

12.05 $\frac{1}{2}$ hrs.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

[*Translation*]

- (i) Demand for financial assistance to Madhya Pradesh Government for improving gas leak affected areas in Bhopal.

SHRI K. N. PRADHAN (Bhopal) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, residents of Bhopal are still affected by gas and becoming victims of new diseases. Not only the cases of T.B., Cancer and heart diseases are increasing, but people are also dying of them.

Due to scanty rain-fall, the water level of the small and the big pond there has dropped considerably and filth has increased to dangerous proportion. Instead of removing the same, it is increasing unabatedly. On the one hand, the work of shifting the people residing near the banks of ponds is being neglected and on the other hand, people are being allowed to settle there and in this manner habitation is increasing there.

At present, the small pond totally and the big pond to a great extent have become septic tanks and stench has started emitting from them.

If the Central Government will not give financial help to the State Government urgently for making the environment healthy in the gas affected areas, for cleaning the ponds and for implementation of schemes to prevent filth falling in the tank then an epidemic can spread there any time and the life of more than 10 lakh people will be in danger.

12.07 hrs.

[MR DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

- (ii) Demand for disseminating, especially over the AIR and Doordarshan the benefits of eating vegetarian foods.

SHRIMATI USHA RANI TOMAR (Aligarh) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, one can save himself from various diseases if

one takes vegetarian food and if he is provided with correct information about its nutritious values. Mainly people become victim of malnutrition because they do not know about the amount of deficiency of protein, vitamin and iodine in their meals. In my constituency—Aligarh, most of the people working in cottage industries are suffering from the diseases *viz.* eyes, bones and diabetes. Malnutrition is the root cause of these diseases. I request the Ministry of Health to propagate the advantages and qualities of vegetarian food on Doordarshan and AIR so that the people may remain cautious and protect themselves from various diseases.

- (iii) Steps for upliftment of the Bidi workers

SHRI NANDLAL CHOUDHARY (Sagar) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the plight of millions of bidi workers is very miserable. They are badly exploited. They are paid less wages than the fixed rates. These unfortunate bidi workers, living below the poverty line, are falling victims to serious diseases caused by the harmful effects of tobacco and malnutrition. The bidi workers have to work day and night along with their families including small children. They are not given the benefits of provident fund, gratuity, maternity benefits and other facilities which are obligatory and provided under the Bidi and Cigar Workers (Condition of Employment) Act. There are crores of rupees accumulated in the Bidi workers Welfare Fund established by the Central Government which is raised in the form of levy of excise on bidi. It is very essential that schemes for opening more hospitals, providing residential accommodation, setting up entertainment centers and community centres for the bidi workers and for granting special scholarship for higher education of their children should be implemented and financed from this fund. I strongly demand that every bidi worker should be insured for atleast Rs. 5000 and the premium should be paid from the Bidi Workers Welfare Fund so that bidi workers may lead the life free from anxiety and may not remain worried about their dark future. Keeping in view the price rise, rate of wages for bidi workers should also be enhanced.