

[Shri A. C. Guha]

It will be recalled that during discussions on the Rehabilitation Finance Administration (Amendment) Bill in Parliament last session when such suggestions were made, I undertook to examine the matter.

The Rehabilitation Finance Administration is at present charging 6 per cent. rate of interest with a rebate of 1 per cent. on regular payment. The Rehabilitation Finance Administration is meant to be run on business principles as distinguished from other measures of Government for the relief of refugees. Already the interest charged to the Administration on the funds made available by Government is 3 per cent. which is lower even than the Government's own borrowing rates.

Nevertheless, with a view to helping the rehabilitation of refugees, Government has decided that with effect from the 1st April 1954, on all loans granted or to be granted by the Rehabilitation Finance Administration up to and including Rs. 20,000, the interest should be 4½ per cent. for the first five years and 5 per cent. afterwards with a rebate of 1 per cent. in both cases if and so long as there is no default in the payment of interest or instalments. Loans for amounts exceeding Rs. 20,000 will, with effect from the same date, bear the rate of interest at 5½ per cent. with a rebate of 1 per cent. if and so long as there is no default in payment.

The Administration is being asked to propose an amendment of the regulations to give effect to this decision.

FINANCE BILL

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

Shri Jangde (Bilaspur—Reserved—Sch. Castes): I beg to present a petition, signed by a petitioner, in respect of the Finance Bill, 1954.

Shri K. K. Basu (Diamond Harbour): I beg to present a petition, signed by seven petitioners, in respect of the Finance Bill, 1954.

UNTOUCHABILITY (OFFENCES) BILL

The Deputy Minister of Home Affairs (Shri Datar): I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill to prescribe punishment for the practice of untouchability or the enforcement of any disability arising therefrom:

Mr. Speaker: The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill to prescribe punishment for the practice of untouchability or the enforcement of any disability arising therefrom."

The motion was adopted.

Shri Datar: I introduce the Bill.

GENERAL BUDGET

Mr. Speaker: We shall now proceed to the discussion of the General Budget. I have to announce to the House that for the benefit of hon. Members, I would like to draw their attention to Rule 225(1) regarding the scope of the Budget as differentiated from the Finance Bill. During the Finance Bill, grievances may be brought to notice. That will be the proper occasion for that purpose. So far as the discussion of the Budget is concerned, under Rule 225(1), the House will be at liberty to discuss the Budget as a whole or any question of principle involved therein. The discussion will be regarding the point whether the items of expenditure ought to be increased or decreased having regard to the importance of a particular head and also the manner in which the Budget is framed. Grievances not related either to the Finance Minister's speech or not directly arising out of the proposed expenditure will not be in order at this stage. They may be deferred for ventilation at the time of the Finance