

Construction of Kakojan Post Office building in Assam

315. SHRI NABIN CHANDRA BURAGOHAIN :

DR. RAJAT KUMAR CHAKRABARTI :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the amount sanctioned for the construction of the Kakojan Post Office building in the Sibsagar district of Assam during 1976-77 ;

(b) whether the amount has been fully utilized ; if not, what are the reasons for its non-utilisation ; and

(c) what steps are being taken for early construction of the said Post Office building ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) :

(a) The administrative approval for land & construction of Kakojan post office building at a cost of Rs. 1,25,592 was issued by P.M.G. Shillong on 8-1-1975. Since there was a ban on the construction of buildings and purchase of land from August, 1973 to January, 1976, no budget was allocated for this work during 1974-77. Even after lifting of ban in January, 1976, this work could not be taken up due to paucity of funds.

(b) The question of utilising funds does not arise, as no budget was allocated for this purpose.

(c) Due to financial constraints, it is not possible to take up this work during the current Plan period.

Unemployment in Rural Areas

316. SHRI KRISHNARAO NARAYAN DHULAP : Will the Minister of PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have undertaken any survey of the extent of unemployment in the rural areas ;

(b) if so, what is the result of the survey ; and

(c) what steps Government have taken or proposed to take to eradicate unemployment from the rural segment of the society ?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR (SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA) :

(a) and (b) During its 27th round, the National Sample Survey Organisation conducted a survey on employment—unemployment in India covering both rural and urban areas. The inquiry related to the period October 1972 to September 1973 and the partial results of the same covering the 6 month period October 1972 to March 1973 have become available. According to these results the average number of persons totally unemployed in each week during the period October 1972 to March 1973 in rural areas was estimated to be 7.0 million. Of these 2.0 million may be said to be chronically unemployed, i.e. had reportedly no work except possibly for a very short period and were seeking, or available, for work.

(c) Government is pledged to the removal of destitution with a definite time-frame of 10 years. Towards this end, Government will follow an employment oriented strategy in which primacy will be given to the development of agriculture, agro-industries, small and cottage industries especially in the rural areas. High priority will also be given to the provision of minimum needs in rural areas and to integrated rural development.

Implementation of the 20-Point Programme

317. SHRI SHYAMLAL GUPTA : Will the Minister of PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) in what manner the Ministry of Labour was concerned with the implementation of the 20-Point Programme launched after June, 1975 ;

(b) whether any assessment of the achievements of the programme in his

Ministry has been made; and if so, with what results; and

(c) what is the expenditure incurred under various heads like advertisement, conveyance, grants given to persons/bodies for the implementation of this programme?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR (SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA) : (a) to (c) The following points of the 20-Point Economic Programme related to the Ministry of Labour :—

1. Abolition of Bonded Labour.
2. Review of Laws on Minimum Agricultural wages.
3. Workers Participation in Management.
4. Apprenticeship Training Scheme.

A statement giving information regarding implementation of these four points is attached.

Statement

Information regarding implementation of the 20-point Programme

1. Abolition of Bonded Labour

The President promulgated the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Ordinance, 1975 which came into force on the 25th October, 1976. The Ordinance provided for the abolition of bonded labour system with a view to preventing economic and physical exploitation of the weaker sections of the people and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. This was followed by the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 after receiving the assent of the President on 9th February, 1976.

Only nine States and one Union Territory namely Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Mizoram have so far reported the existence

of bonded labour system in their territories. Some States have not released all the identified bonded labourers even now. Regarding rehabilitation, so far, only 23,460 out of 92,923 identified bonded labourers have been rehabilitated. It was decided in November, 1975 that the bonded labourers should be given assistance under some of the existing on going schemes under Plan/Non-Plan Programmes, such as distribution of house sites and conferment of ownership thereon, allotment of agricultural and, free education, free hostel facilities for Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes children, loans for agricultural operations/development and loans at differential rates of interest. State Governments have given assistance for the rehabilitation to released bonded labourers under some of the existing on-going schemes under the Plan/Non-Plan programmes of State Governments. Information as what expenditure has been incurred by the State Governments is not available. A sum of Rs. 10,000 has recently been sanctioned to Indian Institute of Public Administration, Delhi for conducting study on the incidence of bonded labour in Palamu district, Bihar.

2. Review of Laws on Minimum Agricultural Wages

One of the points figuring in the 20-point Economic Programme relates to "Review of Laws on Minimum Agricultural Wages". The law on minimum wages is contained in the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 under which both the Central Government and the State Government are "appropriate governments in their respective spheres for fixation and revision of minimum wages in various employments included in the Schedule to the Act. The employment in Agriculture is included in Part II of the Schedule. However, the bulk of the employment falls in the States sphere and the number of agricultural workers in the Central sphere is very small, comprising workers in military farms, horticultural divisions of the Central Public Works Department etc. Almost all the

States have by now notified revised wages for agricultural labour and a few who have not so far revised wages have initiated necessary steps therefor. In regard to enforcement, most of the States have strengthened the enforcement machinery by appointing more inspectors and claims authorities under the Minimum Wages Act, specially to look after the interests of agricultural labour. For this purpose the resources of other departments like Revenue, Agriculture, Rural Development, Panchayat Raj, etc. have been tapped in addition to those of the Labour Department which is primarily responsible in every state for the implementation of the Act.

3. Workers' Participation in Management

In October 1975, the Ministry of Labour announced a Scheme for workers' participation in industry at shopfloor and plant levels to cover the industrial and mining sectors. The scheme was made applicable to units in these industries employing 500 workers or more, whether in the public, private or cooperative sector, including departmentally run units. By the end of May, 1977, 545 public sector and departmental undertakings of the Central Government had either implemented or initiated steps to implement the scheme. Reports received from some of the units show that the forums set up under the scheme have helped in improving production, productivity and overall efficiency. Apart from 545 Central Public Sector Units, reports from 25 States/Territories show that by the end of May, 1977, 1468 units had also either implemented the scheme or initiated steps to do so or had made alternative arrangements.

4. Apprenticeship Training Scheme

Directorate General of Employment & Training under the Ministry of Labour was concerned with the implementation of apprenticeship training scheme which was the 20th point of the 20-Point economic programme launched after June, 1975. Implementation of Apprentices Act 1961 is a

statutory programme starting from 1963 onwards and every establishment is obliged to train a specific number of apprentices as fixed by the concerned Apprenticeship Advisers. It is not a fact that the implementation of Apprentices Act started only after the emergency. The assessment of the achievements of the programme has been made. As against 110087 located seats and 69236 utilised seats as on 30-6-1975, the utilised seats have increased to 156531 out of 163466 located seats as on 13-5-1977. There has been an increase of 87295 in the utilised seats and 53379 in the located seats. The utilised include 53641 apprentices (over 34 per cent) belonging to weaker section viz. Scheduled Castes 16857, Scheduled Tribes 4375, Physically Handicapped 495, Minorities 28110, & Women apprentices 3804. The purpose of the apprenticeship training scheme is to provide the necessary skill and knowledge to the youngsters in order to make them employable in the various trades in the industry.

Closure of industrial units

318. SHRI SHYAMLAL GUPTA : Will the Minister of PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that many industrial units were closed down during the last two years resulting in a number of workers being laid off ;

(b) if so, what is the number of such units, State-wise, and what are the reasons for their closure ; and

(c) what is the effect of these closures on production and economy of the country ?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR (SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA) : (a) to (c) The requisite information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha when it is received.