

*The Lok Sabha re-assembled after Lunch  
at seven minutes past Fourteen of the  
Clock*

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

[*English*]

**MATTERS UNDER RULE 377- Contd.**

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : We now take up Matters under Rule 377.

**(iii) Need to convert metre gauge railway line from Londa to Vasco-de-Gama into broad gauge**

SHRI SHANTARM NAIK (Panaji) : Although there has been a tremendous improvement since the liberation of Goa on 19th December 1961 in the road, air and sea transport for the convenience of the people coming to and going out of Goa, yet the rail transport refuses to move out of the bullock cart age.

The strategic importance of Goa on the west coast of India, inflow of annual tourist, both national and international, up-coming of Navy Project in the nearby Karwar, movement of industrial goods of the new industrial units in the State do not appear to have weighed in the minds of all those in the Railway Ministry in the matter of long-standing demand, of not only Goan people but virtually of the entire country to provide a broad gauge line from Londa to Vasco-de-Gama.

Two years back, during one of his visits to Goa, the Prime Minister realising the importance of the matter had assured to consider the same to the utter joy and jubilation of the Goan people. It is only since then that some moves are being made. But the Railway Ministry is sticking to the narrow approach and the assurance remains on paper. It is feared that people's hope may not be fulfilled.

I, therefore, demand the conversion of metre gauge rail line from Londa to Vasco-de-Gama into broad-gauge.

**(iv) Need to appoint a Committee of Members of Parliament to enquire into the reasons for disregarding the judgement of Supreme Court for reducing the prices of drugs**

SHRI RAJ KUMAR RAI (Ghosi) : Sir, the Supreme Court, in its historic judgement delivered on 10th April, 1987, gave the Department of Chemicals a time of two months and 14 days to dispose of representations of drug companies involved and pass final orders. No action was taken within the stipulated period, i. e., upto 25th June, 1987.

The Department has not reduced the prices of medicines in question, despite the judgement of Supreme Court. The consumer did not get benefit of price control for seven years due to litigation and now even after the judgement, the consumer is being charged higher price. Besides fixing of prices, and their implementation, the question of recovery into Drugs Prices Equalisation Account is involved. The amount involved is about Rs. 200 crores in these cases alone. No step has been taken to fix responsibility for the disregard shown to the court judgement and the hardship being caused to the consumer. I, therefore, request that a committee of Members of Parliament be constituted to go into the whole affair and fix responsibility.

**(v) Demand for appointing a Committee of Members of Parliament to look into the question of decontrol of Prices of certain iron based formulations used to prevent nutritional anaemia**

DR. CHANDRA SHEKHAR TRIPATHI (Khalilabad) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, iron preparations are used as prophylaxis to prevent nutritional anaemia among poor pregnant women, children and infants.

Iron preparations are mostly the monopolised production of a few drug companies. Almost all the major selling iron products have been price-decontrolled and are being marketed under brands having turnover of Rs. one crore to Rs. twelve crores. With

decontrolling the prices of iron preparations, there will be a step increase in their prices. It is not clear why iron preparations have been price-decontrolled when these are being used by poor patients, specially pregnant mothers, infants, children of the country. It appears that the interests of drug industry have been looked after at the cost of poor patients of the country. I request the Government to constitute a Committee of Members of Parliament to go in detail on these issues and fix the responsibility.

(vi) Demand for a Kendriya Vidyalaya at Jharsuguda (Orissa)

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI (Deogarh) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, Jharsuguda being a railway junction and gateway to western Orissa occupies an important place in the railway map of the State. There is a railway colony with a large number of employees staying there. A Kendriya Vidyalaya needs to be established there as early as possible in order to provide proper educational facilities for the children of these employees.

(vii) Need to instal an Electronic Telephone Exchange at Ettumanoor in Kottayam district (Kerala)

SHRI SURESH KURUP (Kottayam) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, the Ettumanoor Telephone Exchange at Kottayam district of Kerala was installed in the year 1948 with a capacity of 360 lines. Out of this, 358 connections are already given. As this is a manual operating system with limited capacity, the subscribers and applicants for new telephone connections are faced with considerable difficulties. Ettumanoor is situated only 10 kms away from Kottayam town, the district headquarters. This is one of the major pilgrim centres of Kerala on account of the Ettumanoor temple. The office of the Gandhiji University is only 2 kms away. Over the years, the area has developed enormously. There is a large number of applicants on the waiting list. The manual system of telephone exchange that is functioning presently is quite inadequate. Now, the Exchange is functioning in a rented building and the department pays an amount of Rs. 6500 per

month as rent. There is enough land available for the construction of a new exchange. I request the Minister to take necessary steps to install an electronic exchange at Ettumanoor.

(Viii) Demand to give up the decision for importing cotton and Viscose Staple fibre keeping in view the good crop in the country.

SHRI V. SOBHANADREESWARA RAO (Vijayawada) : Mr Deputy-Speaker, Sir, the cotton growers are alarmed at the reported decision of the Union Government to import ten lakh bales of cotton and 1.20 lakh kgs of viscose staple fibre, being on the suggestion of the Cotton Mills Association. The forecast of less production of cotton is far from reality. According to the recent estimates, the total production of cotton this year may reach a level not less than 100 lakh bales. In the northern region of Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan, the production may touch 35 to 40 lakh bales as against 32 lakh bales last month. It is learnt that the acreage under cotton has increased by 12 per cent. In Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh the prospects are 27 to 30 lakh bales. Gujarat may get 12 lakh bales, Andhra Pradesh may get 15 to 16 lakh bales, Karnataka may get 7.5 lakh bales this year, while Tamil Nadu may have production of one lakh bales of winter crop and around 4 lakh bales of summer crop.

So, in these circumstances, the import of cotton will definitely cause harm to the interest of cotton growers, while it will definitely help the mill owners to corner the crop at very low prices only to bulge their profits. The Government should recollect the bitter experience in earlier years when it had imported cotton spending lot of amount, but the mills refused to purchase it saying that the price is very high, compelling the Government to again export it incurring huge loss to the exchequer.

I, therefore, appeal to the Government to give up the decision to import ten lakh bales of cotton and 1.20 lakh kgs. viscose staple fibre from abroad.