

12.58 hrs.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

(i) LAY OFF OF TEXTILE WORKERS IN AHMEDABAD.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Mavalankar may invite the attention of the House to a matter under Rule 377. No speech. You just invite the attention of the House.

SHRI P. G. MAVALANKAR (Ahmedabad): Sir, I must thank you for granting me permission to raise this urgent matter. A grave situation has arisen because nearly 15,000 textile workers in Ahmedabad have been laid off due to the 50 per cent power cut which has come into operation since yesterday. This power cut is very extraordinary and unprecedented in Gujarat because this 50 per cent harsh power cut is in addition to the already existing power cut of 15 per cent and a number of other restrictions like staggering imposed since last October. The textile workers of Ahmedabad have been suffering for quite some time. This 50 per cent power cut has rendered 15,000 textile workers idle. There is a great alarm and dismay in the textile and industrial world of Ahmedabad. If this alarming situation goes on, I am afraid 40,000 to 50,000 textile workers would be out of job in a matter of days. I want, therefore, the Government, particularly the Ministers concerned, to look into this matter carefully and urgently. The other difficulty is that the coal crisis is also deepening. The coal supply position for textile mills is day by day becoming precarious. Therefore, I invite the attention of the Government and the Minister concerned to the very serious situation where the textile workers in Ahmedabad are plunged in great difficulties. Already, they are living in hell. On top of it, there is this 65 per cent power cut resulting in thousands of workers getting out of job. The Government have not

done anything for the last few days. Though negotiations with ONGC workers are going on for last two years, no decision has been taken. Government should look into the matter urgently and give some immediate relief to the workers.

13 hrs.

(ii) ATTEMPT TO DEMOLISH STATUE OF DR. B. R. AMBEDKAR AT BAYANA, RAJASTHAN.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE (Rajapur): I want to draw attention to a very disgraceful event that has taken place. On the 14th April the entire country celebrated the fifth anniversary of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the maker of our Constitution and a great social rebel. In the Central Hall here we celebrated his birthday. On that day one of the Deputy Ministers at the Centre, Shri Pahadia, had unveiled the statue of Dr. Ambedkar at Bayana in Rajasthan in the morning. In the same evening some gangsters attacked the statue of Dr. Ambedkar and tried to demolish it. Dr. Ambedkar was born as an untouchable in this country and, unfortunately, because of our orthodoxy he died as an untouchable to the lasting shame of all. Even the statue of Dr. Ambedkar has been treated as an untouchable and attacked, even though he was the maker of our Constitution and a great social rebel. It should not be treated as a mere technical matter saying there is no obligation on the part of the Minister to make a statement. Dr. Ambedkar in this country stands on a high pedestal. So, I demand of the Minister that he should make a categorical statement that immediately an investigation would be instituted and those who are responsible for this act would be punished in a deterrent way so that in future the orthodoxy will not act in a manner which will betray the confidence of the people of this country.