

rules have been framed by which this work-to-rule agitation results in all kinds of difficulties? I request the Minister of Petroleum and Chemicals to intervene immediately in the matter and arrange to have a tripartite conference among the Oil and Natural Gas Commission representatives, the labour representatives and the Government with a view to having an amicable settlement so that the power plants in Gujarat do not suffer any more.

13.23 hrs.

RE. NON-SUPPLY OF YARN TO  
POWERLOOM INDUSTRY IN  
GUJARAT

SHRI P. M. MEHTA (Bhavnagar): Mr. Speaker, Sir, on the 13th March, 1973, the Government imposed a control on yarn. Since then, yarn is not allotted to the power loom industry in Gujarat and other States according to their requirements. One month has passed by and the power loom units of Gujarat and other States are hard hit. In Gujarat, 50,000 workers have lost their job and a further 50,000 workers will be thrown out of employment within a very short time, say, within a week. This situation will adversely affect five lakh souls and they will be pushed to further suffering and hardship for no fault of theirs in these hard days.

The powerloom industry of Gujarat produces one million metres of cloth per year at the average selling price of Re. 1 only. This cheap variety of cloth is mostly used by working class people and the rural population.

My hon. friends, Shri Mavalankar and Shri Banerjee and some others had raised this matter in the House, but there is no improvement at all in the situation. It appears the ministry is indifferent, careless and negligent. Therefore, under the circumstances, I appeal to the Government to come forward immediately to release sized beams and coarse yarn from control and make sized beams and yarn available to the powerloom industry in Gujarat and other States to solve the crisis.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA (Serampore): About the strike by the textile workers in Delhi, let the Labour Minister make a statement, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: If he wants to make a statement, I have no objection. The Labour Minister is not here.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMEN-  
TARY AFFAIRS (SHRI K. RAGHU  
RAMAIAH): About the discussion on the demands of the Irrigation and Power Ministry, there are a good number of members on this side who want to participate in it. I have consulted the leaders of the opposition also. We request you to extend the time by 3 hours. That will mean, the Minister will be called to reply at about 5 P.M.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE (Kanpur): We have no objection to it. But let the Labour Minister make a statement.

MR. SPEAKER: If the minister wants to make a statement, he is very welcome.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU (Diamond Harbour): When something under rule 377 is admitted, why is it that the minister is not informed? Otherwise, there is no point in giving notice under rule 377.

MR. SPEAKER: It is not a calling attention or a debating point that I should direct the minister to make a statement. You have invited the attention of the minister. It is up to him to make a statement or not. I cannot force him.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: You can give a direction.

MR. SPEAKER: I cannot give any direction.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA: If he is not making a statement, we are walking out of the House in protest.

MR. SPEAKER: May I tell you, again it is week-end. Don't do it every time. The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs says, the Labour Minister is not here.

[Mr. Speaker]

He will pass it on to him. You cannot expect him to be ready in a minute. If he wants to make a statement any time during the day, he will be allowed to do so. Don't make the walk-out so cheap.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: Sir, I have a very small submission to make. The coming three days are holidays. I hope you do not want the strike to continue. The Labour Minister was here and he has heard some of our submissions. So, you should direct the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs to request the Labour Minister to make a statement.

MR SPEAKER: In such matters there is no need of my direction. I will allow the Minister to make a statement any time he likes. But there is no question of my directing him to make a statement. No, I am not prepared to do that. If the Minister has heard the submissions and if he wants to come out with a statement any time during the day, he will be allowed to do so.

13.31 hrs.

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS, 1973-74—  
*contd.*

MINISTRY OF IRRIGATION AND POWER—  
*contd.*

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF IRRIGATION AND POWER (SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA): Mr. Speaker, I was telling you the other day that I am grateful to all those hon. Members who have participated in the debate. They have made very valuable suggestions and I am sure my Ministry will be benefited by those suggestions.

13.32 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

India is predominantly an agricultural country and more than 70 per cent of our people depend upon agriculture. Therefore, it is very necessary that agriculture should play a very important role in our country. Our population is increasing and in order to feed the in-

creasing mouths it is very necessary that agriculture should be carried on on sound lines. In order to carry on agriculture on sound and scientific lines, irrigation is very much needed. Therefore, irrigation is one of the very important components of the process of development. This has been recognised and irrigation has been given a proper place in our plans.

It has been mentioned that irrigation has not made much headway in our country. It is true. There is demand for irrigation all round and looking towards the resources we have not been able to make much headway in this direction.

Before 1951 the irrigational facilities available from medium and major irrigation schemes came to 9.7 million hectares. After 1951 we have made much progress and additional irrigation potential has been created. By the end of March 1973 we have reached at the additional figure of 10.7 million hectares. In other words, the irrigation potential has almost doubled. Since 1951 we have taken up 589 major and medium projects out of which 361 have been completed and the result is that 10.7 million hectares have been provided with irrigation facilities. After all those schemes have been completed, an additional irrigation potential will be created to the extent of 10.8 million hectares. Taking all these schemes together, the irrigation potential to the extent of 31 million hectares will be there from major and medium schemes.

For irrigation projects, we have spent about Rs. 275 crores in 1972-73. For the whole of the Fourth Plan, there is a provision for Rs. 953 crores. But since the States are putting more emphasis on irrigation projects, this amount is likely to go up to Rs. 1200 crores. So far as the Fifth Plan is concerned, the Plan provision is going to be about Rs. 2100 crores.

A charge has been laid at our door that we are not taking interest in the irrigation schemes. That is not correct. It will be clear from this very fact that