

[Shri Mukunda Mandal]
station, at about 6.00 A.M. in the morning, we were all awakened by a very severe jolt and we were about to be thrown out of our seats. We discovered that the train had a very narrow escape from a serious accident. On the same track on which the Rajdhani was running, there was a stationary train waiting at Bharthana station and the collision was almost inescapable. But for the presence of mind and the pluck of the driver of the Rajdhani train, the train was brought to a halt just 20 to 25 yards behind the stationary train waiting at the Bharthana station thus, hundreds of lives were saved.

In this connection, I request the Railway Minister through your good offices to (a) institute a thorough enquiry immediately and fix responsibility, (b) formally and officially appreciate and reward the driver and engine crew of the train and (c) a statement giving factual details may please be made available on the Table of the House.

श्री डी० जी० गवई (वृत्तान्त) : मेरा एक व्यवस्था का प्रश्न है इसी सम्बन्ध में। 377 के अधीन जो मामले उठाए जाते हैं वे बड़े महत्वपूर्ण होते हैं। तो जिस मंत्रालय के संबंध में वे मामले उठाए जाते हैं उस के मंत्री को यहां हाजिर रहना चाहिए ताकि वह सुन सके कि उस के विभाग के बारे में किस तरीके का मामला उठाया गया। अभी इन्होंने जो मामला उठाया है, उससे ही सम्बन्धित मंत्री यहां पर नहीं हैं। जिस मंत्रालय से संबंधित मामला उठाया जाए उस के मंत्री को यहां रहना चाहिए। 377 के अन्तर्गत जो मामला उठाया जाता है उसको सुनने के लिए मंत्री जी को यहां हाजिर रहना चाहिए।

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is not necessary. The report will go to the Minister concerned. Please take your seat.

Mr. Vayalar Ravi.

(iii) REPORTED CRISES IN COIR INDUSTRY IN KERALA.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI (Chirayinkil): I stand to raise an important matter of public importance under rule 377.

Coir industry in India is a small scale cottage industry. Labour intensive

nature of this industry, which employs over half-a-million people, invests this industry with special significance, particularly in Kerala, where the industry is mainly concentrated. Even though the internal consumption and marketing arrangement in India have improved considerably over the last few years this industry still continues to depend heavily on export. The growth and survival of their industry is inextricably bound with its export potential and performance. The export of coir and coir goods brings us a foreign exchange to the tune of Rs. 24 crores a year.

But the export of the coir products is suffering a set-back due to the shortage of raw-material in Kerala, due to some important factors, this needs the immediate attention of the Government.

Kerala produces 3443 million husks out of 5837 million of the total production in the country. Yet, Kerala suffers the shortage of husks for the coir industry, which needs only 1600 million husks.

The total production of the coir yarn is 1,26,800 tonnes and the coir products are 29,300 tonnes. The demand for the coir products are very high and the industry is unable to meet the demand even though higher price is being offered by the foreign countries.

The inability of the coir industry in India and the failure of the Coir Board to meet the demand of the foreign buyers is creating a threat to the Indian markets abroad. Some other coir producing countries are enthusiastically jumping into the market to fill the gap which ultimately harm the interests of our country. It affects half-a-million people employed in the rural areas.

The immediate problem is the acute scarcity of the raw-material of fibre and the coir for the coir product. The availability of the fibre can be ensured only through the availability

of husk to the co-operatives and other fibre producing centres. The export of coir yarn adversely affects the production of coir goods which keeps a heavy demand abroad. Further export of coir yarn is disastrous to the employment of people engaged in coir products and its export.

So, may I demand immediate attention of the Government to the problem of the Coir Industry and the implementation of the Sivaraman Committee Report after discussing with the concerned. I demand immediate ban on the export of coir yarn to protect the coir industry from further ruin.

(iv) NEED FOR A NEW WAGE AGREEMENT FOR STEEL INDUSTRY WORKERS.

SHRI ROBIN SEN (Asansol): With your kind permission, Sir, I wish to make the following statement under Rule 377:

The present attitude of the Steel management has become a matter of serious concern to all. The last four year wage agreement for steel workers has expired on 31-8-78. The agreement had kept provisions for fresh discussion for new agreement one year before the expiry of the agreement. The steel management had deliberately ignored the provisions and called the meeting of the National Joint Consultative Committee for Steel Industry only on 28th July 1978. The workers' representatives have submitted the Charter of Demands by the middle of August 1978 and urged upon the management for a quick settlement. The demands were, *inter-alia*, need-based minimum wage on the basis of the recommendations of the 15th Indian Labour Conference, full neutralisation of the rise in cost of living index, revision of scales, incentive, bonus, PF rules, retirement age, introduction of shift-allowance, enhancement of leave facilities, educational facilities, medical facilities, housing facilities abolition of contract system and absorption of contractor

labourers, etc. The management has given only verbal assurance of a quick settlement but is actually resorting to dilatory tactics to settle issues. The Steel management and the Steel Ministry have lost all credibility as they have gone back from their promises to implement the Study Group reports. The said Study Groups have given unanimous recommendations that include recognition through secret ballot and that was accepted in the plenary session of the Steel union representatives under the Chairmanship of Shri Biju Patnaik himself. It was never implemented. Rupees 35 lakhs have gone waste. The present negotiation also has come to a deadlock because of the Steel management's anti-working class attitude and the Bureau of Public Enterprises pulling of strings from behind. The Government's assurance not to interfere in the negotiation has been flouted and the reasonable demands are being rejected on BPE's instruction. The situation is grave and unrest is being invited in the industry by the anti-worker attitude of the management and the Government. In these circumstances, I urge upon the government to avert a confrontation and help to bring a peaceful and negotiated settlement without any further delay.

(v) ABSORPTION OF DEPUTATIONISTS IN FOOD CORPORATION OF INDIA

PROF. DILIP CHAKRAVARTY (Calcutta South): Under Rule 377 I would like to raise a matter of urgent public importance relating to 5000 employees of the Food Corporation of India. It is a matter of such an urgent public importance and I am happy to note that the Minister of Agriculture himself is here.

The story of the sufferings of 5,000 employees serving the Food Corporation of India on deputation for the last 12 years need to be told to the Lok Sabha in the hope that their legitimate grievances may be removed by the Government of India and particularly by the Ministry of Agriculture.