

AN HON. MEMBER: What about Commerce Ministry?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI M. A. BABY): That will come later on. Now, we take up the remaining three Special Mentions. Immediately after that we will take up the Statement by the Minister.

Now Special Mention by Shri Kotiah Pragada.

SPECIAL MENTIONS—Contd.

Crisis in Handloom Industry

SHRI KOTIAH PRAGADA (Andhra Pradesh): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, at the outset I thank the Chairman for giving me permission to make a Special Mention about the handloom weaver who are in distress.

The recent decision of the Government of India, permitting exports of 40 million kgs. of cotton yarn and over 10 lakh bales of long staple cotton with cash compensatory allowance and other incentives like duty draw-backs and import entitlements has resulted in steep increase in prices of cotton yarn to the detriment of the handloom weavers who are already in distress.

Sir, the announcement of the Government of India that hank yarn of counts ranging from 1 to 60's would not be allowed to be exported to safeguard the interests of handloom weavers could not help them as counts of yarn over 60's are exported in unlimited quantities due to absence of restrictions on their exports. The Government has not taken advantage of the statutory obligation imposed on the textile mills to spin hank yarn to the extent of not less than 50 per cent of yarn delivered by them. Consequently, the production of hank yarn for use of handlooms is being decreased from year to year as is evident from the figures of yarn production available with the Government. But it is unfortunate that no prosecution has been launched against erring mills. The powerlooms are allowed to use freely large quantities of

the tax-free hank yarn intended for handlooms. Further, the reduced quantities of yarn available in the open markets is freely used for several other purposes like sewing threads, knitting, fishing nets, etc. As there is no machinery to ensure supply of the available hank yarn to handlooms, it is not known how much quantity of hank yarn was actually available for use of handlooms. The figures of production of handloom cloth published by the Government from time to time were only inflated figures to cover up the increasing under and unemployment caused to handloom weavers in this country. The weavers' co-operative spinning mills which are to stick up strictly to the stipulation of spinning fully hank yarn are setting up frames for production of cone yarn in the name of modernisation and expansion, approved by the NCDC Ltd. and the financing institutions controlled by the Government.

All these have culminated in further increase of yarn prices to such an extent never known in the history; within one month commencing from January to February, 1990, the yarn prices have risen abnormally. They are still on increase despite the agreement stated to have been reached with mill-owners for voluntary price control of yarn prices. Similar voluntary price controls were tried on two or three occasions in the past, with no benefit to the handloom weavers. Cotton imported free of duty and supplied to the mills for spinning yarn and distributing the same to the handloom weavers did not benefit them.

The yarn prices in January and February, 1990, were as follows: In the case of the 40 counts yarn—10 lbs.—it was Rs. 215 and Rs. 250 respectively. In the case of the 60 counts yarn, it was Rs. 400 and Rs. 450. In the case of the 80 counts yarn, it was Rs. 530 and Rs. 605. In the case of the 100 counts yarn, the price was Rs. 675 and Rs. 775. The yarn prices which had more than doubled during the last four years had hit hard the handlooms. The recent increase of over 15 to 20 per cent in prices of fine and super fine counts of yarn is a death blow, par-

[Shri Kotaiah Pragada]

ticularly, to the handloom weavers using them for their production.

The power cuts in certain States, including Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, is just like adding fuel to fire to the problem of supply of yarn to the handloom weavers. The spinning mills manufacturing yarn for exclusive supply to handlooms should be exempted from power cuts and power should be supplied at concessional rates, the benefit of which should percolate to the handloom weavers. (*Time-bell rings*).

The abnormal increase in the prices of all popular dyes and chemicals and also the scarcity or nonavailability of particular dyes (Brown R, Green XBN, Blue 2 R Acra Sulphur black OG grains, caustic soda, etc.) have adversely affected the majority of the handloom weavers, entirely depending on the production of coloured products.

Countries like Germany, Japan, etc., formerly producing and exporting dyes and chemicals to countries like India and other developing or underdeveloped countries had reduced production of dyes and chemicals suitable for colouring of cotton and cotton fabrics as their consumption was gradually reduced over a period of two decades and they have been directed to reduce further their production for reasons of atmospheric pollution. This has encouraged our greedy manufacturers of dyes and chemicals to export them to Germany, Japan, etc., ignoring the legitimate needs of the consumers in the country. (*Time-bell rings*).

The handloom weavers, unable to realise increase in prices of their products in proportion to the increase in prices of their raw materials, mainly yarn, dyes and chemicals, are forced to resort to distress sale of their products, resulting in drastic reduction in their meagre wages at a time when the prices of food and other necessities of life are going up day by day.

The Government is well aware of the fact that the reservation orders issued from time to time since April, 1950,

under the provisions of the Essential Commodities Act and also the recent reservation orders issued under the provisions of a Parliamentary legislation to protect handlooms against the unfair competition of the mechanised sectors of the textile industry never helped handlooms as the mills and powerlooms are openly producing the reserved varieties. (*Time-bell rings*).

SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR (Gujarat): Sir, it is his maiden Special Mention.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI M. A. BABY): Perhaps, the hon. Member has mistaken himself to be a Minister making a statement.

SHRI KOTAIAH PRAGADA: Please give me two minutes more.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI M. A. BABY): A maximum time of three minutes is given in the case of Special Mentions.

SHRI KOTAIAH PRAGADA: I am a newcomer. Kindly allow me. Give me two minutes more.

SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR: This is his first Special Mention. Please allow him.

SHRI KOTAIAH PRAGADA: The courts also in several cases have granted stays of the operation of the orders reserving certain varieties of cloth for handlooms. The officials committees which went into this aspect, on several occasions, stated that the reservation orders have remained on paper only.

Added to this, the excess weaving capacity in the powerloom sector, which is capable of producing annually more than 20,000 million metres of cloth without any fiscal levies as against the annual estimated requirement of cloth of 16,000 million metres only, both for internal consumption and for exports, not to speak of production of mill and handloom cloth has been responsible for the ruthless uprooting of handlooms and displacing thousands and thousands of handloom

weavers who have been driven to the streets abegging and closure of certain textile mills. Further the exports of powerloom cloth in the guise of handloom cloth has also resulted in serious set back to the handloom industry, resulting in accumulation of handloom cloth and consequent under-employment and unemployment for longer periods in a year, causing starvation, leading to starvation deaths of and suicides by handloom weavers in centres with heavy concentration of handlooms. This could have been avoided if the recommendation of the high-powered handloom committee headed by B. Siva Raman, the then member of the Planning Commission, to stamp every metre of powerloom cloth at loom stage was enforced. But the Government has been a silent spectator of the sad situation because the handloom weavers have no trade unions to shout slogans and make noise.

The only way to keep the handloom weavers at work throughout the year is to reserve the non-tailorable cloth to handlooms, allowing the mills and powerlooms to produce the tailorable cloth, to ensure employment to all classes of workers in the textile industry. The other alternative is to allow the mills and powerlooms to produce cloth out of man-made yarns, leaving cotton and cotton-blended yarns and silk yarns to handlooms.

The long standing demand of the handloom weavers from all over the country to arrange supply of yarn and other raw materials at subsidised prices free of fiscal levies just as seeds, fertilisers, sugar, cement, paper and even rice are distributed to several classes of consumers at subsidised prices is to be conceded immediately.

Lastly I submit that at the time of handloom weavers' satyagraha at Madras for a period of 75 days commencing from 15th April to 30th June, 1951, during which period more than 10,000 handloom weavers including myself courted arrest. late Shri Rajaji, the giant among the world statesmen, aptly described that the Indian handloom weaver

is a motherless child when approached by press people. There is no change in the condition of the handloom weaver. I am hopeful that the present Government as promised by the Prime Minister in his first address to the nation, would soon give preference to 'production by masses' in place of mass production by machines, particularly in the textile industry to maximise employment in the rural sector.

श्री राम नरेश यादव (उत्तर प्रदेश) : महोदय, यह एक बहुत ही गंभीर प्रश्न है इसलिये इसकी तरफ सरकार का ध्यान जाना चाहिये । मैं अपने आपको इससे संबद्ध करता हूँ । मैं समझता हूँ कि सारे सदन का ध्यान इस तरफ जाना चाहिये ।

DR. G. VIJAYA MOHAN REDDY (Andhra Pradesh): We all associate ourselves with this special mention. Handloom weavers are the greatest sufferers.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI M. A. BABY): I think the Government will take note of the sense of the House but the point is that the special mention on handloom problem went on like an unending sari of Draupadi in the Puranas.

Raids on the House of Political leaders of Orissa

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA (Rajasthan): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the House and the Government to the raids which have taken place on the 11 ex-Ministers' and also the Chief Minister's Houses in Orissa. Once more I would like to draw your attention that the standard policy for raiding any house is 'only when there is a definite information'. This was stated by the Finance Minister long before and this month which speaking on the budget also. In spite of that I do not believe that during these three or four months this new Government in Orissa could find out that all the 11 Ministers and their Chief Minister were corrupt and they had all the information available with them. In view of this I strongly believe and it was