

DR. S. VENUGOPALA CHARI : I introduce the Bill.

14.17 hrs.

STATEMENT RE. ELECTRICITY LAWS
(AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE - Laid

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : I beg to lay on the Table an explanatory statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for immediate legislation by the Electricity Laws (Amendment) Ordinance, 1997.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT. 1571/97]

14.17½ hrs.

INCOME-TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL*

[English]

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Income-Tax Act, 1961.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The question is :

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Income-Tax Act, 1961."

The motion was adopted.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : I introduce** the Bill.

14.18 hrs.

STATEMENT RE: INCOME-TAX (SECOND
AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE - Laid

[English]

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : I beg to lay on the Table an explanatory statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for immediate legislation by the Income-Tax (Second Amendment) Ordinance, 1996.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT. 1572/97]

* Published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary Part-II, Section-2, dated 13.3.97.

** Introduced with the recommendation of the President.

14.18½ hrs.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

[Translation]

(i) Need to restore access of inhabitants of Uttaranchal U.P. to the nearby forest for domestic use

SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT 'BACHDA' (Almora) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the villagers of Uttaranchal region of U.P. have got centuries old duly recognised rights to have access in the civil forests and reserved forests for collecting cattle fodder, fire-wood, timber for construction of houses agriculture implements and slate, sand and stone etc. The day-to-day life of the people of Uttaranchal cannot be imagined without these rights.

In compliance of Supreme Court orders, the Uttar Pradesh Government has imposed an undeclared ban on these right of villagers. As a result, thousands of forest labourers dependent on forest have been rendered jobless and a situation of starvation has arisen.

Besides their own subsistence, a serious problem of feeding their cattle has also arisen. This has led to severe resentment in the whole Uttaranchal region it may take a virilent turn.

Therefore, I request the Central Government to take appropriate statutory measures to restore these basic forest rights to the villagers of Uttaranchal.

(ii) Need for early Completion of work on bye-pass at Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh

SHRI MANOJ KUMAR SINHA (Ghazipur) : Mr Deputy-Speaker, Sir, Border Road Organisation is undertaking construction of a bye-pass on G.T. Road from Mohansarai to Mughalsarai a bridge on Ganga river in Varanasi (U.P). Initially, World Bank was funding this project and it was to be completed by 31-12-1991.

However, due to slow progress of work, the World Bank stopped funding this project from 1992. Now, Border Road Organisation has taken up this work. The Government has said that it would be completed in June, 1995 but not even half the work has been completed so far. As a result, the cost of the project has escalated many times and it would continue to rise further. Varanasi is religious and cultural City where lakhs of foreign tourists visit, but due to narrow roads, the traffic remains jammed two to four hours daily causing a lot of inconvenience to the people including foreign tourists. This also results in wastage of diesel and petrol worth crores of rupees. With construction of this bye-pass, not only several hours would be saved in covering the distance upto Calcutta but diesel and petrol worth crores of rupees would also be saved. This issue has been raised in this House several times but no action has come forth so far.

Therefore, I through you, demand from the Government to complete this project expeditiously.

(iii) Need to take up the Issue of sharing the Sindhu River Water with Pakistan

[English]

SHRI P.S. GADHAVI (Kutch) : Sir, the newly elected Prime Minister of Pakistan has taken up a new initiative to sort out the problems confronting the two countries. Our hon. Prime Minister has also reciprocated the same sentiments in a spirit of mutual understanding in order to ease tension in the minds of Indian and Pakistani people. Shri I.K. Gujral, Minister of External Affairs also reciprocated these sentiments and offered to start a dialogue with Pakistan to get the problems between the two countries solved peacefully and normalcy restored.

This is a long pending issue, that is, the implementation of Liaqat Ali-Pandit Nehru Agreement which provided that Sindhu river water of Sakhar Ban Dam should be made available to Kutch also. If I may give the background of this Agreement, this Dam is presently situated in Pakistani territory and this was a joint project of Sind, Gujarat and Maharashtra forming part of the then Bombay Province during the British rule. Thus, the water problem of Kutch region is a perennial one and it has become a national problem.

I urge the Government that the sharing of water from this dam be taken up with the Pakistani authorities and be placed on the agenda whenever a meeting between the two countries is held for discussion and agreement.

(iv) Need to allocate adequate LPG to Mavelikara in Kerala to clear the backlog

PROF. P.J. KURIEN (Mavelikara) : Sir, there are a large number of consumers in the waiting list in my constituency-Mavelikara (Kerala) which falls in the district of Pathanamthitta and Alleppey for LPG connection. Those who have booked for LPG connections are in the waiting list for more than six years and adequate allotment are not made for the gas agencies to clear these waiting lists. Since there is a lot of pressure from the consumers, urgent action is to be taken in this regard.

The gas agencies in my constituency are located at places, namely, Kumbanad, Aranmula, Tiruvalla, Chengannur, Pandalam, Mavelikara and Kayamkulam, etc.

I request the Union Government that adequate allotments of LPG may be made to the agencies at these places so as to clear the long pending waiting lists.

(v) Need to set up Rubber Based Industries in Backward District of Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu

SHRI N. DENNIS (Nagercoil) : Sir, Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu is the most suitable place in the country for the

establishment of rubber based industries or a tyre factory. The per acre production of rubber here is the highest in our country and qualitatively also, it occupies the highest place. Though Kanyakumari district is an industrially backward district, not even a single industry either in the public sector or in the private sector has been set up. Infrastructural facilities are available there for the establishment of industries. There is cent percent literacy in the district. There is a large number of educated and uneducated unemployed persons in the area.

I, therefor, request the Union Government to consider the long-standing demand of the people of the area favourably by establishing rubber based industries or a tyre factory in Kanyakumari district at the earliest.

(vi) Need to Provide Financial Assistance to State Government of Maharashtra for Rehabilitation and Improvement of Slums in Mumbai

SHRI NARAYAN ATHAWALAY (Mumbai-North Central) : Sir, there has been phenomenal growth in slum population in Mumbai during post independence period due to continuous inflow of migration of people from all over the country in search of jobs. Most of the migrants from various States got settled in slums and continue to live there in most inhuman and degraded conditions. Asia's biggest slum 'Dharavi' falls in my constituency and the condition there is appalling. In the wake of potential growth of slums in Mumbai, a 'slum state' within Mumbai is fast emerging posing a grave threat of ruthless encroachment on Government land, road and rail sides. It is estimated that slum population in Mumbai is 25 percent of the country's slum population. The problem of slums in Mumbai has been ignored in the past for want of adequate financial support and has now become a national issue which need to be treated on utmost priority by the Union Government which is committed to the welfare of the rural and urban poor. The problem of slums is becoming grave day by day and let the Union Government realise that it is beyond the capacity of the State Government to mobilise massive financial resources for rehabilitation and improvement of slums in Mumbai. I therefore, urge upon the Union Government to make available adequate funds from the Central Kitty or through international agencies to the Government of Maharashtra. I would even request other State Government to contribute in proportion to its migrated slum population for rehabilitation programme - realising the gravity of the situation.

(vii) Need to stop the proposed sale of land belonging to Azam Jahi Mills at Warangal, Andhra Pradesh

SHRI AJMEERA CHANDULAL (Warangal) : Sir, the National Textiles Corporation is proposing to sell the surplus land and use funds for the revival of sick units. Workers are apprehensive that they might be adversely affected due to this move. Azam Jahi Mills at Warangal in Andhra Pradesh is sick. It is understood that its land is also proposed to be sold. The workers are agitating.