

16.45½ hrs.

BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SIXTY-SIXTH REPORT

Shri Rane (Buldana): I beg to present the Sixty-sixth Report of the Business Advisory Committee.

Mr. Speaker: We went into a number of items, Bills for the next week etc., and the report contains the allocation of time for these things.

16.46 hrs.

DISCUSSION RE: SCARCITY OF RAW JUTE

Mr. Speaker: The House will now take up the discussion on the statement laid by the Minister of Commerce on the Table of the House on the 16th August, 1961, regarding the block closure observed by the Indian Jute Mills Association owing to scarcity of raw jute.

Shri Indrajit Gupta (Calcutta-South West): In initiating this discussion on the statement laid by the hon. Minister of Commerce in this House on the 16th August, in response to a calling-attention-notice, regarding the block closure observed by the Indian Jute Mills Association owing to scarcity of raw jute, I would like, at the outset, to bring to the notice of the House that this discussion is being raised at a time which seems to be extremely critical for the whole jute industry and the jute trade.

From the newspaper reports that we have seen this morning, we find that there have been a series of conferences and discussions held in Calcutta during the last two or three days, between the Chief Minister of the State and representatives of the Indian Jute Mills Association and also of certain trade union organisations, on matters arising out of this problem. We also read in the papers that tomorrow, the 25th August, there is

going to be some sort of conference or meeting in Delhi between the representatives of the Indian Jute Mills Association and the Central Government to discuss probably the question of the fixation of a floor price or minimum price for raw jute. I do not know whether that is correct or not, but certainly the Minister will confirm it, and I hope that he will also take the House into confidence as to what line Government propose to follow in this regard.

There is also an item of news in this morning's newspapers, which I hope is also true, which says that the Indian Jute Mills Association has issued a circular to its member-mills advising them to withdraw the restrictions on production which they had imposed at the beginning of this month, which means the restrictions which have been imposed in the form of allowing individual mills of the Indian Jute Mills Association either to curtail the working hours or to seal looms or even to close down, if necessary, according to the amount of raw jute which they had in their mill-stocks.

It now appears that as a result of these confabulations in Calcutta, and as a result of the agitation which has been carried on persistently on behalf of the workers and the jute growers, some results are following, and it is certainly a welcome sign. I hope that all the interests concerned, namely the Central Government, the State Government, the employers as well as the workers and the jute cultivators' interests will all consider this question in a rational and reasonable manner, so that the long-term interests of this great national industry of ours can be properly safeguarded and protected.

Now this statement which related to the question of block closures was primarily meant, in the first instance, to raise the issue of the effects of this on labour. But it was dealt with by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and therefore the statement laid on the Table on the 16th has dealt,