

12.18 hrs.

**MESSAGES FROM RAJYA SABHA**

**SECRETARY:** Sir, I have to report the following messages received from the Secretary-General of Rajya Sabha:—

- (i) "In accordance with the provisions of rule 127 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Rajya Sabha, I am directed to inform the Lok Sabha that the Rajya Sabha, at its sitting held on the 2nd August, 1977, agreed without any amendment to the National Highways (Amendment) Bill, 1977, which was passed by the Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 19th July, 1977."
- (ii) "In accordance with the provisions of rule 127 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Rajya Sabha, I am directed to inform the Lok Sabha that the Rajya Sabha, at its sitting held on the 2nd August, 1977, agreed without any amendment to the Petroleum (Amendment) Bill, 1977, which was passed by the Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 26th July, 1977."
- (iii) "In accordance with the provisions of rule 127 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Rajya Sabha, I am directed to inform the Lok Sabha that the Rajya Sabha, at its sitting held on the end 2nd August, 1977, agreed without any amendment to the Tea (Amendment) Bill, 1977, which was passed by the Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 27th July, 1977."

**CALLING ATTENTION TO  
 MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC  
 IMPORTANCE**

**REPORTED SERIOUS SITUATION ARISING  
 OUT OF ACCUMULATION OF HANDLOOM  
 CLOTH**

**SHRI PRASANNBHAI MEHTA,**  
 (Bhavnagar): Sir, I call the attention of the Minister of Commerce and Civil Supplies and Cooperation to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon:

"The reported serious situation arising out of accumulation of handloom

cloth worth crores and the financial crisis faced by weavers as a result of rapid price rise of inputs e.g. staples, art silk yarn, dyes and other chemicals, causing unemployment of handloom weavers in various States."

**THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND CO-OPERATION (SHRI MOHAN DHARIA):** Mr. Speaker, a slackness in consumer demand for textiles during the months preceding September/October is a well known feature of the textile market. Viewed against this background, the present stock position of handloom cloth in the States cannot be regarded as abnormal. It is expected that as soon as the buying season starts in the next few weeks to meet the seasonal demands, especially for the Onam, Pooja and Diwali Festivals, the market would revive.

It may be recalled that a special rebate of 20% on the sales of handloom cloth was only recently extended, during the period March/April, 1977, to enable the States to clear their accumulated stocks. On the requests received from them, the Government of India also sanctioned loans totalling Rs. 5 crores to the Governments of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and West Bengal to enable the purchases of handloom products of the primary societies by the apex cooperative societies. Brisk clearance of stocks, as a result of the rebate, has been reported by many States. For example, Tamil Nadu reported sales of Rs. 18 crores as against their accumulated stocks of Rs. 20 crores in February 1977. Similarly, the Governments of Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, West Bengal and Kerala have reported large sales and have indicated that their stock position is normal. Only Andhra Pradesh has reported a heavy accumulation, estimated by them at Rs. 10 crores. This is in spite of the clearance of Rs. 6 crores of stocks during the special rebate period. We have been informed that the Government of Andhra Pradesh have offered to buy stocks through apex institutions from the private sector also, provided individual weavers become members of cooperatives and offer their goods for sale and continued to work for the cooperatives. On our part, over and above the special programmes

[Shri Mohan Dharja]

of development taken up under the Central Plan we have secured a sizeable enhancement of Reserve Bank of India credit for the apex marketing society, raising it from Rs. 3 crores to over Rs. 4.50 crores. This should enable the apex society to lift more stocks from the primaries.

The prices of cotton yarn have been on the increase for some time past following the shortfall in cotton production in the 1976-77 season. We have made arrangements for import of substantial quantities of cotton and man-made fibre/yarn. To further improve the domestic availability, export of yarn used by the decentralised sector has been prohibited. We have had discussions recently with the representatives of NTC, cooperatives and private mills. It has been agreed that they will make available bulk quantities of yarn to handloom weavers through their apex societies and other institutions at ex-mill prices. They have also undertaken to open Yarn Depots, if required, for making direct sales to weavers.

The spinners of viscose filament yarn and its users have agreed to continue their voluntary arrangement covering distribution and prices. The spinners have also agreed to make good within the next two months the backlog of supplies accrued upto end of March, 1977. Duty free import of viscose filament yarn has been allowed to augment the domestic availability.

In the case of dyes and chemicals, as is well-known, prices of dyestuffs have been going up during the last two years in tune with the world market prices due to increase in prices of petroleum products. There has been an increase of 4.1% in the index number of wholesale prices between January and June 1977. They are generally purchased by the users in the open market. State Governments and apex societies have now been informed by the Textile Commissioner that they may approach indigenous manufacturers with firm orders on a long-term basis with delivery instructions and the indigenous manufacturers have also been suitably addressed in the matter.

The exemption/concession given in the current year's budget in respect of excise duty on cross-reed hank yarn and on processing duties on handloom fabrics are also expected to have a favourable impact on the cost of yarn to the handloom weaver on the one hand, and on the marketability of handloom products on the other.

The scheme of production of janata dhooties and sarees in the handloom sector is now being implemented by 11 states and one Union Territory. A target of 100 million metres of annual production by March 1978 has been fixed by Government under the scheme.

A level of production of 20 million metres has been reached by the end of June 1977. The scheme wherever it has been introduced is proving a boon to the weavers, especially those at the subsistence level, by giving them assured work and improving their earnings.

As honourable Members know, there are some inherent structural weaknesses in the handloom sector and the seasonality of demand for textiles is an aggravating factor. We have doubled the Central Plan allocation to this sector from less than Rs. 10 crores last year to Rs. 20 crores during the current year. A number of steps have been initiated by us to strengthen the production base and the marketing capability of this sector, in order to enable it to secure its basic raw materials on an assured and stable basis and to withstand the ups and downs of the markets.

**SHRI PRASANNBHAI MEHTA:** Sir, the problems of handloom weavers and the handloom sector have not cropped up over night. Recently, a convention of the handloom weavers met here in Delhi and the hon. Prime Minister inaugurated that convention. I think the Commerce Minister presided over the Convention. The purpose of the convention was to focus the acute and basic problems faced by the industry. During the Emergency period, it had not remained open for anybody to come forward to focus the grievances or the problems faced by the industry before the authorities or publicly.

**MR. SPEAKER:** What is the query you want to make?

**SHRI PRASANNBHAI MEHTA:** Now, after the imposition of Emergency the general price of staple yarns of all counts increased by 30% to 40%. Now, I will give some examples.

**MR. SPEAKER:** You can only put a question. Rules would not permit you to make a speech. What is the query you want to make now?

**SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU (Diamond Harbour):** Sir, I am on a point of order. I want to make a submission. I have been a Member of the Business Advisory Committee, if I remember correctly, since 1968. In the Business Advisory

Committee, it was decided unanimously that for Calling Attention, if I remember correctly, at least 40 minutes are given to 5 persons, at the rate of 7 to 8 minutes per Member. This was decided in the Business Advisory Committee.

MR. SPEAKER: I am only guided by the rules. The rules provide for putting questions.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: Then it has to be changed.

DR. HENRY AUSTIN (Eranakulam): For a change, I endorse the view of Mr. Bosu.

MR. SPEAKER: No precedent can override the rule. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI P. K. DEO (Kalahandi): Sir, I would like to make a submission. In this case, a convention can go a long way.

MR. SPEAKER: In areas which are not covered by law, convention is followed.

SHRI SHYAMNANDAN MISHRA (Begusarai): This concerns the right of the House.

श्री जनेश्वर मिश्र (इलाहाबाद): इस में यह मालुम होता है कि आप जब कुर्सी पर आए, उसमें पहले जो कालिंग एटेंशन का प्रोसीजर था, वह गलत था।

MR. SPEAKER: I am merely guided by the rules. The rules provide for only a question to be put. I am governed by the rules; I am not above the rules.

श्री जनेश्वर मिश्र : हम समझ नहीं पा रहे हैं। इससे पहले जो स्पीकर साहब थे, क्या वे कालिंग एटेंशन के मामले में हल्स से गवर्न नहीं होते थे और जो भी प्रोसीजर उस वक्त था, वह गलत था ?

MR. SPEAKER: I do not know.

SHRI SHYAMNANDAN MISHRA: May I make one submission on this point? You were pleased to say that the hon. Member can ask only a question. Now, would you kindly distinguish between a starred question and a call attention? What happens to a starred question? The hon. Members can only put a supplementary. Do you think that when there is a call attention motion, a question in the nature of a supplementary should be put? There is a distinc-

tion between the two. Therefore, over the years the practice has been evolved that a call attention requires a question to be put in an expansive way, it has to be expanded and amplified and then a question is put. It may have many overtones and undertones. Your pleasure should not be to order that there should be only a question in the nature of a supplementary to a starred question. The question that is to be put in the context of a call attention motion would be of a different nature altogether.

SHRI D. N. TIWARY (Gopalganj): The right acquired by the Members of the House cannot easily be taken away. In successive Lok Sabha members have been allowed to expand the question they want to put; they want to explain the circumstances under which they want to put the question. You are curtailing that right. It is not fair to the members; they have been doing this all along.

MR. SPEAKER: Under rule 197 . . .

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: May I make a submission.

MR. SPEAKER: You have made your submission.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: To safeguard my right as also to assist the Chair . .

MR. SPEAKER: You are rising again and again, please resume your seat.

SHRI JOYTIRMOY BOSU: I rise again with your permission.

MR. SPEAKER: No. Don't record.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU : \*\*

MR. SPEAKER: I shall read out the rule; rule 197(2) says:

"There shall be no debate on such statement at the time it is made but each member in whose name the item stands in the list of business may, with the permission of the Speaker, ask a question."

Then there is also the guideline which is given in the Handbook which says . . .

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: The Handbook is not quoted in the House.

MR. SPEAKER: It says:

"No debate is permitted on such a statement at the time it is

[Mr. Speaker]

made but each member in whose name the item stands in the list of business may, with the permission of the speaker, ask a specific and brief clarificatory question. The total timetaken on a Calling Attention on a day should not be more than half an hour. For asking clarificatory questions the member who calls attention should not take more than about three minutes and the other four members about two minutes each."

So, this is what the rules provide.

**THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (PROF. MADHU DANDAVTE):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a submission on this point because this relates to the rights of the Members of this House. The words seeking clarificatory question' have acquired a certain usage in this House. If the question is to be asked to seek a clarification, it is really formulating the point of view regarding the question and for that, convention, which has been established in this House, does not amount to violation of the rules, but only a slight expansion of the rules and widening of the rules.

**MR. SPEAKER:** MR. Dandavate, that is way the precedents have laid down that the first person should not take more than three minutes, the remaining persons should not take more than two minutes each and the total should not go beyond half-an-hour.

**PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE:** According to Einstein Theory of relativity, even time is not absolute. (*Interruptions*)

**SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE (Howrah):** Sir, Mr. Jyotirmoy Bosu was saying that in the last regime in a Business Advisory Committee meeting, it was decided that another ten minutes be added. You are telling us that it should not take more than half-an-hour. He is saying forty minutes.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I do not get it. If you can show me that I will consider.

**SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU:** Yes, Sir. Your Secretary can show you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** After he shows me that, I will consider it.

**SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE:** Sir, what you are doing, it is only ten or fifteen minutes business. Not even half-an-hour is allowed.

**MR. SPEAKER:** No. Full half-an-hour will be given.

**SHRI HARI VISHNU KAMATH (Hoshangabad):** On a point of information, Sir. Have you got a stop-watch to keep track of two and three minutes? I do not think you have got it.

**MR. SPEAKER:** If necessary, we will get it.

**SHRIMATI V. JAYALAKSHMI (Sivakasi):** Mr. Speaker, before putting my question, I want to submit one thing. If you are so rigid in these rules and regulations, please allow us to have a discussion on the problems of handloom weavers for one or two hours. Otherwise, we cannot deal with the problem fully.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The rules are made for the benefit of the House so that every subject may be discussed.

**SHRI PRASANNBHAI MEHTA:** Before, I proceed, I would like to make a submission.

**MR. SPEAKER:** In addition to what you have already said.

**SHRI PRASANNBHAI MEHTA:** Yes, Sir, in addition to what I have already said. But, Sir, the convention or the practice in this House since so many years is that when the attention is called by a Member to a matter of urgent public importance...

**MR. SPEAKER:** We will allow you three minutes.

**SHRI PRASANNBHAI MEHTA:** Sir, How can I explain my point in three minutes? It is not possible. Sir, at least six to seven minutes to the first Member and four to five minutes to other Members should be allowed. This is the practice. With your permission, I shall proceed.

**SHRI HARIKESH BAHADUR (Gorakhpur):** Sir, according to Rules, thirty minutes time must be given for the calling attention.

**SHRI PRASANNBHAI MEHTA:** Sir, what I was saying is that the prices went up during the period of Emergency. What I want to submit is this. The count 17/2 staple went up from 65·64 in June—July 76 to Rs. 92·86 in October—November. Similarly, count 10/4 went up from Rs. 41 to Rs. 81, 14/1 from Rs. 49 to Rs. 68, 30/2 from Rs. 80 to Rs. 110 and 6/1 from Rs. 35 to Rs. 48·48. This is an old chronic problem. What I am trying to explain is this. The organised textile industry took advantage of the high prices

and stopped or diverted the supply of staple yarn. The middlemen, the traders and the businessmen squeeze the weavers because of the high prices and they do not supply the yarn to the weavers and that brought this condition and the looms went idle during this period. Now, Sir, the problem is acute. That is what I wanted to say.

The previous government has not taken proper care of this industry. But I do not want to blame them because by simply blaming the past, the problems will not be solved. I have carefully listened to the minister's statement. He has elaborately explained the measures initiated by him to solve the problems of the handloom sector. Since he took over charge of this ministry, he is seized of very sensitive and acute issues like jute industry, taking over of sick cotton textile mills, supply of artificial rayon yarn to artsilk weavers, short supply and high prices of edible oils, etc. These problems are inter-woven. So, patch-work would not do. Government must have a comprehensive and coordinated approach. The Commerce Ministry alone is not responsible for all these things. The Labour Ministry and the Industry Ministry also come in. So, there should be a comprehensive and coordinated approach to such problems. I would like to know from the minister the immediate steps taken by the government in the matter of supply of yarn, chemicals and other inputs and the distribution system through which these will be provided to the individual weavers as well as cooperatives, the short-term measures to combat the chronic problem of supply of inputs, repairing of machinery and marketing and long-term measures to improve the health of the handloom industry by removing the inherent structural deficiencies and the proposed plan for the expansion of this sector. He has mentioned in the last para of his statement some measures. I would request him to elaborate the measures he wants to take.

**SHRI MOHAN DHARIA :** The reason why I made a long and elaborate statement is that as far as possible, it should be possible for me to meet the various supplementaries. I do share the concern of the hon. member. As indicated earlier, we have taken certain short-term measures and we are planning for long-term measures also. It is true that yarn was not available at reasonable prices. Therefore, we convened a meeting on 6th July and now new arrangements are made so that

the yarn should be available to the weavers through the apex societies or corporations of the State Governments directly at ex-mill price. About dyes and other articles also, we have urged the State Governments to make some arrangement and we are getting cooperation from the producers also. About long-term measures, in our country the textile industry as such is now passing through a very difficult period. There are handlooms, power looms, composite sector and man-made fibre. How we can regulate all these various sectors and protect particularly the decentralised industries, i.e. handlooms and power looms—this is perhaps the biggest challenge.

And therefore, the need of the day is to have a national coordinated policy for our textile industry including the fibres required by the textile industry and it is in this context we have already started our exercise. It is true that I have been dealing with several articles whether it is textiles, coffee, tea, cardamom and what not, and many times I have got a feeling that if I am out of the Ministry I may perhaps be a good trader.

**SHRIMATI V. JEYALAKSHMI :** Sir, to my Unstarred question regarding the manufacturing units of the art silk yarn and the prices of the yarn and the regular supply of it, only the first portion of my question was replied and that too, on items of manufacture and the number of units. I will quote that :

Items of manufacture	No. of units
1. Viscos filament yarn	8
2. Viscose staple fibre yarn	2
3. Acetate fibre yarn	1
4. Nylon filament yarn	8
5. Polyester staple fibre yarn	5
6. Polyester filament yarn	6

Besides, on an average 115 cotton spinning units are spinning staple fibre yarn under general permission issued by Textile Commissioner in addition to 24 staple fibre spinning mills."

Sir, I want to bring to the Minister's notice that if so many units are producing

[Smt. V. Jeyalakshmi] the art silk yarn, why this scarcity is prevailing and whether it is a man-made scarcity or is there any real scarcity in that field. And, according to the Government of Tamil Nadu's Report, "the total requirements of the handloom and powerloom industries in Tamil Nadu is of the order of 5,000 cases of Art Silk Yarn of 100 Kgs. each. Now the Textile Commissioner, Bombay and the Handloom Development Commissioner, New Delhi, are being approached for making it available from the spinners direct about 5,000 cases of Art Silk Yarn per month for distribution to the handloom weavers in that State at reasonable prices. Efforts are also being made to get direct supplies from South India Viscose Limited, Coimbatore, which is the only spinning mill in Tamil Nadu producing Art Silk Yarn." And secondly, "At present there is no statutory control over prices or distribution of Art Silk Yarn. Previously under a voluntary agreement between the 8 spinners of Art Silk Yarn in the country and the actual consumers, the spinners were setting apart an agreed percentage of Art Silk produced by them for distribution to weavers through allotments made by the Central Committee at Bombay and the Tamil Nadu Regional Committee at Madurai. However, the voluntary agreement is not in force at present."

This reply has been given on May 10. But for the last three months nothing has been done regarding the regular supply of the art silk yarn. In that context, what steps the Ministry is going to take for the regularisation of supply? Secondly, in your statement you have stated that duty free import of viscose filament yarn has been allowed to augment the domestic availability. I want to know whether the mills are producing inadequate quantity or it is a real scarcity. Why should we lose our valuable foreign exchange? If you ask the indigenous spinners to produce more yarn, I think the foreign exchange loss could be averted.

Coming to the Tamil Nadu Government's financial assistance, I would like to know whether the Government of Tamil Nadu has approached the Central Government for financial assistance of 7 lakh rupees on a matching basis to form 119 weavers' cooperative societies to bring the 25,000 weavers in the cooperative fold? While the khadi and village industry is enjoying the benefit of 20 per cent rebate permanently, why not handloom industry? Whether the Ministry would consider extending the same concession to the handlooms also? Whether the Government is aware

that the janata varieties are woven by the powerloom sector and if so, what steps have been taken so far to prevent the powerloom sector from producing the janata dhoties and sarees? Whether the Government has any intention of implementing the recommendations of the Sivaraman Committee, as unless the Sivaraman Committee recommendations are implemented, no justice could be done to the handloom sector.

SHRI MOHAN DHARIA : Sir, several issues have been raised by the hon. Member. So far as the production of man-made fibre industry in the country is concerned, we would like to give them all possible cooperation in utilising their capacity to the fullest extent. We are not at all interested in having more and more imports of articles that could be produced in the country. And it is in this direction that all possible cooperation will be given. As far as the arrangements for distribution are concerned, as I have stated in my reply, it is not only that the industries producing man-made fibres are asked to behave according to the voluntary agreement; but also whatever was the back-log, I have asked them to make it good; and accordingly, they have assured us that they will see that the back-log also is fully met.

Regarding Tamil Nadu government, their Development Commissioner has assured us that he will take the responsibility for the distribution, from September, 1977. As for their request for some additional amounts for the handloom industry, that proposal is being examined. A demand has been made for the implementation of the Sivaraman Committee report. I have already assured the House that we would very much like to take care of the handloom industry. Unfortunately, the Sivaraman Committee has treated both the powerloom and the composite sector on the same footing. That cannot happen. The powerloom industry is also a decentralized industry. Therefore, I shall give my full protection firstly to the handloom sector. At the same time, I am not prepared to treat on par the composite sector and the powerlooms, as is done by the Sivaraman Committee.

SHRIMATI V. JEYALAKSHMI : The Minister has said that the Sivaraman Committee has treated handloom on par with powerlooms; but from that committee's report we come to know that it was recommended that the coloured clothes should go fully

to the handloom sector; and that certain varieties—having certain inches etc. should also go to that sector.

MR. SPEAKER : You are converting it into a debate.

SHRIMATI V. JEYALAKSHMI : The problems of lakhs of weavers are involved.

MR. SPEAKER : Time is also a factor. There are hundreds of problems.

SHRIMATI V. JEYALAKSHMI : I want one clarification. The Minister has repeatedly referred to the voluntary agreement. We know full well that there is scarcity of yarn, and that it is prevailing because of this voluntary agreement. Unless Government of India brings in statutory control to ensure regular supply of yarn, nothing can be done in this regard.

SHRI MOHAN DHARIA : I would like to give protection fully to the handloom industry. I do agree that so far as these reservations are concerned, they must be strictly implemented.

SHRIMATI V. JEYALAKSHMI : They have not been implemented. The janata dhosis and sarees have been produced by the powerloom industry in my own constituency.

SHRI MOHAN DHARIA : There is one question relating to policy. The policy has been laid down, viz. that these reservations should be strictly implemented. So far as its implementation is concerned, it is the responsibility of the respective State governments. Of course, I shall take up the matter with the State government, if she has any complaint against the Tamil Nadu government, that they are not implementing it.

Regarding voluntary agreements, they were reached prior to our taking over charge. The only course left was to see that they were properly implemented, and to see what steps can be taken to ensure fair distribution at a reasonable price. It is from this point of view that I have already convened a meeting on 10th August, of the spinners, of the representatives of weavers, of cotton growers and also of the big mill sector. Then we can sit together and formulate a good policy so that these constraints do not arise.

SHRI P. RAJAGOPAL NAIDU (Chittoor) : A telegram has been received by Professor N.G. Ranga from Shri Punniah, Guntur District Handloom Weavers' Congress, which reads:

"Satyagrahis including women at Tenali arrested and convicted ; satyagraha continuing."

This is the situation. In many centres the satyagraha by weavers is being continued in Andhra Pradesh. It is said that Rs. 5 crores have been given by the Government to Tamil Nadu, Kerala and West Bengal Government and that this facility has not been given to the Andhra Pradesh Government. It is also admitted by the hon. Minister that Rs. 10 crores worth of cloth is not lifted in Andhra Pradesh. Therefore, there is unemployment. Shri Pragadi Kotiah, the leader of the Weavers' Congress, has stated :

"Neither the weavers are begging, nor are they demanding for salaried jobs and several financial benefits attached to the salaried jobs. The repeated request has been that they should be permitted to continue self-employment in the traditional occupations of handloom weaving to enable them to earn reasonable wages required for simple living."

What is the hon. Minister going to do with regard to the glut of handloom cloth in Andhra Pradesh ? Has he got any scheme ? How is he going to relieve the weavers from their present difficulties ? Of course, the hon. Minister has stated that Diwali and other festivals are coming and so the problem would be solved. I do not think, so, because it will only give temporary relief. Relief measures alone will not do. There must be a permanent solution. Unless there is some definite policy of reservation and its implementation in the handloom industry, the problem will not be solved. Therefore, I want to know from the Minister what steps he is going to take to purchase handloom cloth from Andhra Pradesh and to reserve varieties like dhosis and sarees for the handloom industry.

SHRI MOHAN DHARIA : As I have mentioned in my statement, it is only in Andhra Pradesh that it was not possible for them to get rid of stock worth Rs. 10 crores. I see from the records that at that time, unfortunately, only the Government of Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Kerala made a demand for additional funds for the handloom industry. The Andhra Pradesh Government did not make any such demand. But I do not want to stand on technicality. I shall take up the matter with the Andhra Pradesh Government and I shall certainly see what could be done to help the Andhra Pradesh Government in facing this difficulty. So far as long-term measures are concerned, I have already stated what I have to say.

DR. HENRY AUSTIN : As has been stated by the hon. Minister, the handloom sector faces certain inherent structural weaknesses like the seasonality of the demand. The textile industry is facing a grave situation. So, I preface my question with this observation that it is in the background of an explosive situation, which has arisen in my own State, that we are discussing this question. I do not want to elaborate my question, or observations thereof, because the situation obtaining in my State is a problem that is being faced by the handloom weavers, spinners and other people involved in this sector throughout the country. The position today is that we are only shedding crocodile tears for the poor people, particularly for those people in the rural sector. The fact of the situation is that almost 70 per cent of the people involved in this sector are living at the subsistence level. While the statement says that several steps have been taken, and I do believe and appreciate the statement, the fact remains that in my own State about 8 lakhs of people are involved in this.

13:00 hrs.

The hon. Member from Cannanore who is behind me could not get a chance, but I may point out that in Cannanore District they are producing a rare variety called Crape which has not only raised the absorption capacity in the domestic market but has also created foreign demand. Temporary measures have been taken, but still the situation is very explosive. It is a chronic problem. As Members are aware, we are going to celebrate the festival of Onam. You know the mythology associated with it. Every Keralite is supposed to be happy during this festival when Maha Bali comes, and one of the pre-requisites is good clothing. Even the poorest of the poor should wear fine clothes, but if they have no purchasing power, how can they buy ?

One of the major elements which aggravates the situation is the black market existing in certain essential inputs like dyestuffs and chemicals. It has been said in the statement that the decentralised sector has been asked to export cotton yarn and that the indigenous producers have been asked to accelerate production. Nevertheless, the fact remains that terrific blackmarketing is going on. Effective steps will have to be taken. You have perforce to raise the supply of inputs to the co-operative societies.

You are giving 20 per cent rebate permanently to khadi, but for handlooms you are giving ten per cent by the State and ten per cent by the Centre only during festival periods. Why this discrimination ? I am also committed to the encouragement of khadi, but handloom is equally important in view of the fact that many of our compatriots of the poorer sections are involved. This aspect of the matter has also to be taken into account.

In view of the accumulation of handloom cloth worth crores of rupees and the financial crisis being faced by the weavers, spinners and others involved in the industry throughout the country, and particularly in my State, and in view of the fact that at least during the Onam season the people in Kerala and particularly the weavers should be given a better deal, are the Government taking any concrete short-term measures in addition to the long-term measures that they have mentioned to meet the situation ? What steps are you contemplating in the matter of rebate to handloom being raised to equal that given to khadi and in the matter of stopping blackmarketing in essential inputs like dyestuffs ?

SHRI MOHANDHARIA : There are three points that I would like to mention. One is regarding the rebate. This time we gave rebate to the extent of 20 per cent even to handloom, but you must not forget the difference between handloom and khadi. The yarn produced by spinning mills can be used by the handlooms. But in the case of khadi, it is handspun and hand woven. More ver, it is more employment oriented and naturally less of mechanisation. Therefore, some more protection has to be given to it.

So far as the crepe cloth is concerned, it is because of the restrictions put by the EEC importing countries that they would not import the crepe or the garments manufactured from crepe. The House will be happy to note that we have gone against this restriction to the Textile Surveillance Body, Committee of GATT which decides these issues, and they have given a decision in favour of our country. But this will be till the end of December, 1977. We are also trying to have better agreements with all these EEC countries through GATT .

Regarding the inputs, black-marketing and what not, this is the legacy of the past Government and we are trying our level best to take effective steps in this direction.



**MR. SPEAKER** : He wants some relief before Onam.

**SHRI MOHAN DHARIA** : I will look into it.

**SHRI KUSUMA KRISHNA MURTHY (Amalapuram)** : I received a telegram from Mr. Kasina Venkataratnam of Bandarilanka, a member of the Andhra Pradesh Handloom Weavers' Congress stating that in Andhra Pradesh, at a number of places there are relay fasts for want of livelihood to the weavers and their families of the handloom sector because most of them do not have jobs due to accumulation of huge stocks of handloom cloth and also due to rise in prices of yarn, dyes and other inputs of handloom weavers. As has been stated by the hon. Minister that there were requests from some States for financial assistance for this handloom industry and they have been taken into consideration and granted a total loan of Rs. 5 crores. I would like to draw the attention of the Hon'ble House to a glaring fact in this connection that here in this sector, most of the weavers belong to backward and weaker sections.

For example, in UP, most of the handloom weavers are Muslims; in Assam, most of them are tribals and in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, most of them are from weaker and backward sections of our country. So, this is the problem mainly of backward and weaker sections. Therefore, these people require special attention of the Government in allocating financial resources. Whether they make a request for assistance or not.

It is an undenyng fact that stocks of handloom cloth have been accumulated in Andhra Pradesh. Besides, as has been stated by the hon. Member, there is a lot of difficulty in purchasing the yarn, dyes, chemicals and other inputs required for the handloom industry, because their prices are rapidly increasing. There is a procedure in Government namely of 'levy sugar' under which Government could procure sugar from the producers as levy and distribute it to the consumers at reasonable and uniform rates. Similarly, I would suggest to the Government to procure the yarn, dyes and other inputs of the industry in order to distribute them to the handloom weavers at a price in par with the rate at which they are available to the mills. In this regard, I would like to emphasise on the nature and mode of effective implementation of what is formulated by the Government of India. Therefore, in this connection, I would like to know specifically what steps the Central Government would propose to take mainly in allocating financial resources to our State handloom sector and what

arrangements the Central Government are making to lift the accumulated stock of handloom cloth in Andhra Pradesh?

**SHRI MOHAN DHARIA** : Regarding the problem faced by Andhra, I would like to discuss it with the representative of the Andhra Government in order to find out to what extent we can give some sort of assistance to the Andhra Government. Regarding the suggestion whether there could be something like levy on the producers of these inputs, it is a good suggestion for consideration. But it will be very difficult for me to say anything at this stage. I may say that Government would be pleased in giving all possible protection to the decentralised sector particularly the handloom or powerloom or the cottage industries which are spread throughout in this decentralised sector.

13.10 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha adjourned for Lunch till Ten Minutes past Fourteen of the Clock*

*The Lok Sabha re-assembled after Lunch at Ten Minutes past Fourteen of the Clock*

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER in the Chair]

COMMITTEE ON PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

FIFTH REPORT

**SHRI RAMACHANDRAN KADANNAPPALLI (Kasaragod)** : I beg to present the Fifth Report of the Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions.

14.10½ hrs.

STATEMENT RE. CHANGE IN THE FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF SHAHDARA - SAHARANPUR RAILWAY LINE

**THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE)** : Sir, construction of a new broad gauge line from Shahdara to Saharanpur, in place of the old narrow gauge line which ceased operation in 1970, was approved by Parliament, through the Supplementary Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Railways presented to them in August, 1973, on the basis that a Corporation jointly financed by the