

15.29 hrs.

COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES

EXTENSION OF TIME FOR PRESENTATION OF REPORT

DR. HENRY AUSTIN (Ernakulam):
I beg to move:

"That this House do extend upto the last day of the next session the time for the presentation of the Report of the Committee of Privileges on the question of privilege regarding handcuffing of Shri Ishwar Chaudhry, M.P., referred to the Committee on the 30th August, 1974 "

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The question is:

"That this House do extend upto the last day of the next session the time for the presentation of the Report of the Committee of Privileges on the question of privilege regarding handcuffing of Shri Ishwar Chaudhry, M.P., referred to the Committee on the 30th August, 1974 "

The motion was adopted.

15.30 hrs.

MATTER UNDER RULE 377

RE: MICA AND SHELLAC INDUSTRIES

SHRI CHAPALENDU BHATTACHARYYA (Guridih): Sir, the time of the House has been taken up on so many minor second-rate matters that the anguish of lakhs of workers working in the mica industry and a lakh of families working as stick-lac growers have not been heard on the floor of the House. I have been requesting for a calling attention motion for the last four days, but all I am getting is permission to raise it under Rule 377 and the minister is not there to reply to the very serious situation which has arisen and which has affected Chotanagpur plateau,

portions of M.P. and the district of Purulia in the eastern region.

The mica trade was canalised in 1972 to protect the weaker section of the people against the growth of monopolistic trends in the mica export trade as it was steadily going into the hands of half a dozen or a dozen mica exporters. This canalisation was to be effected through the MMTC. For six months the MMTC did not define who constituted the weaker section of the trade. Then it came out with a definition which by literal or formal interpretation could include even the largest of the mica exporters. Therefore, the definition of the weaker section by the MMTC was an exercise in futility.

Then they started purchasing mica and fixing the minimum floor price for different varieties of mica for export. The mica trade is a very complex trade with 200 varieties of mica and 150 exporters with the price ranging from Re. 1 to Rs. 1000 per kg.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Please ask a question.

SHRI CHAPALENDU BHATTACHARYYA: Is it a fact that some of the favourites are being tipped off in advance by about a month that such and such varieties of mica would be purchased so that they could build up stock of such varieties of mica? Is it also a fact that the Bihar Mica Exporters' organisation which comprises the largest number of mica exporters, has been kept at arms' length by the Mica Corporation, which is a subsidiary of the MMTC? Then, may I know whether in the fixation of the minimum floor price of different varieties of mica, the prices of No. 6 and mica loose splitting, which are labour intensive, were given very low percentage increase and as a consequence the potential of employment of the mica industry could not be realised? The other question is whether the low minimum price for No. 6 and loose splittings have recoiled on the mica production from mines it-

[Shri Chapalendu Bhattacharya]

15.36 hrs.

self. What has been the shortfall in the total mica export earnings? My last question is directed to the Finance Ministry really, which has been wringing out Rs. 4 crores as export duty from a labour-intensive industry like mica, but which is not ploughing back sufficient funds into the industry. The Mica Corporation says it has no funds to make purchases. They are making *mala fide* rejections of mica supplies and so the small producers of mica are forced to make distress sales of mica to bigger producers with its melancholy chain-effect on three lakhs of families over the 72-mile mica belt in Bihar.

An equally melancholy denouement is being revealed in the shellac industry. There collusion is reflected in equalising the minimum export price of hand-made shellac with one per cent impurity with the minimum export price of machine-made shellac of .5 per cent impurity, which is simplicity itself. This will mean that the entire shellac industry of the small men who are manufacturing hand-made shellac will go to the wall.

That is precisely what has taken place. So, all I want is that the traditional differential price between hand-made shellac and machine-made shellac, that is, about Rs. 250 per maund should be re-established and *status quo* maintained in the differential price. If they want to earn more foreign exchange, let them add Rs. 500 per quintal of machine-made shellac to the present price of Rs. 2,618 per quintal as on 30-5-74, fixed as minimum export price for hand-made shallac also. Unless this is done, this will impinge upon the production of stick lac itself and already prices have crashed from Rs. 1200 to Rs. 600 per maund. It will be a melancholy day for the tribal belt in Chhotanagpur from which I come.

We must have a debate on this.

STATUTORY RESOLUTION RE: DISAPPROVAL OF MAINTENANCE OF INTERNAL SECURITY (AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE AND MOTION RE: DISAPPROVAL OF PRESIDENTIAL ORDER SUSPENDING CITIZENS' RIGHT TO MOVE A COURT AGAINST DETENTION ORDERS UNDER MISA AND CONSERVATION OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE AND PREVENTION OF SMUGGLING ACTIVITIES BILL—Contd.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: We will now take up the Statutory Resolution on the Maintenance of Internal Security (Amendment) Ordinance, the motion on the Presidential Order and the Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities Bill.

Shri Mavalankar to continue his speech.

THE MINISTER OF WORKS AND HOUSING AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI K. RAGHU RAMAIAH): Sir, I have one submission to make.

In order to enable the House to complete this particular item within time because we are already running short of time—it is a humble request to you—would you, Sir, indicate at what time the Minister will be called so that the discussion may not go on endlessly and we are able to finish it within time?

AN HON. MEMBER: Tomorrow.

SHRI SHYAMNANDAN MISHRA (Begusarai): The Presidential Order is a very important one. You cannot shut out discussion.

SHRI K. RAGHU RAMAIAH: I am not shutting it out.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I will just give the facts to the House and what the position is with regard to