

she is my sweetheart, don't you agree? I think Mr. Gopalsamy will agree with me.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: I support you.

SHRI S. K. T. RAMACHANDRAN: Let us come to business, Madam. At least, Mr. Gopalsamy likes and loves my wife. Madam, let us come to the point. This is a very serious matter. When we want to convey some very important message to somebody on the other side of the phone and when we are in the middle of the talk, suddenly there will be a cut. Then, for half an hour or one hour you try the number again, but you don't get it.

Madam, the regular irregularity in the functioning of the telecom system reached its culmination during the recent strike period. Whenever you dialled a number—most of you would have heard it—there was a voice coming across the line, "This line is very busy, please dial after some time." Then you wait for some time and dial again only to hear the same voice again, "This line is very busy, please dial after some time." Madam, we can't understand whether it was manipulated or whether the line was really very busy. Madam, it was not only during the strike period but even otherwise also the telecom system has been regularly irregular.

Madam, since the telecom system is the nerve centre of our whole communication system, if it does not respond to the call of the people, there is no use of the system. Their mission itself is defeated and so the Ministry should take serious steps to correct the system and see that it is put to the best possible use. Thank you very much, Madam.

Discrimination Against the workers of Paradeep, New Mangalore and Tuticorin ports

SHRI PARVAT KUMAR SAMANTARAY (Orissa): Madam Deputy Chairman, I am drawing the attention of this House to a number of Acts enacted by this Parliament mostly for the workers, only to be forgotten in the midway when question comes of giving the privileges, benefits under the law. I am particularly mentioning about the condition and plight of the cargo-handling workers of the Paradeep Port, the New Mangalore Port and the Tuticorin Port and the Haldia Dock Complex.

Madam, we have got ten major ports in the country. These three Ports have come under the purview of the dock workers system. For the last ten years though the law is very clear for extending the wage benefits and privileges mentioned in the Indian Dock Labour (Regulation and Employment) Act and the federation representing the dock workers had settlements with the Government of India in the years 1980, 1984 and recently in the year 1988, there is no result. It is causing concern. These workers around 8,000 in total, are getting less payment, and they are deprived of even getting regular payment as given to other cargo-handling workers of other major ports.

I would like to submit here that the dock workers in other major ports are not only being extended the facility of these wages but also they have been given the privilege of medical reimbursement facilities, leave with wage children education allowance, Gratuity paid-holidays and other privileges. But these workers are not availing all those. Even the Port Trust Board has passed a resolution extending the benefits to the cargo-handling workers. The Government sitting in Delhi is sitting over the decision. This has happened very recently. The Paradeep Port Trust Board decided to extend the minimum wage guaranteed for 21 days for

[Pravat Kumar Sramantaray]

these cargo workers. The Government of India is yet to clear it. I have information that the Government of India is still making queries. I am afraid it may lead to strike. We are already, facing price rise. Once the Dock workers go on strike, the prices will soar further in the country. I demand for their early regularisation.

Thank you, Madam.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I will bring to the notice of the hon. Members that we have 21 special mentions and also the reply of the Minister of Civil Aviation and the reply to the discussion on the price-rise by the Finance Minister also. I take the sense of the House. Looking at the heavy business, we can dispense with the lunch hour, not the lunch and continue with the business and finish it. Otherwise, we would not be able to finish the business. Special mentions will be taken up now. We will finish the special mentions. Then I will request the Minister to give his reply.

SHRI JAGESH DESAI (Maharashtra): Madam, give half-an-hour break.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I have no objection even for one hour. But I feel that the Members who want to go and have lunch, can go and come back. There are 21 special mentions. I don't want to curtail their time. Only two days of this session have been left. So, I would like and request the Members to forget about even this half an hour. Let us have no lunch hour. Let us today sit and do some good work. You can have lunch. Let us not have lunch hour today.

Non-implementation of the award of National industrial Tribunal on the Pay Scales of Employees of Rural Banks.

SHRI N. E. BALARAM (Kerala): I would like to draw the attention of the Government to some of the questions raised by the Regional Rural Bank employees. The Regional Rural Bank employees have been agitating over years on the question of parity in the scales of pay of the employees of sponsored banks, comparable posts. I think it is their legitimate demand. But so far neither the sponsored banks nor the Government have taken note of this agitation or found out any solution to the problem raised by the employees. As a result those bank employees have already decided to go on strike. Besides they had approached the Supreme Court also to find a solution. At that stage on the advice given by the Supreme Court, the Government has already constituted under the provisions of Industrial Disputes Act, National Industrial Tribunal to decide the question. The Tribunal has already given the Award. The Award was given, according to my information, some two months back, but even now the Award has not been published in the gazette as per the requirements of the Industrial Disputes Act. It is very surprising to me. So, what I want to draw the attention of the Government to (1) They should publish the Award immediately; (2) They should implement this Award because the Government was also a party to it. When it came to the Supreme Court, the Government also agreed that the employees can go to the Industrial Tribunal and the Award given by the Tribunal would be binding on both sides. Now, the Award has already been given by the Tribunal. So, I request the Finance Minister as well as the Labour Minister to look into the matter and have immediate discussion on the question and implement the Award.

SHRI ASHIS SEN (West Bengal): Madam, I may be allowed to speak on it.