

[Shri Dharendra Nath Basu]

textile mills and Textile Workers' Association have served notices that they would start strike in all textile mills with effect from 15th March. The minimum demands of the textile employees have neither been met with by the management of textile mills nor by the National Textile Corporation. Negotiation for settlement is far from sight and it is most likely that the textile employees will go on strike, as already notified, that is, from 15th March 1979. As a result, the mills will have no production and the export commitments already made by the managements of the mills will not be fulfilled and the suffering of more than one lakh and eightytwo thousand people who were workmen in the eastern zone alone will know no bounds. Some textile mills and some jute mills are already lying closed with the result about 67,000 employees have been thrown out of employment. The members of their family are now almost starving. The Government of India should immediately intervene in the matter and try to settle all the disputes sympathetically and in a proper way. Unless the disputes are settled promptly, I am afraid this will have serious repercussions in other industries. It is reported that some of the promoters of jute and textile industries now under closure in West Bengal have already started new mills elsewhere. So, I would request the Minister of Labour and Parliamentary Affairs to settle the issues without delay.

(iv) REPORTED ARREST OF A SIKH YOUTH BY U.K. POLICE FOR WEARING 'KARA' STEEL BANGLE

SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOO-WALIA (Faridkot): Mr. Speaker, I want to make a statement on the following matter of urgent public importance.

The U.K. police arrested a Sikh youth in England for wearing *kara* (steel bangle). The UK authorities have described *Kara* as an offensive weapon. It is a great insult to the religious rights of the Sikh community, since it is ordained by the tenth guru, Guru Gobind Singh, to keep the five

*K's*, and *kara* is one of them. No true Sikh can have real satisfaction without *kara*. The whole of the Sikh world is mentally, spiritually and socially pained and perturbed over this offensive action of the UK police.

I will urge upon the External Affairs Minister to take up this matter of utmost importance with the UK Government. I will appeal to the British MPs and the people of Great Britain to honour and support Sikh cause, while keeping up the glorious traditions of religious liberalism.

(v) REPORTED STRIKE BY THE WORKMEN OF GARDEN REACH SHIP-BUILDINGS AND ENGINEERS LTD.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Jadavpur): Sir, I want to raise the following matter of urgent public importance.

10,000 workers of the Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Limited (GRSE Ltd.) have been forced to go on strike on and from January 22, 1979 for the redressal of their outstanding grievances. The industrial relations in GRSE Ltd., have been fairly satisfactory and all disputes have so far been settled amicably or through conciliation since 1961.

With a view to improve the wage structure and fringe benefits of workmen, at least at the level of the newly set up Central Public Sector and Shipyards, the Union submitted a charter of demands for the GRSE Workmen in February 1977, after the expiry of the previous settlement. But the management adopted dilatory tactics; yet, the workmen waited patiently for nearly two years to give sufficient time to the management for settlement. The workmen were assured that the charter of demands would be settled irrespective of industry-wise settlement in West Bengal, and the effect would be given from 1st January 1977. With a view to give time to the Management, the strike notices were twice deferred, on the assurance and condition that all workmen would be paid *ad hoc* at the rate of Rs. 500 subject to adjustment.

after settlement, negotiation on charter of demands would be completed by the end of November 1978, that settlement would be irrespective of industry-wise settlement and the effect of the settlement would be given from 1st January, 1977. Such assurances were clearly recorded by the Joint Secretary (Defence Production) in his letter of 25th May, 1978 and also the Managing Director of the Company in the minutes of the Company dated 11th July, 1978. However, the Management, under the directives of the Bureau of Public Enterprises, have been pressing their workmen to follow the line of the Engineering Wage Settlement and to give up their claim for arrear payment, in spite of the categorical assurances given in the past. As a result the employees have been forced to go on strike and all the three Trade Unions have formed a Joint Action Committee under which the present movement is being carried out.

The workers are very eager to settle the dispute on any honourable term, and I urge upon the Government not to stand on its prestige but to take immediate measures for coming to a reasonable settlement so that further loss of production, already to the tune of over Rs. 3 crores, does not take place.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (PROF. SHER SINGH): Sir, approximately 8,600 workmen and clerical staff of the Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Limited (GRSE Ltd), Calcutta, have gone on strike from 22nd January, 1979. The strike is on the issue of revision of wages and allowances of workmen and staff. The last settlement expired on the 31st December, 1976 and we were trying to come to a new settlement. That was to be done in the form of a tripartite agreement. The GRSE Ltd. has been traditionally following the tripartite engineering wage settlement in West Bengal. The revised engineering settlement was announced by the West Bengal Government on the 11th January, 1979. The employees and staff of GRSE have not accepted this settle-

ment. They are demanding a bipartite settlement. There are no valid grounds for de-linking GRSE from the tripartite settlement, to which the other engineering public sector industries are also parties. The management of GRSE have been persuading the Union to accept this position. They have also offered proposals for introduction of productivity linked incentive schemes at the plant level, within the parameters of the tripartite settlement. The matter has also been referred to conciliation to the appropriate authorities. I have been just now informed that the Labour Commissioner, West Bengal has called a meeting today.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: The Minister should have taken note of what I have said in my statement. There must be an adequate reply to the points.

MR. SPEAKER: This is not a debate.

12.45 hrs.

MOTION OF THANKS ON THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS—contd.

MR. SPEAKER: We take up further consideration of the following motion moved by Shri Yagya Datt Sharma and seconded by Shri Asoke Krishna Dutt the 22nd February, 1979, namely:—

“That an Address be presented to the President in the following terms:—

“That the Members of Lok Sabha assembled in this Session are deeply grateful to the President for the Address which he has been pleased to deliver to both Houses of Parliament assembled together on the 19th February, 1979.”

If a Member is absent when he is called, he will not be called again. It is not proper for Members to give their names and thereafter be absent from the House. Because a large number of Members have given their names, the remaining Members will be given ten minutes each. The Prime Minister will reply tomorrow.