

[Prof. Savithri Lakshmanan]

control, a lot of changes have been brought about in the Indian Railways which are really praiseworthy. But the Minister should be aware of the fact that there are a number of cases lying pending with the Railway Board and some of them need immediate attention. One such case is the construction of Thirur-Edapilly coastal railway-line. The people of this area have gone through a lot of stress and strain. They are now looking forward with the hope that at least now the Government will meet their demand. I would, therefore, like to request the hon. Minister that in view of its importance to the public, subject to the availability of funds he may approve the said proposal which is lying with the Railway Board for so many years now.

I now come to the passengers' amenities. From time to time the Railway Board frames various rules and regulations so as to provide better services to its passengers but it seems that everything remains on paper only. The railway officials do not honour the rules and regulations framed by the Railway Board. The law making authority would make a strong legislation in this regard. In my constituency also, the long distance passengers have complained many a time about the passengers' amenities. I may say that while some of the complaints may be attributable to unavoidable factors but most of their grievances are genuine.

In our country, second-class passengers are more and they always intend to travel in the second-class coaches. In India the second-class means the lowest class as far as railways are concerned. I would say that at present the second-class coaches are quite

inadequate to meet the persistent demand of the passengers.

16.00 hrs.

More such second-class unreserved coaches are to be attached with the long-distance trains in order to provide smooth travelling to the passengers. In view of the extra load on trains, the line capacities and the operational facilities have to be enhanced accordingly. Some yardstick should be fixed for the coach factories to manufacture coaches, especially second-class unreserved coaches, in a time-bound manner.

Another thing I would like to point out is regarding the stoppage of Rajdhani Express in Kerala. Presently the railway authorities have given a stoppage at Ernakulam station only *en route* to Trivandrum. It is not justifiable that if a passenger from Trivandrum wants to alight at Ernakulam, he has to pay the charges for journey from Trivandrum to Erode. Erode is 300 kms. away from Ernakulam, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Madam, you can continue next time. Now, it is 4 p.m. We will take up Item No. 14 that is discussion under Rule 193.

16.01 hrs.

DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

Problems of NTC run Textile Mills

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, Shri Mohan Rawale to raise a discussion regarding

problem of NTC run textile mills particularly in Bombay.

SHRI P. C. THOMAS (Muvattupuzha): Sir, the Opposition has come back!

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE (Bombay South Central): I am saying it for your information that I am on a hunger strike. I am still on hunger strike now when I'm on my legs.

[English]

SHRI P.C. THOMAS: We are happy that you have realised the importance and come back.

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the condition of mills in Bombay city is in doldrums. 30 per cent industries in our country export goods but now the textile mills are closing down in Bombay. I would like to draw your attention to it as to why these mills close down. The mill-workers in Bombay put in their labour to make the textile mills forge ahead. They have great contribution in the progress of the mills and have given them a wider scope in International market.

Mr. Chairman, Sir now with your permission I am speaking in Marathi.

[Translation]

*SHRI MOHAN RAWALE: Mr. Chairman, Sir, there was strike of textile

workers in Bombay in 1982. I am the son of a textile worker. When my father was working in Tata Mills, I was 5 or 6 years old. I used to go to this Mill along with my father. I have seen the rigorous conditions of workers under which Mill workers have to work. They had to stand before the hot furnace for 8 hours continuously. Cotton bits used to enter his stomach. When he used to retire after working under these conditions, he hardly survived for 5 or 6 years after his retirement. This was the fate of 70 to 80% of workers. So, the workers feel that they should get some benefit when they have worked so hard. That is why the workers participated in that strike. They felt that they should get some benefit as a reward of their ceaseless work. That is how the workers joined this strike. Poor workers suffered the most in this strike. They had to face starvation. In that strike which took place in 1982 more than two lakh ten thousand workers had participated. In private mills, there were more than 10 lakh workers. Nearly 85,000 of them accepted additional workload and continued to work and 23,900 workers became unemployed. Out of 41,000 workers working in nationalised mills, 31,000 workers were reinstated leaving as many as 10,000 workers unemployed. As a result of the ordinance which was promulgated in October, 1983, 20,000 workers out of 43,000 were reinstated leaving 23,000 workers unemployed. The official figure of unemployed workers is 22,000 but according to me including 'badle' workers, at least 70,000 textile workers are unemployed. If the Government has done any significant work in NTC Mills, it is their decision to implement voluntary Retirement Scheme and make the workers jobless. I would like to cite some examples in this regard. Mukesh Mills was closed in December,

* Translation of the speech originally delivered in Marathi.

[Shri Mohan Rawale]

1982. Nearly 12,000 workers were rendered jobless. Badberry Mills was closed in 1983 because of non-supply of power rendering 2600 workers jobless. 5,000 workers of Srinivas Mills became unemployed in 1984 because of closure of that Mill due to non-supply of power. Modern Mills was closed for the same reason in March, 1987 which left nearly 2,000 workers unemployed. 3009 workers of New Great Mills became unemployed due to lack of supply of raw material to that Mill. Kamla Mills was closed due to financial crisis in 1988 which left its 1800 workers jobless. Raghuvanshi Mills was also closed for the same reason. Nearly 1200 workers of this Mill lost their jobs due to closure. In Mafatal Mills, 110 workers resigned in 1979. Sawn Kurla Mills was closed in 1979 due to financial problems. Nearly 1659 workers became unemployed. Sawn Sudi Mills was closed due to financial crisis leaving its 2531 workers jobless. Sawn Process Mills was closed due to financial problems leaving nearly 1200 workers unemployed. I have got a lengthy chart giving the figures of jobless workers. So, I do not want to read the whole of it. In Standard Mills, out of 4500 workers, 3500 workers have been retained leaving 1000 workers jobless. I have got the figures to prove that a large number of textile workers have become jobless.

Sir, I would like to point out the reasons because of which these Mills had to be closed down and large number of workers became jobless. When the Mills became sick, NTC took over these Mills. When Late Smt. Gandhi was the Prime Minister. It is important to remember that these Mills were taken over by NTC for running them and not for selling them. These were taken over for giving employment to the poor workers. The

Government has made an announcement that it would give jobs to one crore of People within a year. You have mentioned in your manifesto. Where are those jobs? You are in fact taking steps to take away the jobs of workers who are already employed. Under VRS scheme, the Government is only shunting out the workers from their jobs.

Several times, I have discussed with the Minister the reason of closure of these Mills and the Hon. Minister has agreed with me. Raw material of inferior quality is supplied to these Mills. Machines of good quality are not supplied with raw material which would last for 2 to 3 years. But inferior quality material which would last for 3 or 4 months is supplied. Due to raw material of poor quality, good machinery gets damaged soon and cannot last for a long time and it even adversely affects production of cloth.

I have also pointed out to the Hon. Minister that corruption of some NTC officers is also responsible for this situation. I would like to mention here that NTC cloth has good demand in foreign countries. The cloth manufactured in NTC Mills which were taken over in 1983 was exported earlier to Russia and other countries. Cloth manufactured by Jupiter, Sitaram, Pillay Mills was exported. But unfortunately some NTC officers indulged in corruption. Out of fear workers have joined. They even accepted additional workload. Due to experience of 1982 strike, they are afraid that they might lose their jobs. Even when they join, they are always afraid that they might lose their jobs. Officers take advantage of this situation. In the first week of the month, officers tell the workers that merchants are not ready to lift the stock of cloth manufactured in the Mill. I want to point out that this is deliberately done. There is connivance

between the NTC officers and the trading businessmen, because of which the stock is not lifted by the businessmen. By 10th of a month, the cloth which is worth 10 rupee a metre is sold at Rs. 5 or 6 a metre. This causes loss worth crores of rupees. I have myself visited Jupiter Mill and other Mills in my Constituency which are on the verge of closure. There are other reasons such as non-supply of cotton and non-availability of capital which are responsible for the closure of these Mills. That is why NTC mills are on the verge of closure. When I go to these Mills, workers tell me that they should be supplied cotton which would last at least for 6 months. I hope that Hon. Minister will make an announcement in this House today that Government would give working capital and cotton to these mills. I have already met Hon. Finance Minister, Manmohan Singhji. Hon. Finance Minister told me that Textile Minister is not asking for funds from Finance Ministry. I do not know what is the truth. I took Textile Minister with me. Just now Textile Minister told me in the Lobby that Textile Ministry is prepared to give the funds. I am only saying what the Hon. Minister had said. These are his words. I met him and told him that funds should be given for working capital, cotton and raw material. The Minister is prepared to give the funds. I do not know whether he has demanded the funds. But when I met him he told me that funds would be given. Let us see what announcement he makes today.

There are many textile mills in Bombay which have the most expensive machinery. Kohinoor Mill for example has very costly machinery. Even if you take over only Kohinoor Mills, it can supply water to 3 or 4 other Mills. There are Processing bleaching and dyeing sections in this Mill, which can manufacture 1 lakh metres of cloth everyday. But this Mill has

been almost closed down today. Only 100 workers are working in that Mill. All these mills were made to incur losses because of the corruption of NTC officers as I mentioned earlier. The officers very well know that once the Mills incurred losses they could be handed over to their owners. I am sure Hon. Minister is aware that if a mill is not nationalised within 15 years, it will have to be handed over to its owner. So, I request the Hon. Minister that all those mills which were taken by NTC 12/13 years back should be nationalised. In Kohinoor Mill, there is facility of dyeing, printing and processing. This Mill has been closed down. There are boilers and very costly machinery worth several crores of rupees. Several lakh metres of cloth can be manufactured in this Mill. The workers are sitting idle in this Mill. They say that cotton and raw material should be supplied to the Mill so that they can work. They are made to sit idle by the Government and their ability of working is wasted. You provide them work and they are prepared to manufacture cloth. In Kohinoor Mills there are 22 machineries of bleaching and dyeing which are lying idle. There are 8 colour printing machinery worth crores of rupees in Kohinoor, Jupiter, Sitaram and Digvijay Mills. There are automatic machines which can manufacture several lakh metres of cloth. But unfortunately, as cotton has not been supplied to these Mills, machinery worth crores of rupees is lying idle. In future it is quite possible that this machinery will be rusted and it will be disposed of as scrap. I would like to bring this to the notice of Hon. Minister. I do not want to make any charge against you. In fact, I am proud of you. You come from Labour Union. I know that you have got great sympathy for workers. You are proud of workers. But while taking any step please see that no injustice is caused to workers. Please take into account the condition of workers. I am confident that if you pay attention things will improve.

[Shri Mohan Rawale]

You have transferred a corrupt official. But there are other corrupt officials. Please conduct an enquiry of their wrong deeds through C.B.I. These NTC officers have amassed lakhs and crores of rupees by indulging in corruption and rendered the workers jobless.

Sir, I can give example of several other mills. You may be surprised that Finance Minister has allocated only 1 crore of rupees for running 120 textile mills all over the country. Is it possible to run 120 mills within 1 crore of rupees? And for VRS Scheme 300 crores of rupees are allocated. That means for removing the workers from their jobs you can give 300 crores of rupees. But for running the mills you cannot give funds. That means you are about to close down the mills. Please tell me whether it is your policy to close down the textile mills. Even though, I am on fast for agitating this issue, I have come here. I have said this when I had come to the House, three days back that there some textile mills which Government wants to seel out. So, for opposing this move of the Government, I have taken this step of going on fast. The Government is going to close down 8 textile mills in Bombay. I do not have any opposition to modernisation. I agree that there is no alternative to modernisation. But while going in for modernisation, you should retrench workers and close down the mills. In reply to question asked by me and Shri Ram Vilas Paswan, you have clearly stated in this House that no mill would be closed down in Bombay. You are going for merger of Mills. But, while doing merger, you will close some mills and sell them out. I had asked a question and you have sent a reply to me. I want to read out the reply given to me. I only want to give some figures. Madhusudan Mill has an area of 18.5 acres. Approximate value of this

surplus land is 97 crore 23 lakhs of rupees. Cloth manufactured by Sitaram Mill used to be exported. That mill is going to be sold out. 11.09 acres is the area of this Mill. Area outside the Mill is 3.39 acres. Total area of 14.48 acres is going to be sold for 65 crores 86 lakhs of rupees. Kohinoor mills has an area of 14.33 acres of land which is being sold for 77 crores of rupees. Elphinstan Mills has an area of 8.69 acres of land which is being sold out for 48 crores 11 lakhs of rupees. My father was working in Tata Mills for 46 years. The cloth of this Mill used to be exported. Russian Prime Minister had visited this Mill. As a Child I had seen Prime Minister of Russia had all praise for this Mill. You are going to sell out that Tata Mill. 12.45 acres of land of Tata Mills is going to sold out for 45 crores 68 lakhs of rupees. Dam Mill has 8.5 acres of land which is being sold out for 45 crores 64 lakhs of rupees. I have gone on fast to oppose this sell out move of the Government. I have said it in the House, and I am firm in the stand which I have taken because I am the son of a Mill worker. I had said at that time that if the Government does not take the step I will sacrifice my life in this House. Fasting is only the beginning. Let us see whether you are defeated or I am defeated. It is going to be proved now whether you are champion of workers or not. I have lot of hopes from you since you are Union leader. Perhaps you may not be aware of what is happening at the lower level. That is why I request you to take decision in this matter.

16.16 hrs.

[SHRI P.C. CHACKO *in the Chair*]

Sir, I have with me a letter written by the Prime Minister. If all the Government departments like Defence, Railways etc. obtain their requirement of

cloth from NTC Mills, it will be better. I had met Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narasimha Rao in this connection. He had talked to me in that connection. I want to read out a portion of this letter with your permission:

"You had referred specifically to the extent of the purchase of textile items by the Ministry of Railways and other Departments of the Government. We have decided to continue the policy of the Government Department purchasing their requirements from the NTC/BIC while we implement the NTC Turn Around Strategy. Accordingly, as per current instructions, the different Ministries/ Departments concerned are required to purchase their textile requirements from the NTC/BIC to the extent these understandings can meet them. The Ministry of Textile is pursuing this matter to ensure adherence to these instructions."

Sir, I want to know whether these instructions have been given to various Departments or not. When we ask these Departments, we do not get reply. Even if orders are placed for cloth required for Parachute, NTC Mills can run in Bombay. So, I request you to take up this matter with various Departments and ensure that all departments follow the instructions of Prime Minister.

There was a scheme called Textile Rehabilitation Fund Scheme which came into force with effect from 15th September, 1986. I do not know how this criteria was applied. If some mills were closed before 15th September, 1986, do you mean to say that workers were at fault? Did the workers close down these Mills? The Mills were closed down by the owners. So, I request that this criterion should be

changed. A Mill may close down any time. So, workers should not be held responsible for closure of a Mill. The owners or officers of a Mill should be held responsible. So, I request you to change this criterion.

Workers of the Mills which were closed on or after 6.6.1985, should get 75%, 50% or 25% of their salary for three years. Those Mills which have been closed by the Government permission or where officials liquidation has been appointed by the High Court, there this scheme is applicable. I request the Hon. Minister to change the criterion. There are large number of workers in Bombay who became jobless after 1982. They will be able to get the benefit of this scheme.

This Government had started Rehabilitation Fund and Textile Modernisation Fund Schemes. 750 crores of rupees were earmarked for this purpose. I would like to bring to your notice that:

"The Textile Modernisation Fund Scheme was started by the Industrial Development Bank of India with effect from 1st August, 1986 with the initial corpus of Rs. 750 crore for a period of 5 years to meet the modernisation requirement of the textile Mills."

I want to ask the Hon. Minister how many mills in Bombay were given assistance from this Fund. 877 crores of rupees were disbursed. IDBI disbursed that Fund, out of this 765 crores of rupees were given to private mills. 'Reliance' alone was given 300 crores of rupees. 'Reliance' which is a rich concern was given this amount. And those Mills in Bombay which are on the verge of closure, and do not have Cotton or raw material have not been given a single

[Shri Mohan Rawale]

paisa. You have given assistance to NTC Mills outside Bombay. But sick Mills in Bombay have not been given any assistance.

That is why, I request the Hon. Minister to give assistance to Mills in Bombay. I do not know what is the Government's policy of modernisation. I do not know whether you have pulled up IDBI for not giving assistance to some Mills. But if assistance would have been given to these Mills in time, these Mills would not have been on the verge of closure today.

Government has initiated VRS Scheme. This is actually a forcible retirement scheme. You are forcibly retiring the workers. You are waiting to see that workers become jobless.

I have written to Hon. Minister about VRS scheme and he has also written to me. 3% of recognised Union Members have been involved forcibly in this scheme. NTC officers ask the workers to fill the forms of VR Scheme. I would like to bring to your notice that workers are asked to fill in VR Scheme forms. If the poor workers do not fill the forms, they do not get their dues. Harassed workers have to do this. I had asked the Hon. Minister about it. But, he told me that there is no agreement between Union and NTC. So, please ask NTC officers to make payment of dues to the workers directly. Supreme Court has given the decision that workers of the Kohinoor Mills should be paid their arrears. The arrears of their salary should also be paid to them. But unfortunately, this decision of the Supreme Court had not been implemented. Though the Supreme Court gave this decision on

28th February, this has not yet been implemented. So far even the identification of workers has not been done. The Court has said that they should be given arrears of salary and job should be given to them. Many mill workers have died during this period. So, I request the Hon. Minister that arrears should be paid to the workers.

I fail to understand why does not the Government regularise the workers who have put in service for more than 240 days. I asked Hon. Labour Minister Shri Sangma about it. Sangmaji okeyed this proposal and said that those workers who served for 240 days would be declared temporary workers. But even after 5 years, the workers have not been regularised. So, I request that these workers should be regularised.

There is one danger from unorganised or organised sector. In the Annual Report, it is mentioned:

"Textile Policy statement of June, 1985 enforced compulsory registration of powerlooms in the decentralised powerloom sector. Also, the State authorities were authorised to register the powerlooms in terms of Clause 9, Part 3 of the Textile Order 1986 under the new Policy. According to the latest position, as compiled from the reports received from the various State Registration Authorities, the number of powerlooms was above 12 lakhs."

In unorganised sector, there are 12 lakh workers. There is difference in wages paid to workers in organised and unorganised sectors. The hours of work are 8 hours and 12 hours respectively. The salary is Rs. 2000 for a worker in

organised sector and Rs. 1000 in unorganised sector. I am not opposed to competition. Competition should be there, but there should not be difference in wages of workers in different sectors. If competition is there should be enhancement of the wages. Labour Laws should be applicable to unorganised Sector. But presently they are not applicable.

The opposition has boycotted the House. The scam involved 5000 crores of rupees. But that amount could not be recovered.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Mohan Rawale, have you finished your speech?

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE: I will take just five minutes more. This is also connected to the subject. I am coming to the subject.

But because of non-payment of electricity dues to the tune of 4 crores of rupees, 11 Mills were going to be closed. Workers are not getting their wages. Even though Reserve Bank officers were there, amount of 5000 crores could be recovered. But 4 crores of rupees cannot be paid for payment of electricity dues. That is what I would like to point out.

I have received several representations. I request you to visit Jupiter Mills in Bombay. You please inspect the machinery there. You kindly meet the workers and ask them whether they can run the Mill. The proposal to close down some Mills should be cancelled. The Mills should be provided with Cotton Yarn, raw material and working capital which would be adequate for 6 months. I make this request to the

Hon. Minister. If the Government does not announce its decision in this matter, I want to make it clear that I will continue my fast. I thank you very much for giving me an opportunity to speak.

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY): I want a clarification from Shri Mohan Rawale.

[Translation]

He has repeatedly said in his speech that the privatisation of mills has been done and these are being sold out to private sector. He keeps on saying such things in his statements. I would like to know whether he has any proof. If he has, then he should enlighten us. Similarly, he has been repeatedly saying that workers have been rendered jobless. The closure of mills has led to the workers turning unemployed. If you have any proof in this regard, please send it to me.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, Shri Rawale can hand over the letter to the Minister. So, I think we will leave more time for the hon. Minister to reply because Shri Rawale has raised many points. I will also request the other Members to be brief.

SHRI SHARAD DIGHE (Bombay North Central): Mr. Chairman, I would like to congratulate Shri Mohan Rawale for raising this discussion regarding the problems of NTC-run textile mills, particularly in Bombay. This has given an opportunity to us to express our views as far as the feelings of the Bombay

[Shri Sharad Dighe]

textile workers are concerned. It will also give an opportunity to the hon. Members to clarify many points about which there are doubts or distortions regarding the true position.

Hon. Shri Mohan Rawale and I are more concerned with problem, because in Bombay the majority of the textile workers are staying in the South Bombay constituency which is represented by Shri Rawale and in the North Bombay constituency which is represented by me. Therefore, both of us are more concerned as far as these workers in Bombay are concerned.

The textile workers in Bombay are really the backbone of that city. At one time the textile mills provided the largest employment in the city of Bombay. All the residents from the hinterland, from the Konkan as well as the Western Maharashtra used to look to Bombay for employment through these textile workers, or the textile mills.

Even today these textile workers occupy a very important position in the city of Bombay not only in the ordinary life but also in the political and social life of this city. Therefore, from that point of view we are more concerned. I urge upon the hon. Minister, at the outset, please do not look upon this problem as the usual problem of sickness in industry; please do not look upon this problem as part of the global Liberalisation Policy; please do not look upon this problem merely from the usual norms of viability or non-viability of this industry. It is the bread and butter of the whole Western Maharashtra and particularly Konkan area and the city of Bombay. Many workers come from various parts of India for the

purpose of employment in the city of Bombay in the textile mills. Therefore, if the textile mills are closed down or employment is reduced substantially, then there will be a problem not only from these textile industries' point of view but also from the point of view of Bombay city itself. Therefore, from this point of view, I urge upon the Government through the Textile Ministry that a very serious view should be taken as far as the deteriorating condition of these textile mills is concerned.

A lot of figures have been given by my colleague, Shri Mohan Rawale. He also described the situation regarding unemployment in Bombay in the textile mills. I may remind the Government that during the long drawn strike of textile workers, led by Shri Datta Samant in the year 1982, the situation in the city of Bombay became very much serious as far as textile workers were concerned and, therefore, at our request the then hon. Prime Minister, Shrimati Indira Gandhi took a bold step by taking over the mills in Bombay and accepted the challenge of running the mills in profit for the benefit of the textile workers because she realised the importance of the textile workers in Bombay and their place of honour in the national stream and also in the national and other movements also. These textile workers in Bombay have taken a very good lead and have contributed to the freedom movement also by different methods and have always supported the national cause. Therefore, as I was saying earlier, please do not look at this problem only from the point of view of usual industry's viability or non-viability where you give them voluntary retirement benefits, merge them and then solve the problem. This is not the way. We must give special attention, as far as these textile workers are concerned.

With these preliminary remarks, I will now come to the present plan of the Government which has been placed, from time to time, before this House, in the Committees and also reported widely in the press. Now, we are told that basing on the Rs. 2005 crore Textile Research Associations' restructuring plan of NTC for modernisation coupled with rationalisation, of course in consultation with the union and textile leaders the Government is planning to take a very bold step as far as this industry is concerned. This Plan is awaiting the approval of the Cabinet. This is the revised Plan. The earlier agreement was made on 22nd December and now this latest pact was reached on 9th April which was considered by the Cabinet Sub-Committee, consisting of Finance Minister, Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission and the hon. Textile Minister.

Ultimately we are told that this revamping programme is awaiting the Cabinet approval. According to that plan, the major step which the Government wants to take, as I understand, is making these mills viable by way of mergers and modernisation. For that purpose, this plan of Rs. 2,005 crore is envisaged and different details have been worked out from time to time. According to the tripartite formula, about half of these Rs. 2,005 crore are to be met by sale of surplus land. I do not know exactly the present position but that was the point at that time canvassed by the Textile Ministry. This is because mostly the Finance Ministry has been making it clear that no budgetary support would be available for NTC modernisation. Mr. Mohan Rawale rightly appealed that this approach should be changed and refusal

to giving any budgetary support for the modernisation of these mills will not be a good policy and that will affect very vitally these textile mills in Bombay.

Several figures are with me but I would not burden the record by quoting all these things. I shall only say that as far as this plan is concerned, it appears that if the BTRA's restructuring plan is approved, then two mills, Jupiter and New Hind, will be merged with Bharat and Mumbai mills. Then Apollo and Digvijay mills are proposed to be continued as independent units. The BTRA's restructuring plan envisages four mills - Elphinston, Jam, Madhusudan and Sitaram mills to be merged with Gold Mohur, Tata, New City and Podar mills. Finlay and Kohinoor mills will continue as independent units. These are the reported data and the Textiles Minister will correct me if these things are wrong.

As far as the nationalised mills of NTC (South) are concerned, the modernisation will require Rs. 104.00 crore and start-up expenses will be Rs. 87.16 crore and Rs. 60.82 crore will be required for working expenses. Therefore, the nationalised mills of NTC (South), the project outlay will be Rs. 252.78 crore. With regard to taken over mills of NTC (South), the expenses for modernisation will be Rs. 94.44 crore.

The labour employment figures are also important. About the labour employment in the nationalised mills of NTC (South), there were 17,852 employees on roll as on September 22, 1992, before starting of the implementation of the corporate plan. The Corporation has rationalised 3,803 employees up to 31st March, 1994 and has to further rationalise 4,008 employees for achieving the labour employment as per the BTRA's plan.

[Shri Sharad Dighe]

With regard to the taken over mills, there were 19,072 employees on roll on September 22, 1992. Till March 31, 1994, NTC (South) has rationalised 2,670 employees and has to further rationalise 7,528 employees for achieving the BTRA's plan which envisages rationalisation of 8,241 employees, against the proposed rationalisation of 10,570 employees in the corporate plan.

16.45 hrs.

[SHRI TARA SINGH *in the Chair*]

This is against the proposed nationalisation of 10,570 employees in the corporate plan.

Now, therefore, the main thrust is on two points. The first is the merger of the mills to make them viable and the second a creating fund by way of sale of surplus lands. With these two points, the modernisation will be carried out. By modernisation with the help of rationalisation the Government propose to make these mills viable. But, as I was saying, this approach may be revealed because ultimately what does the merger mean? Though the word 'merger' of two mills is very attractive, from the practical point of view the merger of two mills or even merger of two branches of a mill mean further unemployment as all those employees cannot be absorbed in the other part of the mill. Therefore, the unemployment that is created due to rationalisation would be further increased by this step of merger of the mills. Though it appears that we are not closing the mills and we are simply merging the two mills, I would say it is another word for the action of closure of the mills. I call this merger of the mills as closure

of one of the mills and retaining the other mill and that is all. Only a few workers may be absorbed here and there. But it will result into further unemployment as far as this issue is concerned. From this point of view, the plan of merger of the mills may be reviewed. I will go to the extent of saying that this plan may be given up. Merger of the mills will create further unemployment and further addition of hardships of the textile workers in Bombay.

Then the ticklish point is about the sale of the surplus land. There is no doubt that - as Shri Mohan Rawale said - we are not against modernisation. We do realise that in the present circumstances and in the present competitive market, in the world as well as in the country, we will have to make this industry more viable and more competitive by modernising it. There is no other alternative than to modernising this industry because most of the machinery in these mills is very old and is not upto date as far as the progress of this textile industry is concerned.

Therefore, nobody opposes modernisation. Even the workers, the leaders of the workers and even the Opposition parties like Shri Mohan Rawale, also would not say that they oppose modernisation. But at what cost will the modernisation be? Modernisation should not be at the cost of the merger of sale of land in a very arbitrary manner, if there is surplus land and if the sale of that surplus land will create further funds which would be gainfully available for modernisation and making the particular mill viable, that is, of course, welcome and that has to be done. But I will warn the Government that has to be done very carefully and very tactfully. Otherwise by mere sale of land, the proceeds that will be available will be frittered away or

exploited or will be siphoned off by some other ways.

A piece of land in Bombay is valuable today that it is equivalent to a piece of gold. Somehow or other, due to wrong implementation of the Urban Land Ceiling Act and due to several other factors, the prices of land in Bombay have been skyrocketing and they have reached a very high level. This is evident from the fact that one of the proprietors of a mill, Mr. Sunil Khatau was even murdered for indulging in these land deals which were made for the sale of his lands. Perhaps, he took the help of some of the gangsters for obtaining the consent of the union and workers forcefully and ultimately in the rivalry of two gangs, he was murdered only for dealing with the sale of land. So, we must take lessons from this incident that sale of land is going to create a very great problem and it should be handled very skillfully.

In the beginning, even the State Government of Maharashtra had declared an Industrial Policy in April, 1993 approving the sale of surplus land for creating funds for rehabilitation of sick mills. At that time, the development rules were also changed to such an extent that these surplus lands could be sold even for residential purposes so that crores of rupees would be available to the owners. But, after the murder of Mr. Sunil Khatau in Bombay by the gangsters, the Chief Minister of Maharashtra declared his decision not to permit sale of surplus lands. But unfortunately he further clarified that this was applicable only to the private mills and not to N.T.C. mills. So, as far as the N.T.C. mills are concerned, it appears that they will be allowed to sell the surplus lands and some problem may arise there also. Unless proper monitoring is done and in-built checks and cross

checks are ensured, then for utilisation of the sale proceeds it will not be wise to allow the sale of the surplus lands in the name of creating funds for modernisation. Therefore, I would appeal to the hon. Minister that if he, at all, takes any decision for the sale of surplus lands for the purpose of making that particular mill viable, then certain appropriate machinery will have to be created and certain norms will have to be laid down saying that lands are to be sold only to public undertakings and through the Government machinery only. While selling the surplus lands, great care will have to be taken so that no corruption takes place and the sale proceeds come into the coffins of the Government.

Then, I would also caution the Government that the sale proceeds will have to be used only for modernisation of those mills, paying the dues of the workers, making that mill viable and for no other purpose. So, only that much land should be sold which would be required for this purpose.

Otherwise, this will be misused and great problems will arise as far as this is concerned.

Shri Mohan Rawale is right in saying that we must find out the root cause as to why these NTC mills are going to losses from month to month and from year to year. We should not look upon it as ordinary industry. These mills were taken over. Some of them were nationalised. Even then, they are running into losses. So, the Government must also review its own policy. The main causes, according to me, for getting these mills non-viable are that we have not provided sufficient funds and working capital of these mills at the proper time. He allowed them to drift away. We remained just spectators for years

[Shri Sharad Dighe]

together and then naturally the losses increased and on the balance-sheet, we say "This is not viable. It is making losses." They are making losses because of the inefficient working of these NTC mills. We do not provide them working capital at the proper time. We do not supply them raw material such as cotton to these mills and many of the workers just sit idle and receive the wages merrily.

I also join Shri Mohan Rawale in saying that corrupt bureaucrats are in charge of these things. They firstly do not know their jobs. Such persons are sent as Chairman and Managing Directors of these NTC mills who do not know anything about textile industry at all. They had no concern with this industry throughout their life. They just come to enjoy their position and, therefore, the main cause of this loss of NTC mills is that they are inefficient persons. Those who do not know anything about textile industry are put in charge as heads of this and they just enjoy the salary and they are not interested in making these mills viable or in bringing them profits.

There is so much corruption that good mills and machinery are being stealthily taken out and sold. This is all adjusted under some Heads or the other and the mills become more and more deteriorating, non-viable and then, of course, if the matter goes before BIFR or before the Government, then naturally these facts are clear that it is not viable. But we must find out why it has become non-viable. It is not only due to commercial causes or trade causes but it is due to corruption and inefficient Heads of these Mills and it is due to non-supply of working capital and raw materials at the proper time and, therefore, they go on

deteriorating from time to time. These elements have to be gone into. As I said earlier, merely seeing the balance-sheet and always saying that these textile mills are not viable and that they are getting more and more losses, is not a good approach. We must go into the root cause of the matter and, investigate all these issues. They were taken over in 1982. What has happened all these 12 or 13 years? It has been said that still they have not been nationalised. So, many advantages of nationalisation are not available. Property has not been vested in the Government. Old dues and all the difficulties are there. Workers are not paid their past dues. Provident Fund and other difficulties are also there. Therefore, why is it that Government has not taken steps to nationalise them completely so that all these difficulties would have been over?

17.00 hrs.

Perhaps, the Government were able to make these mills viable. But in the present atmosphere of our globalisation and liberalisation, I do not think any Government will agree to nationalise them. But from the advantages point of view, it would be necessary first to nationalise them and then to deal with them so that many legal problems and difficulties can be avoided.

Sir, I also agree with Shri Mohan Rawale that in some cases when the workers have succeeded in the Industrial Courts, when they have succeeded in the Bombay High Court, when they have succeeded further in getting awards in their favour regarding their dues, the NTC people merely file appeals in the Supreme Court. They do not think that they are not private owners; the mills are Government Undertakings; they are for the workers. When the workers have got

the judicial decision in their favour, why should you go in appeal just as you have done in the case of Kohinoor Mill matter? Why should you go further and further and resort to legal proceedings putting the workers into further trouble, further disappointment and further expenses of legal charges just because there is a legal remedy? That they should not be approach of the Government. It is a welfare Government for the workers. We stand for the workers. We stand for the working-class. So, such an approach is not good. Such an approach should not be adopted as far as the working-class is concerned. Therefore, when we consider the Textile Mills in Bombay, do not have the simple approach; do not have the usual approach but think that this is the working-class of Bombay, this is the backbone of Bombay, the workers have to be protected, their employment has to be protected and you have to save them somehow or the other even at some cost. Please do not merely apply the norms of non-viability, BIFR and all these things just as we apply to other industries. Since these mills are incurring losses, you should not close them down, shake your hands off and say that you have nothing to do with them. It is a human problem. Often our Prime Minister has also said that the Government is adopting this liberalisation policy with a human face; the Government is going to implement this liberalisation policy with a human face. If you want to do it with a human face, then, these textile mill workers of Bombay must be given special treatment; must be given special funds and a special approach has to be made as far as these textile workers are concerned.

Sir, I am sure that when a labour leader is at the helm of affairs in the Textiles Ministry, he will convey my feelings. I hope he must have the same

feelings with him also. I also hope he will convey those feelings not only to the Finance Ministry but also even to the Prime Minister saying that this is a human problem of Bombay workers, a political and social problem of Bombay; it is not a mere problem of a few workers here and there and therefore, it has got to be approached and a solution has to be found out not in the usual way but with some human approach and with special approach as far as these textile workers are concerned.

With these words, I again urge upon the Minister of Textiles to do the needful in the matter.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SURYA KANTA PATIL (Nanded): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have risen to take part in the discussion on the problems of textile mills under Rule 193. I attentively listened to my senior colleagues Shri Dighe and Shri Rawaleji. Whenever there has been a discussion about mills, we the members of Parliament, have repeatedly mentioned that the Minister and Ministry of Textiles need to ensure a proper functioning of textile mills not only in Bombay but in the entire Maharashtra. I do not know why the mills are not treated for their sickness? I am not a textile expert. I am neither a textile expert nor an economist but as a social worker I feel that we do not have any mean in our system to treat somebody before he becomes sick. A sick person who can be saved is put on oxygen when his condition start deteriorating and I have never seen a critically ill patient, who was put on oxygen, getting discharged from the hospital fully cured. Probably the loopholes in our system render such industries sick and the condition worsens and lakhs of people stake their lives.

[Shrimati Surya Kanta Patil]

The lakhs of farmers have treasured each and every thing of our country with great sincerity right from the days of Quit India Movement in 1942. Those hands which slogged to shape our country facing many difficulties belonged to those freedom fighters who are no more with us and those mill workers who remembered the 9th yesterday in a proper manner. Today, their children, grand-children and great-grand-children are on the verge of death. I do not know what is the solution to this.

17.06 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Shri Dighe has gone into details about this. I would like to tell the Government and the Ministry of Textiles that once the textile industry was a name to reckon with in the country and it used to be called the heart-beat of Bombay. When we used to go for walks in our childhood, we would be fascinated with the scene of smoke emitting from the mills of Bombay and enveloping the city in it. Today these mills are closed, the mill workers do not have any employment, they are having a very bad time.

I do not level allegation against any person or worker's organisation or army. But there are certain flaws for which these industries were in loss. Why did the loss incur? I would not like to go into the reasons of the loss because it is not my subject. Shri Sharad Dighe has explained it in detail. But now the question is that the persons responsible for the loss are not affected and the workers and common people are starving. Our economists point out that they won't afford continuous loss, therefore, they

cannot revive sick industries. Through you, I would like to ask the hon. Minister of Textiles whether our officers are quite inert even if the textiles industry is running in loss. Have its high officials, ever walked on foot and supervised whether the workers are working there or not. I do not understand whether the loss is due to non working of workers or due to the decisions dictated from the air-conditioned rooms. I am distressed to submit that it is just like a patient whose condition has deteriorated so much that he is on the verge of death and then he is being tried resurrection through oxygen, yet I am happy that the hon. Minister of Textiles and Prime Minister are taking this issue very seriously. Through you I would like to urge upon the Government not to confine this issue to deliberation only and it should take prompt action instead. I demand the Government to consider all the issues raised by my hon. friends. The workers are in a very miserable and hopeless condition. Taking their right to live into consideration on humanitarian grounds certain prompt decision ought to be taken. The Government cannot keep them, waiting too long in the name of modernisation and land selling.

It was the issue of Bombay. There is an NTC mill at Nanded also which is my constituency, a mill named Usman Shahi mill has been running there for ages but now it has been taken over by the NTC. The erstwhile mill manufactured quality cloths which were exported also. But now it is a subsidiary of the NTC. This mill was closed down modernisation. Time and again we were informed that the mill is going to be modernised. After the discussion by Shri Rawale, the hon. Minister had assured us on this count amidst my interruptions in this very august House. Today two departments of the mill are being run in the name of

modernisation. But the workers have no work there.

Sir, in a small town like Nanded which had been the political playfield of our hon. Minister of Home Affairs for the last 40 years hundreds of labourers are forced to starve in the name of modernisation, but not a single rupee was given in the name of modernisation. I urge the hon. Minister of Textiles that the families of workers who have been living on the land for last 50 years should be given ownership right of the land. The hon. Minister of Textiles told us that assurances are given every time. Be it Shri Sundar Raman or any other hon. Minister of Textiles, after becoming Minister he visits Nanded first by air or train. But nobody has ever bothered to resolve the problem of workers there who had worked there for last 50 years. I feel that we have to contain the growing crisis of urbanisation. But should we neglect them for the selling of land? The problem of the labourers has become very serious today. Can we not provide the same land to those labourers who have toiled there for over 50 years? Their families are living in huts today. The people are tired of welcoming the visiting Minister of Textiles for years, there. They feel too tired to garland them any more and to discuss with the visiting hon. Minister of Textiles as to when he is going to provide the land to the labourers. After 50 years, the fifth generation of the workers is working in that mill this time. After the land is sold to builders for erecting big buildings and to construct five star hotels there where the children of the workers would go? We cannot provide them alternative land in other cities. Leave aside Bombay. Today the price of land has gone up so steeply that it is not possible for a poor man to purchase even an inch of land at a city like Nanded which is moving towards rapid

urbanisation. Therefore, why the people who have been living on the plot for last fifty years, should not be given the ownership of the plot. Set a cooperative society for them or construct houses for them there. Many labourers were made to seek Voluntary Retirement. It is not fair. Can they be forgotten so easily who have worked hard to set up the mill and contributed in the building of nation.

I request the hon. Minister of Textiles to resolve the problem of the workers of the Nanded NTC mill immediately. Thereafter I would take him to Nanded and garland there. However, we have welcomed him there umpteen times. I know that he hails from Andhra Pradesh which is the border of our state. We also are old citizens of Andhra Pradesh. We consider hon. Prime Minister as our nation. But I request him to give a small residential plot to those workers who have been working there for the last 50 years. In this regard the Government should not impose any such conditions as to the person should be in service or not in service because many workers have been relieved of their duty. They have not been provided with any plot a great agitation might be launched because the workers are on the verge of starvation. I, therefore, request the Government to consider this issue and introduce a Bill to provide land to the children of workers there is forth-coming Lok Sabha Session.

SHRI RAJNATH SONKAR SHASTRI (Saidpur): Sir, Shri Mohan Rawale does certainly deserve our congratulation who has introduced the Resolution to discuss the problems of the workers of National Textile Corporation and Bombay mills, and thus gave us an opportunity to discuss this important Resolution. It is really a matter of pride and good luck.

[Shri Rajnath Sonkar Shastri]

Sir, when our freedom struggle started, Mahatma Gandhi had fought to discard foreign clothes as one of his weapons. He had burnt foreign clothes. Khadi became more popular and the 'Charkha' and its yarn became big weapons in the freedom struggle. At that time our slogan was:

"Roti, Kapda Aur Makam"
Mang Raha hai Hindustan".

When we realised that we are very near to freedom, we made a slight change in this slogan and started chanting:-

"Roti, Kadpa Aur Makan;
Hoga Sabko ek Saman."

However, from the discussion in this House and the views expressed by S/Shri Mohan Rawale, Sharad Dighe and one of our lady Members, one reaches to the conclusion that even after 47 years of independence, food, cloth and shelter are not available to everybody. We had made several promises and seen many dreams, which even today remain unfulfilled. It is a very serious thing.

Sir, it is a matter of happiness that today a discussion is taking place in this House on this problem. Further, it is a matter of great pleasure that the Minister of Textiles belongs to a poor class. He has seen abject poverty.

Sir, the Department on which a discussion is taking place in this House comes under the Ministry of Textiles. As my other friends have said that textile industry is the biggest industry of India. Textile industry has 20 per cent

contribution in the industrialisation of the country. Today, there are about one crore fifty five lakhs persons engaged in this industry. Clothes and garments have 35 per cent share in total export of the country. Today, this industry is facing a lot of problems. Sir, I would like to bring it to your notice that in 1991, the number of spindles was 11 million which increased upto 28.40 million in 1993. In 1981, the weaving capacity of the mill sector was two lakh and eight thousand handlooms. However, it declined to one lakh sixty eight thousand in 1993. I would like to know from the hon. Minister that how did this capacity decline? What was the reason for its downfall? It has been said that this capacity has declined due to powerlooms but if we go into deep, we find many other reasons. The new generation worker is distancing himself from the textile or mill sector. Today, textile mills are being modernised and the workers are the most affected lot. Earlier a worker from Eastern Uttar Pradesh used to go with 10-12 workers to Gujarat, Ahmedabad and Bombay for work. When he used to come back to his home once in a year, the people of the village used to encircle him and ask him about his welfare and the income. The worker used to tell them that he was working in such and such mill and if they wish, they may accompany him and earn good money. But, today when he comes back to his native place, he says that he would not advise other people of the village to accompany him for some work in Ahmedabad or Bombay. Today, he does not encourage them. On his return, he brings another worker with him to work in their own fields. I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to what are the reasons for its downfall?

Today, textile industry is facing many problems. I was just reading this report. It is alright that the production of

cotton is increasing but the area under its cultivation is decreasing. Secondly, the prices of cotton are increasing rapidly.

I was just going through some figures. In comparison to April 1993 prices, there was 16.3 per cent increase in the prices of cotton in November, 1993. Similarly, the prices of bidding cloth also increased by 9 per cent. It is a matter of great concern for us.

In 1947, the people had not imagined that there would be steep rise in the prices of textiles in such a short span. It will have to be checked. The hon. Minister is an efficient and intelligent person. He thinks over the problems. I am confident that he would reasonably look into it.

There were some shortcomings in 1994-95 budget due to which our textile industry was directly affected. There was a change in excise duty structure. A financial burden of Rs. 1356 crore has been put on textiles in this years budget. The excise duty on all kinds of man made cloth and fibres has been raised by 23 per cent. Further, excise duty on clothes has also been doubled. It has badly affected powerloom sector. I would submit that it should be looked into and the duty structure should be rationalised.

Today, there is no control over the export of cotton. As a result, textile industry is suffering a great loss. Though the production of cotton and blended cloth is increasing in India, yet the area under its cultivation is decreasing rapidly. India has the largest area under the cultivation of cotton in the whole world. Therefore, it should have an impact on textile trade. This factor should play an important role in the manufacturing of cloth. Nobody knows how have these

anomalies occurred? The hon. Minister should also think over it.

I have come to know that the Ministry of Textiles is contemplating to close down 33 mills out of 122 mills of National Textile Corporation. It has raised a doubt in our mind. As the issue was just being discussed and Shri Rawale had also raised it, the Hon'ble Minister asked for some proof. However, we cannot give him any proof. I have come to know all this from the newspapers. I have got the cuttings of those newspapers in which a concern has been expressed over this step. In the editorials it has been stated that the Hon. Textile Minister has already planned to close down 33 mills out of 122 mills. I have also read through the newspapers that these mills are not likely to be closed down due to technical reasons and the Ministry has a plan to merge these units. It has created a confusion and needs to be clarified.

Even during Janata Dal regime, an idea was mooted to close down some of the mills. Some proposals were also received in this regard. Central Unions had agreed to these proposals but the workers took a serious view of it. This situation was efficiently saved from taking an ugly turn. Now, the same thing is being repeated. The hon. Minister is well aware of it. But keeping in view, the gravity of the situation and the statements coming from various quarters, it is but natural to be concerned about it. The Government should make its stand clear. If the mills are closed down, there will be retrenchment and it would definitely lead into resentment.

A provision of Rs. 189 crore has been made in the budget for voluntary retirements. Those workers who opt for

[Shri Rajnath Sonkar Shastri]

voluntary retirement will get their amount from this allocation. The people think that the Ministry is doing it the other way that those who want to retire voluntarily should do so by getting some money. This creates a doubt in our mind. The hon. Minister should also look into it.

An amount of Rs. 285 crore has been allocated for modernisation of mills. More doubts come to mind as only Rs. 122 crore have been provided for the modernisation of 79 mills. I would like the hon. Minister to clear this doubt too. If these mills are closed, it will not augur well for the country as well as the people.

Now, I would like to brief. My other colleagues have already spoken much about the mills in Bombay. From their views one thing has become clear that the wages worth crores of rupees of the workers are lying outstanding against the mill owners. I would like the hon. Minister to intervene and make efforts for payment of outstanding wages of the workers by the mill owner.

I hail from Varanasi. Day before yesterday, the attention of the hon. Minister was also drawn towards this problem in this House. Varanasi sarees are famous all over the world. The carpets manufactured in Bhadohi are matchless. Today, both the industries are facing crisis. In Varanasi Saree industry, mostly economically weaker people are engaged. If we see further, we find out of them 80 per cent workers belong to scheduled castes, backward classes and minority communities.

Sir, today Varanasi saree industry is facing a great crisis. There is shortage of silk. There are four varieties of silk, Mulberry, Tusser, Airi and Moonga and

all these are being produced in large quantity in the country.

Our country has tremendous producing capacity of these four items. So far as the production of coral is concerned we enjoy monopoly all over the world. The Government has set up a Central Silk Board in order to tackle the problems concerning silk production. Today we find that the weavers are not getting silk. In this connection the Government has formulated a scheme to collect silk stock with the help of World Bank but that too has been failed.

Sir, if these poor weavers will not get silk, they would not be able to carry on their jobs. As a result thereof people in lacs will starve and facing it at present also. This issue has already been discussed in this House and as well as in Rajya Sabha. At that time Poorvanchal Silk production development project was launched. This scheme was especially launched for Varanasi and Ghajipur in which State Government's share was 467 lakh 22 thousand rupees and Central Silk Board's share was 251 lakh 77 thousand. This Board was established with the total capital of Rs. 718 lakh 99 thousand. The problem of silk in Ghajipur and Varanasi could not be solved even after investing such a huge amount. In Varanasi and Ghajipur you will find that more than 8 lakh people are handloom weavers. Several lacs people are earning their livelihood from weaving. If you will go there and ask them about their problems, they will tell what else can we say as silk is not available. I would like to tell the hon. Minister that his efforts were very good but there is something wrong. He has to look into the matter to get the solution.

Sir, the weavers of Banarasi Sarees are living in remote rural areas. Mr.

Deputy Speaker, Sir, I let you know that Banarasi Sarees are very beautiful and attractive but I would like to tell you that the women folk of these people do not possess even a single cloth to hide their bodies. These weavers toil in the sweat of their brow to make these beautiful sarees for people and the country but their plight is miserable. Their children roam naked. If you look at what they eat, you will find it difficult to control your tears. Their social condition is pitiable. Their houses are in dilapidating condition. Their children do not go to school. Their hands are soiled, they work hard but even then they do not get a full square meal.

Sir, I would like to draw your attention towards it. You had gone to Banaras, we thought to show you those places where you would see and understand everything. There is no need to tell you as you are well acquainted with this problem.

Sir, the situation of the Eastern Part of the country is miserable. These are 35 districts and around 35-40 MPs are elected from these districts. But these people are counted only for votes. Except this, they do not know anything about democracy. They do not have food to quell their hunger. In my constituency Choulapur, Choubepur, Jalalabad, Dullahpur, Sadiabad, Sadat, etc. are the areas where no developmental work is going on. People know this area as the area of Saree weavers but they are non-entity.

Sir, social disintegration is taking place there. People of this area are sad and gloomy. I would like to say that all these problems should be taken up seriously and the social lives of these poor weavers must be studied closely.

Mahatma Gandhi launched a big movement over the issue of clothes which uprooted British empire, foreign clothes were burnt at that time which closed down the cloth mills in Lancashire and Manchester and British Labourers wept over it. Sir, the same situation is going to be with Indian weavers. It is really very sad. Mahatma Gandhi chose the issue of clothes for movement. Today you are the Minister of Textile, therefore I request you to look into the problem of this sector to fulfill the dreams of Mahatma Gandhi.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank you for allowing me to speak.

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, today Shri Mohan Rawale has raised the issue regarding Bombay Textile Mills. Three days earlier also he raised the issue in which he expressed his concern over these three points, first, the textile mills are being closed, secondly the workers are being retrenched and he has also invited attention towards those crores of rupees which were earned by selling of surplus land.

At the outset I would like to let hon. Mohan Rawale know it how he came to this conclusion that we are closing down the textile mills and workers are being retrenched and they are not getting payment. I would like to assure you that wages upto June have been distributed among workers and according to the payment of Wages Act the Payment of the salary of July will be made in the first week of August. We are ready to make that payment in the current month. Therefore, I request you to get rid from this misunderstanding and give proper reply to rumour mongers. Tell me the name of a single labour whom payment

[Shri G. Venkat Swamy]

has not been made. Mr. Mohan Rawale I have worked for workers in Trade Union for more years than your age and faced several lathicharges of police, how can I tolerate injustice to workers. I have always worked for the welfare of workers. It was the decision of cabinet that 14 mills should be closed down and 28 mills should be merged. But I opposed the closure and recommended for their modernisation. I took this risk after assuming the charge of Minister. For the last one and a half year, when I took charge of this Ministry, I am trying my best to protect the interest of workers. I would have done the same thing if I were in your position.

But I would like to remove your misunderstanding that these mills should be modernised. These mills are already referred to BIFR. BIFR had raised the issue for sale of these mills to private sector. I would have kept quite if I had been in favour of this proposal of privatisation. BIFR would have invited tender for their sale to private sector. But I have taken steps against this decision. Mohanji as you also know that there are CITRA, ITRA, VITRA and NITRA in T.R.A. I told them that they should go to each mill and prepare a scientific modernisation plan for each mill you were also present in tri-partite committee of Labour Ministry in which all the trade unions of the country were represented. You can know that what will be the productivity and quality of production by 128 years old machinery or what will be the performance of these mills in market competition. Mohanji and Digheji has stated that corruption is prevalent in textile mills. I convened a meeting of all the general managers when I took charge of this ministry and I told them openly that they all were corrupt. I had been in

trade union and therefore I know what type of corruption prevails in a textile mill. Corruption is there in buying of cotton and sale of clothes. I can tell you that how many corrupt officials have been penalised and retrenched during this period. You cannot remove corruption in 1½ year which is prevailing in an institution for the last 150 years. Mostly corrupt people bring stay orders from court. When they are caught or penalised. I do not think anything wrong if the corruption prevailing in these mills is being removed step-by-step and their modernisation under Public Sector Undertakings instead of their auction by BIFR. If in your opinion I am doing wrong, before keeping quite on this issue I would like to know whether you will accept the decision taken by BIFR. I assure you that I have told before tripartite committee that no factory will be closed down and there will be no privatisation or retrenchment what else do you need? Listen me I am telling you the basic thing that the Government is trying to bring these mills under Public Sector. I will be the first person to raise voice against retrenchment. Mohanji and Digheji were in the tripartite committee in which this principle was adopted and all the trade unions accepted it. I am proud of your contribution in that committee, Bombay city has the largest number of working class. N.T.C. was set up in 1968 and the Union Government has spent Rs. 3360 crore on it uptill now. There were two lakh people when Datta Samant had called for strike. When Mrs. Indira Gandhi was Prime Minister she sent me there to look after their affairs along with Sri Pranab Mukherji and Shri A.P. Sharma. Trade Union leaders also went there. We all took part in discussion. We have talked to those people. Textile industry was in a very bad shape there and millowners were getting the whole profit. They were getting wealth at the cost of poor workers. The Government

has spent Rs. 3360 crore. Just now Shastriji was saying that women and poor people are yearning for clothes. They are hungry and yearning for food. I would like to know whether the Government of India has decided to do nothing for working class of the country. I would like to know as to whether these millowners should get all the benefits at the cost of we people. The 40 per cent people are living below the poverty line. How it can be called justice. I had been trade union leader in the past and therefore, I know it very well that how workers get their salaries, I know that women and poor people are facing great difficulties in villages. Therefore, I restrained the decision to refer this industry to BIFR for privatisation. We convinced the Government before the tripartite committee for modernisation of these 122 textile mills of NTC in place of their handover to the private sector. Hon. Prime Minister is also against closure of Public sector because it is against our principles and thus these mills cannot be given to private sector. Therefore, I would like to say that Government of India propose to modernise this industry.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, Digheji knows that there are 13 taken over textile mills in Southern Maharashtra. Mill owners of that area have given representations for getting these mills back. You were talking about TATA, I would like to say that his father came here to say that this decision should be withdrawn and he was ready to give money to workers. Although, they are raising voice for referring this industry to BIFR but I am going to bring a Bill in this House for nationalisation of textiles. They have said that after the proposed nationalisation of textiles industry if the taken over mills will not be modernised they will not let these mills work. These textile mills will be brought in public sector for modernisation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, now the question is that how much money is to be incurred on this scheme. You all know that machinery in these textile mills are 120-130 years old which will be replaced by new ones. Presently, the clothes prepared by these mills is of sub-standard quality which has less market value. I assure you that we want to install new machinery and retrenchment will not be done. I would like to know your opinion on this issue. We are trying to modernise this industry but you are saying that merger is closure. Would you like to tell me the definition of closure under the Industrial Dispute Act. Closure means to put lock on mills and then workers are given compensation after announcement of retrenchment. We are not doing so. We are replacing the 150 years old machinery and workers are being asked to work on those new machines. We have already submitted the plan for modernisation of textile mills. You have told that there are 122 NTC mills out of which 23 mills are in Southern Tamil Nadu which have already been modernised. We still have 79 more mills for modernisation on which consent was given by tripartite committee. Your doubt may have come true if we had not taken any action at that time and BIFR had sanctioned these mills to persons from private sector. In that case multi-storey buildings and houses would have been constructed at that place. We wish that these mills should be kept in working conditions and workers should not be retrenched. Our slogan is "No closure, no privatisation, no retrenchment". What else do you want from me. In respect of the issue that whether the Government is going to handover these mills to their former owners I would like to say that we are trying to bring a bill in the Parliament for nationalisation of these mills so that these mills may be saved from going back into the hands of private

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mill owners. Is it wrong? Mohanji, I assure you that not a single worker will be retrenched. I will be responsible for retrenchment even of a single worker in Bombay. Surplus workers have option and they are free to do what they want. Shrimati Patil has said that so far 3600 workers have gone under VRS. Remaining 1,22,000 workers of NTC are also waiting to do so. But we do not want to lose any skilled worker as we will need them after modernisation. I again assure you that no retrenchment will be done. You come here again and again I have also been elected to the Parliament for five times. When Smt. Indira Gandhi was Prime Minister, then I had been instrumental in calling a 38 days strike in IDPL and she took a decision that what had to do. You also belong to that area and I know that you are under the heavy pressure of workers and they might have threatened about hunger strike. Workers are misled by the propaganda by mill owners. Why the proposed nationalisation of textile mills is being opposed and MPs are doing it. The millowners are willing to buy these mills through BIFR. If it is correct in your opinion I have no objection in withdrawing this scheme if nationalisation and stopping the decision of surplus land. Out of total 9 subsidiary units of NTC 8 had been referred to BIFR. Tamil Nadu subsidiary unit have been modernised and you are trying that remaining will go in the hands of millowners I would like to tell that Government has decided not to handover these mills to their former owners and run it on its own. These people are trying to stop the Bill for nationalisation of these 13 textile mills. These people are pressurising the working class. I have discussed the matter with several people and trade unions that modernisation will be done without retrenchment. I am

ready to go to Bombay with you. I am ready to talk to persons who oppose merger and modernisation. I am ready to accept their suggestions. Why you are trying to take such a big action on it. I know that hon. Members should realise the real position and make the people understand it. On behalf of the Government I assure you on the floor of the House that no retrenchment, privatisation or closure of mill will take place. Please listen to me and assure the workers that it is in national interest.

Mohanji, not in India only but it is a unique thing in the whole world that modernisation of 122 mills at one time has been done which is unprecedented. Digheji I do not find anything wrong in modernisation of these mills by selling the surplus property, by utilising the budget allocation for it and without utilising the money meant for 40 per cent people, living below the poverty line. You can suggest another way for it. We have only two options - either sell these mills or modernise them while keeping under Public Sector. I am ready to accept your suggestions. I am not going to reject your suggestions. No worker will be retrenched. I have given this assurance time and again then why this type of things are being mentioned. I do not find any person for raising this issue.

I appeal you to leave all these issues. We will modernise these 122 mills under the textile Ministry. You have mentioned that at present export by textile mills is worth Rs. 25 thousand crore. It is correct about total export. But Textile Ministry wishes to raise this figure upto Rs. 30 thousand crore. For the year 1994-95 the target for export has been fixed upto Rs. 28 thousand crore. The present contribution of Textile Ministry in export is quite important and it can be raised after the proposed modernisation

of 122 textile mills and this is the intention of the Government behind this programme. We are trying to strengthen the backbone of the country and will not let it weaken. The Government do not want to put the workers into any trouble and modernisation will be done without retrenchment for raising productivity of mills. We will give a suitable and befitted reply in this House to those people who are working for privatisation of these textile mills. I would like to say that the process for nationalisation and modernisation will be started immediately in 2 textile mills in Kanpur and 13 taken over mills in Bombay.

These 122 textile mills of the country had total 1 lakh 75 thousand workers out of it 36 thousands have gone under the VRS Scheme and some are likely to go. Several of them will also opt for retirement with the introduction of the Pension Scheme for them. Pension scheme is likely to be introduced in this very session. Then you will rarely get the experts and skilled workers in the field of spinning and weaving. This was the only reason why these were not touched under the VRS Scheme.

I have a long association with the trade unions. I belong to a poor family and would like to tell you not to involve yourself with the atmosphere which has been created now a days in Bombay. I assure you that even not a single worker will be retrenched. No mill would be handed over to the private sector and no mill would be closed but these mills would be modernised and all workers would lead a prosperous life. When we are going to do this thing, you should extend your helping hand and cooperation to us. That would help the both. You come from Bombay. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI SHARAD DIGHE: You please tell us something about the sale of land.

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY: You have asked a good question about the sale of land.

18.00 hrs.

I have said in the tripartite committee to think over it and sell it. Members from all parties *i.e.* CPI, CP(M) etc. were present there. I asked them to sell it and pay money to the Government. The Government will not sell it because NTC is an independent Corporation and it will be done by the NTC. But in the meeting no one was ready to do that.

Now I would like to say, as has been said by Dighe ji, that we do not want to become owner of mills which are running in loss. The officials of NTC, Collector and Secretaries of State Government should set up a machinery to sell the land and pay money to the Government.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Hon. Minister, how much time more do you require?

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY: I need just five minutes more.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: So, we extend the time by five minutes.

[Translation]

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY: Though I was not willing to tell, but, since you have asked about it, I would like to tell you that I had called the Chairman of

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UTI and IDBI and asked them to mortgage the land and pay Rs. 2005/- crores to the Government as loan. They also said that as per rules they cannot mortgage the land. I also told them to sell the land and pay that much amount of the Government but they did not agree to do so. Therefore, now they would directly purchase this land. We are going to sell it to the public sector and not to private sector. What more Mr. Sharad Dighe would want in this matter? We would not tolerate any vested interest in it.

Mr. Dighe ji, would you like to keep hundred years old machinery for worshipping? Had it been left in the hands of BFR it would have been sold to the private sector. We have opposed it tooth and nail. The hon. Prime Minister and I have clearly stated that we are not prepared at all for the privatisation of Public Sector Industries. We are stick to that principle. We are going for modernisation of the Public Sector.

Sir, through you, I would like to request Shri Mohanji to extend cooperation to us in this task. In over enthusiasm he should not loose his temper and try to understand the problem in right prospective and if he face any difficulty in understanding it he can consult me. If the working class is in fact facing any difficulty there, they should tell me and I shall solve their problems.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, Shrimati Surya Kanta Patil has said about Nanded that the mills there, which were under Nizam Hyderabad earlier, are lying closed. It is true because Nanded was a part of Nizam Hyderabad and that is why these mills were under Nizam Hyderabad. These three mills are - Ajmanshahi Nanded,

Usmanshahi-Varangal and Mohammadshahi-Varangal. All three mills are lying closed now-a-days. Earlier these mills were in closure under the N.T.C. but now we have taken up them for modernisation. Now we are going to modernise them. There is very small surplus land of these mills and we will get very small amount for it. We have to take money from outside. Therefore, I assure you that we are making arrangements of Rs. 2500 crores for the modernisation of these mills.

SHRIMATI SURYA KANTA PATIL:
It is a matter relating to the houses of workers.

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY: The land of factory has been encroached upon. Now you are saying to legalise it.

SHRIMATI SURYA KANTA PATIL:
There is no encroachment. That is your colony and land also belongs to you. No encroachment has been made on the surplus land of the mill.

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY: I would like to tell you as to how many people have made encroachment at Nanded.

SHRIMATI SURYA KANTA PATIL:
They are your workers. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY: If they are prepared to vacate it, I am ready to make announcement today itself.

SHRIMATI SURYA KANTA PATIL:
From whom you will get it vacated. *(Interruptions)* They are all workers of the mill. You please go there and meet them *(Interruptions)* You should see the register of the mill before asking to vacate them.

(Interruptions)

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY: I have noted down your all points. Regarding your suggestions I will do whatever is possible and try to fulfill them with all seriousness.

At last I would like to request Shri Mohanji, Sharadji, Shastriji and all other members to try to understand as to what the Government really intends to do.

SHRI RAJNATH SONKAR SHASTRI: Please tell about the silk also.

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY: Shri Shastriji is asking about silk industries of Banaras. It is true that the condition of workers is pitiable whereas businessmen are in very good condition. During Shri V.P. Singh's regime 10 thousands weavers of Uttar Pradesh were in jail because of their outstanding loans worth Rs. 46 crore. As soon as I took over as Minister I requested the Prime Minister and their loans of Rs. 46 crores were waived. Not only this but with a view to improve the condition of weavers, the hon. Prime Minister has sanctioned a scheme to set up 3000 centres for the supply of hank yarn and 522 handloom centres. There was a provision of Rs. 300 crores for 7th plan which has been raised by the Prime Minister to Rs. 1386 crores. The work has been initiated at the village level. Regarding Banaras I assure you that if you give me anything in writing I am prepared to take action on it seriously. What I want to say is that we will reach our goal step by step and our goal is modernisation and not the privatisation or closure. If the hon. Member is satisfied with my reply I think he would welcome my proposal.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I think, you have already mentioned the entire

thing and whatever you wanted, the hon. Minister has promised.

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to ask some clarifications.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Mr. Rawale, normally after the Minister replies, no further clarifications could be allowed.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think, he has dealt with all these aspects exhaustively.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE: The Minister has said nothing about raw material, cotton and working capital. The Minister has himself admitted about the prevailing corruption there. (Interruptions)

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY: I am not admitting but condemning it.

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE: I would give an example. There was an embezzlement to the tune of Rs. 32 lakhs in a mill which was made up in 10 months. What I want to say is that if the officers want, the mill can run. (Interruptions) You say that you will not close them but is the proposal, you have mooted, not a proposal of closure?

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY: There is no closure.

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE: You are going to sell the entire land and even then you say that there will be no closure.

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY: I have been saying it from the very beginning that you should try to understand (*Interruptions*) I have not said anything about the retrenchment of even a single worker.

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE: The hon. Minister has also stated here that so long he is there no worker will be retrenched but you had sent a proposal to tripartite Committee for the retrenchment of 22,000 workers and we opposed that proposal. All Trade Union leaders, Shri Sharad Dighe and I opposed that proposal. Had you sent that proposal?

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY: Now I am saying it that no worker would be retrenched.

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE: You can commit mistake. As you have already committed one mistake, so, if you wish you can rectify it also. I would request you that the proposal sent for the closure should be withdrawn. If that is not possible I suggest you to run them on cooperative basis. If you propose them on cooperative basis, the hon. Finance Minister would also accept it and he is prepared to invest 40 per cent and workers are prepared to invest 10 per cent. You please persuade our Chief Minister and ask him to invest 50 there because once he had said that he was prepared to invest 50 per cent if these mills were allowed to run on cooperative basis.

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, as soon as I took over I made an appeal to the working

class to take over all the NTC mills on cooperative basis. I had requested each trade union but all of them had shown their inability to do so. If Shri Mohan ji is prepared for that he can give proposal even today and I am ready to handover them today itself. What else do you want?

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE: You have made allegation against us regarding salaries. Even till now salaries have not been disbursed in many mills.

SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY: You have asked about salaries and cotton etc., so you listen to the reply too. You make announcement here only after understanding facts and figures. As you have said that cotton and raw materials are not available there because of the bunglings by the officers and workers are not aware of it. We have received a proposal from the Finance Ministry that we should submit the package plan, which was submitted in tripartite committee, to the Cabinet and after getting approval of the Cabinet, funds will be released. These funds will not be for modernisation but will be available for the working capital for the factories. We have prepared a proposal for it and it is being sent to the Cabinet. After the approval of the Cabinet you can purchase cotton etc. They will be made functional like this till they are modernised and we are also trying to disburse the salaries to the workers. Mr. Mohan, you tell us what else we can do?

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Thank you Hon. Minister for Parliamentary Affairs.

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES AND MINISTER OF

PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA): Sir, I would suggest that the debate on the Railway's Supplementary Demands for Grants may continue upto seven o'clock so that those Members who want to speak may participate. The hon. Minister can reply to it on the next working day, not tomorrow. Will you like to reply tomorrow?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF): No.

SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA: The hon. Minister may be allowed to reply on Tuesday. We can sit upto seven o'clock so that we can accommodate those Members who want to speak.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (Muvattupuzha): Sir, I think the Opposition is coming back. Already Mr. Mohan Rawale has come, tomorrow the BJP will come and then others also will come.

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have come only to raise this matter.

[English]

SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA: Sir, if they do come back, we shall give them additional time. There is no problem of time. But those of the Members who want to participate, may kindly be allowed to speak today.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I think the House will agree with the proposal of the Parliamentary Affairs Minister.

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

18.10 hrs.

SUPPLEMENTARY DEMANDS
FOR GRANT (RAILWAYS),
1994-95;

AND

DEMANDS FOR EXCESS
GRANTS (RAILWAYS),
1991-92 - Contd.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Shrimati Savithri Lakshmanan was on her legs. She may continue her speech.

PROF. SAVITHRI LAKSHMANAN: Sir, earlier I was talking about the Rajdhani Express. I am grateful to the hon. Minister for giving us this Rajdhani Express.

By this at least the people of my constituency would see the Rajdhani Express and know what this Rajdhani Express is. The Railways are not issuing tickets from Trivandrum to Emakulam and instead they are issuing tickets from Trivandrum to Erode and the passengers are compelled to give charges for almost double distance that they are travelling. This is in no way justifiable.

Sir, I know very well that it is a common factor that Railways need maintenance facilities and operational facilities adequately for stopping these superfast trains. If it is not possible for allotting one more stoppage, let me make a *via-media* suggestion in this regard. Trichur falls in the centre of Kerala. And also Trichur station has adequate space where operational and maintenance facilities could be provided easily for