

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-

national liquidity, and less than the share of OPEC exports to total world exports which is 15 per cent.

(2) Most OPEC countries, except Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, have sizeable international indebtedness which their surpluses do not cover. Total OPEC external indebtedness is over \$ 6000 billion which is staggering compared to the OPEC oil surplus of only \$ 40 billion. Arab countries especially are deep in debt.

(3) World inflation has also reduced the real export price of crude oil since 1973. Thus the present proposed hike of 14 per cent will only bring the 1979 crude oil prices, in real terms, back to the 1973 level. There will be no net gain to OPEC.

(4) Oil reserves are depletable and hence the Arab countries which are solely dependent on oil revenues will have to quickly finance diversification of their economies, before this natural resource does get exhausted. Hence funds are urgently required for their economic development.

In view of the above, India which has been a traditional friend of the Arab countries, must educate public opinion to accept the OPEC move with understanding even if it is somewhat to our cost. Otherwise India will cease to deserve to be called a leader of the Third World countries.

(iii) Report Short Supply of Coal in Industrial Areas of Eastern Region for want of Wages

SHRI DHIRENDRANATH BASU (Katwa): Sir, under rule 377, I wish to raise the following matter:

As a result of short supply of coal due to want of wagons in industrial areas of eastern region, the capacity of many of the industries to the extent of 40 to 60 percent is not being utilized, resulting in laying off of workmen in several jute and rubber industries and

closure of some medium industries. It is reported from various States of the eastern region that lakhs of people have been laid off, and thrown out of employment, causing extreme hardships to the workmen and the people of the area. Production cost of industrial products has considerably gone up, and the consumers have now to pay rates of above 50 per cent of the production cost. Unless adequate wagons are allotted for transport of coal to these industrial areas, I am afraid many more industries will have to be closed down. More-over in the flood affected areas, particularly in West Bengal re-construction and rehabilitation works are held up due to shortage of materials. Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Assam agreed to supply some materials for re-construction of houses in flood-devastated areas, but due to shortage of wagons, the materials cannot be transported. I would, therefore, draw the attention of hon. Railway Minister to look into the matter and arrange wagons for coal and other materials as mentioned above, without further delay, failing which the suffering of the people will know no bounds.

The hon. Minister of Energy the other day mentioned in the House that the coal-fields have enough stock to meet the requirements, but due to want of wagons they cannot be transported. Immediate action of the hon. Railway Minister is, therefore, solicited.

I understand that wagons are being exported to different countries against their requirements, without meeting the requirements of our own country. Export of wagons should be stopped, till the urgent requirements of our own country are not met with. The wagon factories like the Standard Wagon should make all efforts to utilize their fullest capacity, so that the shortage may be partially met with.