

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The question is :

"That this House do recommend to Rajya Sabha that Rajya Sabha do elect two members of Rajya Sabha according to the principle of proportional representation by means of the Single transferable vote, to the Joint Committee on Offices of Profit in the vacancies caused by the retirements of Shrimati Monika Das and Shri B. Krishna Mohan from Rajya Sabha and do communicate to this House the names of the members so appointed by Rajya Sabha to the Joint Committee,"

The Motion was adopted

12.15 hrs.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

[English]

(i) Need to declare Waterway from Trivandrum to Cochin a National waterway

SHRI A. CHARLES (Trivandrum) : The need for developing inland waterways in this country cannot be over emphasised. Fortunately, Kerala has been blessed with a very long natural waterway connected with a number of rivers, lakes, back waters, estuaries and artificial canals. The total length of navigable route in Kerala is about 1900 kilometres, which accounts for 20 per cent of the total inland water route in this country. But, due to various reasons, there has been a decline in the use of inland waterways in Kerala after independence.

In view of the inherent advantages available in Kerala the Gokhale Committee in 1957 and the Bhagawathy Committee in 1967, have recommended the overall improvement of this canal. The National Transport Policy Committee has also recommended the development of the West Coast Canal as a National Waterway. In

view of the great need for the development of inland waterway in the State, I request that urgent action may kindly be taken to declare at least the waterway from Trivandrum to Cochin as a National waterway and the work for its development started in the Seventh Plan.

[Translation]

(ii) Demand for a 'Dhalai Nagar' in Aligarh U.P. on the lines of 'Tala Nagar' already provided there

SHRIMATI USHA RANI TOMAR (Aligarh) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, Approximately 7000 workers are working in about 260 furnaces in district Aligarh. These workers include artisans, firemen and soil mixers. Members of their families are facing starvation due to financial exploitation by the industrialists. These workers have been forced to carry on moulding and casting work in their homes due to which most of the families have been afflicted by dangerous diseases like T.B. and Asthama. Due to faulty assessment by Labour Department, these workers have been deprived of the free medical facilities available in ESI hospitals. I would like to request that with a view to improve their condition, a 'Dhalai Nagar' should be set up at Aligarh on the pattern of 'Tala Nagar'.

[English]

(iii) Need for proper running of Ahmedpur-Katwa and Bardhaman Katwa railway lines, conversion thereof to broad gauge and nationalisation of A. K. (N. G.) Railway Co. Ltd.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur) : Sir, a large number of Railway passengers in the districts of Birbhum, Bardhaman and Murshidabad in the State of West Bengal are seriously concerned about the proposed move of Railway Ministry for the closure of the narrow gauge railway service from Ahmedpur to Katwa and Bardhaman to Katwa within the Eastern Railway. Recently a big demonstration has been held protesting

[Shri Somnath Chatterjee]

against the proposed move of closure as also against the curtailment of passenger amenities gradual withdrawal of number of train services in those lines, appointment of commission agents and private contractors for running the services. Demands have been made during a historic 'padayatra' that was held on 8 and 9 March, 1986 for improvement of railway services and conversion thereof to broadgauge lines, for the economic development and industrialisation of backward rural areas. The West Bengal Legislative Assembly has passed a Resolution unanimously on the issue of the conversion of the two narrow gauge lines into broadgauge lines and nationalisation of A.K. (N.G.) Railway Company Limited.

I urge upon the Government to take immediate steps for the purpose of proper running of the said railway lines, conversion thereof to broad-gauge as well as nationalisation of the private company in order to alleviate the sufferings of a very large number of passengers using these railway services.

(iv) **Need for stocking steel material at the yard of Steel Authority of India at Wellington Island, Cochin**

PROF. K. V. THOMAS (Ernakulam) : Sir, Steel Authority of India has a yard at Wellington Island, Cochin for the supply of steel materials to the entire State of Kerala. For the last two months, there is no stock in this yard. As a result of this, small-scale industrialists, house builders and other people have to go to Tamil Nadu and Karnataka to collect steel items. This involves huge transport expenditure. So, I request the Government to stock the steel materials in Wellington Island yard.

(v) **Demand for installing a T.V. transmitter in Pathanamthitta district of Kerala**

PROF. P. J. KURIEN (Idukki) : Sir, about 65 per cent of the population of the country has been covered by T.V. and the policy of the Government is to further increase the coverage during the Seventh Plan so that even the remotest areas in the country are brought on the TV map.

However, the Pathanamthitta district of Kerala has not so far got the privilege of being brought on the TV. map. This is one of the important hill districts of the State which is one of the most advanced educationally with a large number of schools, colleges and other educational institutions. This is one of the few districts which grow commercial crops like cardamom, paper, cloves which earn foreign exchange for the country. Perhaps the maximum number of Keralites working in the various Gulf countries are from this district. When all other districts have been covered, only Pathanamthitta has been left out. This has caused a great deal of frustration among the people.

I would, therefore, request the Government to take immediate steps to instal at least a low power transmitter at a suitable place in the Pathanamthitta district and thus fulfil a long-cherished dream of the people of this district.

(vi) **Demand for taking immediate step to stop wastage of flared gas and set up a Gas Cracker Complex in Assam**

SHRI M. R. SAIKIA (Nowgong) : The flaring of natural gas by the Oil India Ltd. and Oil and Natural Gas Commission during the last 25 years is known in the region as a scandalous affair, despite the outcry for more energy and power for rapid economic development of neglected Assam. It has been learnt that Assam Industrial Development Corporation has submitted a plan for establishment of a Gas Cracker Complex in Assam to stop the wastage of flared gas which has the potential of 65.240 million cubic metres of which recoverable gas is 19.74 metric cubic metre, only 2.45 metric cubic metre is used by a few industrial units locally.

I, therefore, strongly urge upon the Union Government to take immediate steps to stop wastage of the above gas and establish the proposed complex in Assam.