

1. Thirty-ninth Report regarding paragraph 75 of the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year 1969-70, Central Government (Civil) relating to All India Radio.
2. Forty-fourth Report regarding Chapter III of Audit Report (Civil), 1970 and Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year 1969-70 on Revenue Receipts relating to Union Excise.

**COMMITTEE ON ABSENCE OF
MEMBERS FROM THE SITTINGS
OF THE HOUSE**

FIFTH REPORT

SHRI S. C. SAMANTA (Tamiluk) : I beg to present the Fifth Report of the Committee on Absence of Members from the Sittings of the House.

12-23 hrs.

**STATEMENT RE. CEILING ON
AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS**

**THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE
(SHRI F. A. AHMED) :** I beg to lay on the Table a statement on Ceiling on Agricultural Holdings.

STATEMENT

I have seen reports in a section of the press saying that the Ministry of Agriculture had distorted the recommendations of the Central Land Reforms Committee. In view of the importance of the matter I wish to make a statement clarifying the position.

In the statement made in this House on 4.8.1971 about the recommendations of the Central Land Reforms Committee I said that "the ceiling for a family of five members may be fixed within the range of 10 to 18 acres of perennially irrigated land or irrigated land capable of growing two crops." A similar statement was made in the Rajya Sabha by my junior colleague Shri A. P. Shinde on the same day. As will appear from the proceedings of the Rajya Sabha of August 4, 1971 while clarifying the position about irrigated land Shri Shinde made it clear that in referring to irrigated lands the understanding of the Land Reforms Committee was that perennially irrigated lands or lands which got water for two seasons from government sources should be taken into account. This position was subsequently made clear in the Lok Sabha on 15.11.1971 in answer to Starred Question No. 14. In the statement laid on the Table of the House in answer to that question it was mentioned that "the ceiling for a family of five members may be fixed within the range of 10 to 18 acres of perennially irrigated land or land with assured irrigation from government source for growing two crops." The Government's stand has been reiterated in subsequent statements including the one made in the House on the 17th of this month.

A reference to clause (d) of S. 14-K of the West Bengal Land Reforms (Amendment) Act which was enacted on 8.2.1971 during President's Rule in that State will make it abundantly clear that when laying down certain ceiling limits for irrigated land the Government of India had in mind land irrigated from Government sources. In the West Bengal Law irrigated land has been defined as land irrigated from "any State Canal Project or State (power driven deep tube-well) irrigation Project." The West Bengal Act was amended after very careful consideration and after consulting the Parliamentary Consultative Committee.

I may add that similar provisions exist in several State Ceiling Laws enacted years

[Shri F. A. Ahmed]

ago. For example, Explanation (b) under Section 2 of the Gujarat Agricultural Land Ceilings Act, 1960 says that "perennially irrigated land means land which is assured of supply of water for a period of not less than 10 months during a year from any tank, canal or bandhara constructed or maintained by the State Government." Explanation (c) makes it clear that in the case of seasonally irrigated land also only irrigation from a Government source would be taken into account. The Madhya Pradesh Ceiling on Agricultural Holdings Act, 1960, defines perennially irrigated land as "land which receives water for more than one crop in an agricultural year from any source of irrigation belonging to Government." Under this Act also seasonally irrigated land means land which gets irrigation for not more than one crop from Government source. There are similar provisions in the laws of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Orissa

Instead of suggesting that ceiling in respect of irrigated land be fixed at any particular figure, the Central Land Reforms Committee deliberately suggested a range of 10 to 18 acres because conditions vary very much from region to region. It is expected that the State Government will fix the ceiling taking into account the actual conditions prevailing in the State. What the Committee has suggested is only the outside limit. It is open to the State Government to fix the ceiling well below the out limit suggested by the Central Land Reforms Committee.

I may assure the House that we have been extremely anxious to hasten the pace of land reforms and improve implementation. We are pursuing the matter vigorously with the State Governments. I am happy to report that the State Governments are showing increasing awareness of the need to pay the highest priority to the amendment of the laws in accordance with the national policy and making vigorous

efforts to improve enforcement. I would seek the support of the House in this important task we have undertaken.

12.23½ hrs.

RE. DECLARATION OF 'MAY DAY' AS HOLIDAY

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE (Kanpur) : I want to say something about the Order Paper, apart from this statement on which we want a discussion because what is contained in the statement, I know, is against their policy even.

We are now at the second stage of Budget and we are on the Demands of the Ministry of Industrial Development and then the Defence Ministry comes and according to present calculations, on 1st May, the Labour Ministry's Demands are likely to be discussed. Last year, you allowed us to make a reference about the working people of the entire world. 1st May, the May Day is a historic day as far as we are concerned. We expected that our Prime Minister who says that the country is moving towards socialism would declare it a public holiday. Even Pakistan has declared it a public holiday. The Tamilnadu Government has declared this as a holiday. It should be declared as a Government holiday here. Or, at least, the Parliament should meet here on the 1st of May and pay our homage to our great martyrs of 1887 who led the entire working class movement of the whole world and then adjourn.

MR. SPEAKER : The Parliamentary Affairs Minister has just gone out.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE : It should be declared as a Government and public holiday. Even late-lamented Panditji said it should be a public holiday.