONGING TO LINGUISTIC MINORITIES.

SHRI NOORUL HUDA (Cachar): Sir, I would like to bring before you and before the House one important matter concern-

ing the fate of the linguistic minorities in the State of Assam. Recently the Board of Secondary Education, Assam, have approved a curriculum which is to be introduced from the current academic year of 1974 which, if implemented in its present form, is fraught with great danger and I fear would arouse feelings of animosity among the different linguistic minorities living in the State of Assam for decades. This curriculum is approved by the Board of Secondary Education, Assam. It clearly discriminates between those whose first language is Assamese and those whose first language is not Assamese. For example there are the Bodo people of Assam and also the Manipuri-speaking people in Assam, besides the Bengali speaking people of Assam especially in the district of Cachar where the Bengali-speaking people are 80 per cent of the total population of that district. They would be forced to learn Assamese language and would be debarred from learning Hindi language. That is the discrimination. Now this discrimination or this policy would not apply to those pupils whose first language is Assamese. The pupils of linguistic minorities in classes VIII to X in secondary schools would have to take Assamese language compulsorily as elective subject and in effect, if they take history as a subject, they would be debarred from taking geography; if they take advanced science they will be debarred from learning advanced mathematics.

13.00 hrs.

But, the Assamese language speaking pupils would not be subject to this disadvantage. So, it is a clear and blatant discrimination against the linguistic minorities in the State of Assam. That is why the linguistic minorities in Assam have, times without number, demanded from the State Government of Assam not to make Assamese language compulsory in all the schools of Assam. Also they have suggested that instead of making Assamese as a compulsory elective subject, the Assamese language should be learnt as an optional subject in the schools. We also belong to

a minority linguistic group based on Manipuri linguistic group and we have no ill-will against the Assamese language as such. That is why we always demand from the State Government of Assam not to force on the linguistic minorities in Assam to learn the Assamese language as compulsory third subject. Uptill now, the Assam Government have not responded to the demands of the linguistic minority groups such as Bengali, Bodo, Manipuri and other linguistic groups. That is why I would like to raise this important question on the floor of this House and I would ask the Prime Minister, the Home Minister and your goodself to intervene in the matter and persuade the State Government of Assam not to force the Assamese language on the linguistic minority groups and also not to debar the linguistic minority pupils from learning the Hindi language which is an officially recognised language of the Indian Union. It should also be remembered that Assam is not a strictly unilingual state because only 60 per cent of the people speak that language while the other 40 per cent of the people belong to different linguistic groups. That is why also I would seek your intervention as well as the intervention of the Home Minister and the Prime Minister to whom we have given our representations. The people of my district have represented to them. But, uptill now, we have not been favoured with any reply.

I would conclude by saying that if this policy of the State Government of Assam is implemented, then the feeling of bitterness and animosity would prevail which would lead to disastrous consequences which all the right-thinking people would like to avoid. That is why I request that the Government of India should take up the matter and persuade the State Government of Assam not to implement this proposal.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU (Diamond HARBOUR) : Sir, I have written to you that about 40,000 people are demonstrating against the West Bengal Government regarding unemployment and price rise. I would request the hon. Home Minister to make a statement on this.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Bosu, you will kindly sit down. I have never permitted you. I did not call you. Please do not do that everyday like this. I shall look into it and if I allow you, you will be given a chance. You have not got my permission. Do not do like this unless you are called.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: Sir, I have written to you about this.

MR. SPEAKER: Without your being called, do not do it like this. This matter has been pending since last week and because Shri Huda approached me, I have allowed him.

(ii) REPORT ACUTE SHORTAGE OF FOOD-GRANTS IN WEST BENGAL

SHRI A. K. M. ISHAQUE (Basirhat) : Sir, there is acute food shortage in West Bengal. As you know, the Government of West Bengal have been urging upon the Central Government for supply of adequate foodgrains to the State. Sir, you know what sacrifice West Bengal made for the cause of India. In 1947 when we became free only 2.31 lakh acres of land were under jute cultivation. West Bengal changed the crop pattern and today as much as 11.77 lakh acres of land are under jute cultivation. All this diversification was at the expenses of paddy which is a staple food in West Bengal. All this money was earned for the benefit of India but West Bengal has not been compensated for the sacrifice.

Sir, West Bengal is a land of refugees. Twenty per cent of the total population has come from erstwhile East Pakistan. Another twenty per cent of the population have gone from other States of India. To feed them should have been responsibility of the Central Government but Centre has taken no responsibility for feeding them. Sir, some areas in West Bengal are covered under statutory rationing system. The implications of this system are that anyone living in these areas can go to the court and enforce the obligation to feed them.