[Shri C. M. Stephen]

information can be elicited from the government. They can have a discussion; they can have a half-an-hour discussion. They can have a call—attention; they can put a Motion; they can have a short notice question. These are the different methods whereunder information can be called for. Rule 377 states what should be done under 377. That is the end of it. Under 377, a reply to the point raised by the Member is not called for at all. Therefore on the spot, it is not called for at all. If, after hearing the observations the Minister feels that a statement under rule 372 is called for, he can give notice and come with a statement. Not in reply to what has been said under 377. I want a ruling on that.

MR. SPEAKER: I think rule 377 is very clear, in that sense. No reply from the Minister is anticipated in this rule. The Minister may make a statement, if necessary, later on. That is a different matter.

Mr. Kaushik may make a statement on the plane crash.

SHRI M. KALYANASUNDARAM: I am on a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: You have been on a point of order so many times. Anyway, proceed.

SHRI M. KALYANASUNDARAM: You don't listen to me. You will be compelling me to say something more drastic. Don't make me protest like that.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes; proceed.

SHRI M. KALYANASUNDARAM: I request the Chair to be reasonable. Rule 377 is a valuable privilege given to the Members to bring to the notice of the government immediately any matter of public importance, other than the point of orders. I had given notice under 377 regarding a serious railway strike. I had met you personally and represented to you. I met the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs

and represented to him about the urgency of it. But that was ignored. It did not see the light of the day. (*Interruption*). I don't object to the Minister giving a prompt reply. I welcome that. I welcome it if the Ministers are ready to give a reply even for 377. It is a good improvement. But that treatment should be given to all the Members who give notice under 377.

DR. HENRY AUSTIN (Ernakulam): I fully endorse it.

SHRI ARAVINDA BALA PAJANOR: I would like to make a submission.

MR. SPEAKER: No, no.

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12. 36 hrs.

STATEMENT *RE.* CRASH OF AN AIRCRAFT OF NATIONAL REMOTE SENSING AGENCY NEAR ONGOLE, ANDHRA PRADESH

पर्यटन और नागर विमानन मंत्री (श्री पुरुषोत्तम कौशिक) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, अत्यन्त दुख के साथ मुझे इस सदन को विज्ञान तथा तकनीकी विभाग से संबद्ध नेशनल रिमोट संसिग एजेंसी के एक वी० सी०-3 विमान की भयानक दुर्घटना के बारे मे सूचना देनी पड़ रही है ।

नेशनल रिमोट संसिग एजेंसी का एक डी० सी०-3 विमान, बी० टी० ई० ई० एल०, जो 5 अप्रैल, 1977 को भारतीय समय के अनुसार 0615 बजे मराकपुर के दक्षिण पूर्व में एक सर्वेक्षण उड़ान के लिए मद्रास से रवाना हुआ था, आंध्र प्रदेश में ओंगोल के निकट एक गांव में ध्वस्त हो गया । दुर्घटना में ऋ के पांच सदस्यों तथा नेशनल रिमोट संसिग एजेंसी के पांच कर्मचारियों के मारे जाने की खबर है ।

नागर विमानन के महानिदेशालय ने बम्बई के विमान सुरक्षा नियंत्रक, श्री एम० एम० चावला को जांच करने के लिए घटना- स्थल पर जाने के लिए आदेश दे दिये हैं ।

निश्चय ही सदन को मेरी ही भांति इस दुर्घटना से गहरा सदमा पहुंचा होगा और वह इस असहय शोक मे तथा मृतकों के परि- वारों के प्रति सहानुभूति प्रकट करने में मेरा सहभागी होगा । विज्ञान तथा तकनीकी विभाग ने प्रत्येक मृतक के परिवार को पांच हजार रुपए का अनुग्रह अनुदान स्वीकृत किया है ।

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12.37 hrs.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377—*Contd.*

(ii) COMPLAINTS ABOUT MALPRACTICES
    DURING RECENT ELECTIONS TO LOK
                SABHA

SHRI SHYAMNANDAN MISHRA (Begusarai): I have given a notice under Rule 377 and I have been in- formed that I would be given an op- portunity to speak today.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMEN- TARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR (SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA): Some questions have been raised about Government's intention to seek the permission of the House to continue sitting for another day. I wish to state on behalf of the Government that the Government has no intention to do so and we hope that the Gov- ernment's business that has been in- cluded in the agenda for the session will be completed to day itself.

SHRI SHYAMNANDAN MISHRA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, under Rule 377, I draw the attention of the House to a matter of great public importance, nay of great importance to the demo- cratic process itself of which this House is the product.

Though the elections to the Lok Sabha have been, by and large, fair and augur well for our democracy, it is learnt that the Election Commis- sion has received complaints about serious malpractices committed in certain areas.

Some of these malpractices which were in gestation for some time now seem to be coming of age, thanks to the perfection of technique achieved by its perpetrators. And unless the Government makes thorough enqui- ries into them and takes effective steps to prevent them in the future, what appears now relatively a small affair may, very soon, assume grave proportions imperilling the democra- tic process itself.

Rigging is now being done in a well-organised, pre-planned manner, and, what is really disturbing,—with the active aid and assistance, or at least connivance, of the State machi- nery—is the manner in which they are doing it.

I will begin with the Begusarai constituency which I have the honour to represent. There men in high authority had hatched plots with gangsters and anti-social elements armed with lethal weapons to capture booths on a large scale with the result that the administration and the police officers, merely looked on. So much so that in the Sonapur booth of Begu- sarai which was protected by four rifled men, the ballot boxes were snatched away by an armed gang and a repoll was ordered. But, strangely enough, no enquiries were made as to how such a loot could be perpetrated.

Notorious antisocial gangs armed with rifles and sten guns moved from booth to booth like an invading army with a number of vehicles led by a pilot jeep in order to intimidate voters and presiding officers and to capture booths. The Government had com- pletely abdicated its functions in favour of this gang in this entire belt. At one booth a presiding officer told