

12.50 hrs.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

(i) Report Threat to Ghana Bird Sanctuary from Mathura Oil Refinery.

SHRI VIJAYKUMAR N. PATIL (Dhulia): Mr. Speaker, Sir, under Rule 377, I would like to mention the following matter of urgent public importance in the House.

It is reported that the Mathura Oil Refinery poses a grave threat to the Ghana Bird Sanctuary, the world's most beautiful avifauna colony according to India's leading ornithologist. He is reported to have said that it would be suicidal to invest crores of rupees in the refinery now and lament later, over the damage it might slowly cause to the bird sanctuary. I am no God to predict exactly what damage would be done. But imagine if some of the birds stopped coming to this sanctuary as a result of this refinery, would it be possible to shift it then? he asked. The 900 hectare sanctuary, boating of at least 325 species of birds is only 40 km from the refinery, which would release, no less than 25 tonnes of sulphuroxide and other poisonous gases daily into the atmosphere. This is revealed by a study being conducted by National Environmental Research Institute and two zoologists of Rajasthan University, on the environmental effects of the refinery. These scientists feel that pollution caused by the refinery would not only disturb the ecology for the birds and wild life, but pollute the air and water of surrounding areas in Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. In the light of the above, I would urge upon the Government to have the matter examined in depth and reconsider the decision regarding location of Mathura Refinery.

(ii) Reported Intention of Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries to raise crude Oil prices.

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY (Bombay North-East): Mr. Speaker,

Sir, The OPEC Council has recently announced their intention to raise crude oil prices by an average of 14 per cent effective from January, 1979. The Minister for Petroleum and Chemical, Shri H. N. Bahuguna has rightly Stated that this will cause hardship to India because our import bill will rise by Rs. 200 crores.

My purpose in raising this matter here in Parliament is, however, to place the OPEC step in its correct perspective so that the people of India do not get a purely selfish orientation in this regard.

The practice of petroleum producing countries jointly determining the price of crude oil began only in 1973 after a continuous erosion (since 1947) of revenues from oil and the simultaneous depletion of the oil reserves. Saudi Arabia for example earned \$ 7.2 per tonne of the oil exported in 1955, but this amount fell to \$ 6.5 per tonne in 1970. The oil producing countries were thus reduced to playing the passive role of a rentier state with no control or management over their only natural resource, namely oil. This control has rested with Anglo-American Oil Companies.

In 1973, the 13 oil producing countries banded together in form of OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) in what is the first example of dynamic economic cooperation among developing countries and thereby seized control over their own natural resources.

Since the formation of OPEC was unexpected, the resultant cartel pricing dislocated many economies. It also led to some Arab countries earning sizeable surpluses running into billions of dollars. This caused international jealousies. But here too the matter should be seen in perspective, especially because of the following.

(1) The OPEC surplus of \$ 40 billion is only 10 per cent of the total inter-