

13.09 hrs.

NATIONAL HIGHWAYS (AMENDMENT) BILL*

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER) : I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the National Highways Act, 1956.

MR. SPEAKER : The question is :

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the National Highways Act, 1956.

The motion was adopted.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER : I introduce the Bill.

13.10 hrs.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

- (i) Need to make Operational the Rupsi Airport in Dhubri District of Assam

[English]

SHRI NURUL ISLAM (Dhubri) : One of the biggest airports was established by Britishers at Rupsi in the district of Dhubri (Assam) during II World War considering the commercial and strategic importance of the area. It had been in operation till 1981. The National Airports Authority suddenly suspended the operation of the airport on the plea of economic non-viability. When a series of investigations proved the economic viability of the airport, the Authority declined to make the airport operational stating that it was not fit for Boeing flight. To make it fit for Boeing flight, the expenditure would come to around Rs. 15 crores. In view of the new liberalised economic policy and accelerated uniform economic growth of each and every backward regions of the country, the air communications have become one of the essential infrastructural facilities. The Rupsi airport is situated in backward region between Bagdogra (West Bengal) and Borjhar (Assam). Both the airports are at a distance of about 300 kilometres.

The commercially and strategically important airport at Rupsi has been lying unutilised for long. It is learnt that there is a proposal to hand over the airport to the paramilitary forces for strategic reasons.

I urge upon the Central Governments at the earliest for greater public, economic, and commercial interests.

- (ii) Need to make Vishweswaraiah Iron and Steels Limited Karnataka Viable

SHRI K.G. SHIVAPPA (Shimoga) : Sir, several years ago, the famous Visweswaraiah Iron and Steels (VISL)

Limited was taken over by the Steel Authority of India. The main purpose of the taking over was to modernise the industry, extend more benefits to the employees and to earn more profits.

However, none of these objectives have been achieved and there is confusion all over. The contractors who are taking contracts there at present are worried about their own interests.

If the situation is allowed to continue like this, the losses would mount year after year and a time may come when Government may think about the closure of this industry which was founded by Bharat Ratna Late Shri M. Visweswaraiah.

I, therefore, urge upon the honourable Ministry of Industry to order a high level investigation in this regard and to put the industry in its proper perspective so that it can earn substantial profits and the dream of the people of Karnataka and particularly, of Bhadravathi is realised.

- (iii) Need to instal a Low Power Transmitter at Patan in Maharashtra

SHRI PRITHVIRAJ D. CHAVAN (Karad) : Sir, the western part of Satara district of Maharashtra is not adequately covered by the existing television transmitters located at Satara and Karad. This area, particularly, the Patan Tehsil is hilly and economically underdeveloped. Many people have been displaced and uprooted because of a large irrigation project on the river Koyna at Koynanagar. This area is also earthquake-prone and has recently suffered repeated damage due to earthquake. Most of the people work as Mathadi Kamgars in Bombay. There has been a long-standing demand for a transmitter to serve the people in and around the Patan Tehsil.

I request the Central Government to instal a LPT at Patan to cover this hilly area on a priority basis. This will be a good gesture to alleviate the sufferings of the people in this area.

- (iv) Need to provide more employment opportunities to local people in industries set up in Chhatisgarh region of Madhya Pradesh

[Translation]

SHRI KHELAN RAM JANGDE (Vilaspur) : Sir, the percentage of the local people employed in the industries set up at Raipur and Bilaspur in Chhatisgarh area of Madhya Pradesh is very less and on account of it the local people have to go to other areas in search of jobs.

My submission to the Central Government is that in the existing industries and in the industries likely to be set up in Chhatisgarh region, the local people should be given more employment opportunities by imparting them training so that they may not have to go to other states for jobs and the local people of this area are uplifted.

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