

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS, SPORTS AND WORKS AND HOUSING (SHRI BUTA SINGH) : Earlier also, extracts of the proceedings of whatever was mentioned under Rule 377 were sent to the various Ministries. But most of the subjects are concerned with the States. So, we cannot follow them up.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE :
Not all.

SHRI BUTA SINGH : Even under Rule 377, there is no provision that we should come back and report it to the House. Special matters mentioned under rule 377 will continue to be attended to by the Ministry concerned.

(iv) Need to exempt diesel used
by Fishermen from taxes

SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES* : Fishing has developed into a huge industry in our country. Under the 20-point programme, the nationalised banks and other financial institutions are helping the fishermen to procure mechanised boats. In our country about two million people are engaged in this occupation and thus maintaining their own families. They are playing a vital role in earning foreign exchange. Sea wealth worth three hundred crores of rupees is being exported.

In recent years, there has been a big hike in the prices of diesel and other materials needed for the mechanised boats. It has badly hit the poor fishermen. Mechanised boats with 150 H.P. capacity, which are engaged in export, have got exemption from tax on diesel. Government is considering to exempt tax on diesel for lower H.P. mechanised boats also. An early favourable decision would solve this crucial problem of fishermen, otherwise the fishing industry may be destroyed.

In this regard a task force Committee set up by the Ministry of

Commerce, in Government of India, has recommended to exempt fully the diesel used by fishermen. Agriculture Ministry has also recommended this step.

Therefore, I request the Hon. Agriculture Minister to consider this as a serious problem and take suitable action to fully exempt from taxes the diesel used by all categories of fishermen.

(v) Functioning of Balasore Telephone Exchange, Orissa

SHRI CHINTAMANI JENA (Balasore) : The condition of Balasore Manual Telephone Exchange, Orissa, (GMT) circle has deteriorated to a large extent in the absence of adequate number of telephone operators and other supervisory staff. The present strength of operators and other supervisory staff is 32. They have to attend to the demand of 600 local telephone subscribers and to the trunk calls made from and to Balasore. Since Balasore town is a business and cultural centre and nearby Chandipur and Remuna are tourist centres of Orissa, the workload in that telephone exchange is increasing everyday. It has become impossible to meet the increasing workload of this telephone exchange with the existing staff. It is, therefore, necessary to increase the strength of telephone operator. I suggest the Government of India to appoint at least fifteen more operators to attend to the local and trunk calls as well.

It is regrettable that most of the time the telephone boards installed there, go out of order and remain un-repaired for days together. Therefore, I demand that adequate number of supervisory and technical staff should also be appointed for the maintenance of these telephone boards forthwith and automatisation of the exchange may please be taken up on top priority basis.

*The Original speech was delivered in Kannada.