

[Shri G. G. Swell]

of the whole of the North-Eastern region of the country." I think he is undertaking the things. Assam is the gateway of the North-East. Whatever happens in Assam, for better or for worse, affects the whole of the North-East. In the early 60s and the early 70s, some politicians in Assam conceived the idea of establishing Assamese hegemony in the whole of the North-East by declaring Assamese to be the sole official language. At that time, there was no Mizoram. At that time, there was no Arunachal. As a matter of fact, the whole of the North-East was the State of Assam. But, some wrong-headed politicians—and I am sure my friends Mr. Ledger, Mr. Saikia and others regret that day—thought that they would impose Assamese hegemony in the whole of the North-East. They began by making Assamese the sole official language of the whole of Assam. That is how it started. That is how the struggle for a separate State of Meghalaya started. I came to the Parliament for the first time on this platform of carving out a new state of Meghalaya out of Assam. The seeds of movement for Arunachal and for the insurgency in Mizoram started from their time. They were all parts of Assam. Therefore, whatever happens in Assam, for better or for worse, affects the whole of North-East.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI M. A. BABY): You may finish in one minute.

SHRI G. G. SWELL: I have so many things to say.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI M. A. BABY): We have to start the other business at 5.00 o'clock. You can continue next time.

SHRI G. G. SWELL: What is happening in Assam today? The ULFA activity has already started affecting the whole of North-East. I would like to go on record at this stage and tell the House that ULFA may be a terrorist organisation. It may be a secessionist organisation because it is saying that its objective is a socialist sovereign Republic of Assam and the North-East. And, therefore, it is secessionist. But it is an out-growth of a psychology of the common people of Assam. This also has to be recognised. It is in that way an extension of the struggle waged by the AGP. AGP is not part of ULFA, but ULFA is a child of AGP. Shall I stop here?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI M. A. BABY): Yes. You may continue on the 25th.

ALLOCATION OF TIME FOR GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION AND OTHER BUSINESS

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI M. A. BABY): I have to inform Members that the Business Advisory Committee at its meeting held today, the 11th May, 1990, allotted time for Government Legislative and other Business as follows:

<i>Business</i>	<i>Time Allotted</i>
1. Consideration and passing of the Legislative Councils Bill, 1990	3 hours
2. Discussion on the working of the Ministry of Urban Development.	2 days
3. Consideration and return of the Appropriation (No. 2) Bill, 1990, as passed by Lok Sabha.	4 hours

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-