

13.03 hrs.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Now we take up matters under rule 377. Mr. Harish Rawat is not here. Mr. V.S. Vijayaraghavan.

(i) Need to protect the interests of 'Janata Dhoti' weavers of Kerala.

SHRI V. S. VIJAYARAGHAVAN (Palghat)* : The 20-Point Programme of our Prime Minister lays great emphasis on the development of the handloom sector. Accordingly, the Government has formulated a number of schemes to provide for their economic development. It was with this in view that the manufacture of Janata dhoti was entrusted to the handloom sector. There is a provision for the Central subsidy to the tune of Rs. 1.50 per square meter. However, the benefits of this scheme have not reached thousands of poor weavers working in the handloom sector in Kerala. As a matter of fact, 90% of the Janata dhoti in Kerala is produced in Palghat district. The primary cooperative societies are engaged in the manufacture and the Apex Society in marketing it. Unfortunately, the Apex Society is not giving any benefits to these primary societies. For instance inspite of the fact that the scheme provides for the supply of yarn at controlled rate, and advance payment of wages, the Apex Society has not given it during the last six years. What is more, it is learnt that this Society does not even pay for the goods received from the societies. Thus, these primary societies of poor weavers are groaning under the burden of heavy debt. On the other hand, statistics show that the Apex Society has been earning a profit of 10% every year.

Therefore, I request the Government to look into this matter and take necessary steps to protect the interests of the poor weavers of Kerala.

(ii) Declaring Trivandrum Airport as an International Airport.

PROF. P. J. KURIEN (Mavelikara) : Trivandrum airport is one of the important airports in the country. Besides a large number of domestic flights being operated daily from this airport, as many as 16 international flights are operated from here every week. As a matter of fact, the maximum traffic to and from the Gulf countries is from Kerala. However, the Trivandrum airport has not so far been declared as an international airport. The reason for not doing so is said to be that this airport cannot take bigger aircraft like B-747, DC-10 etc. But, the developmental works like extension of runway, installation of approach lights and telecommunication equipments for night landing facilities etc. are being carried out there. Thus, very soon, the Trivandrum airport will be in a position to take international aircraft of any type.

Besides, if the Trivandrum airport is declared as an international airport, the Malayalees working in Gulf countries will be able to use the direct flights to Trivandrum and thus escape the inconvenience at Bombay airport. There is great prospect of increase in the volume of traffic at this airport.

Therefore, I would request the Government to take immediate steps to declare the Trivandrum airport as an international airport.

(iii) Demand for Selling up of a Ganga Board to Control Floods.

SHRI ZAINUL BASHER (Ghaziipur) : Unlike the past, the floods in river Ganga have become a regular feature. From 1978 to 1983, there were three devastating floods in river Ganga, of the same magnitude as was witnessed in 1916 and 1948. The floods rendered millions of people homeless and destroyed crops worth crores of rupees in U.P. and Bihar. The floods, along with the regular drought is the main factor contributing to the economic backwardness of U.P. and Bihar, particularly eastern U.P. and parts of Bihar. If the floods in Ganga are controlled and if huge water

*The original speech was delivered in Malayalam.