

12.00 hrs.

SHORT NOTICE QUESTIONS

Closure of Bidi Factories in Vidarbha

S. N. Q. No. 17. **Shri Balkrishna Wasnik:** Will the Minister of Labour and Employment be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware of the closure of bidi factories in Vidarbha from 1st July, 1958 rendering about three lakh labour unemployed;

(b) if so, whether the closure is the result of disparity in wages as obtaining in the neighbouring States;

(c) whether any State Governments have approached the Central Government to take suitable steps to remove the disparity in wages and working conditions of the workers, and

(d) if so, what steps the Government are contemplating to take in the matter?

The Deputy Minister of Labour (Shri Abid Ali): (a) Yes.

(b). Yes.

(c) and (d). A statement is placed on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

The State Governments of West Bengal and Bombay had brought to the notice of the Central Government the disparities existing in the minimum rates of wages fixed for employment in bidi industry in adjacent States and desired that suitable steps should be taken to remove the disparities. The Minimum Wages (Central) Advisory Board, set up by the Central Government under Section 8 of the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, considered the situation arising from the disparity in minimum wages obtaining in adjacent States and on the suggestion of the Board, the Central Government convened in March 1958 an Inter-State Committee to consider the matter. The Committee recommended that all State Governments should fix or revise minimum wages in such

a manner that serious disparities were avoided, which would lead to the migration of the industry from one State to another. The State Governments have been requested to expedite action in this regard and the matter is receiving their attention.

12.01 hrs.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

Shri Tangamani: May I know whether bidi industry is also one of the industries covered by the Minimum Wages Act and also whether the directions for fixing the minimum wages have been issued only to Punjab and Bombay Governments or to all the State Governments in the country?

Shri Abid Ali: Yes, Sir; the decisions reached at the Nainital Conference were communicated to all the State Governments.

Shri Tangamani: In the statement we find that a reference was made to the Minimum Wages Act, Section 8 and the two State Governments were asked to clear this disparity. May I know whether other State Governments were also given this communication for fixing the minimum wages and that there must be uniform wages and if so what is the minimum wage fixed per thousand?

Shri Abid Ali: Besides that we had also convened a meeting of the representatives of the State Governments concerned and there it was decided that the rates of payments to the workers should be such that there should not be much disparity so that the industry might not migrate from one State to another.

Shri Tangamani rose—

Mr. Speaker: What about Mr. Wasnik?

Shri Balkrishna Wasnik: I have been rising, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Members who table questions do not pursue them.

Shri Tangasani: May I know whether the Government is aware of the fact that on the question of wage increase there has been a strike for nearly a month in Trichinopoly in Madras State? If so, what direction, if any, has been given by the Central Government?

Shri Abid Ali: It is in their own sphere and there is no question of our giving a direction to them. We send them suggestions whenever it becomes necessary.

Shri Balkrishna Wasnik: May I know whether it is a fact that in the inter-State Committee meeting held on 31.3.1958, it was agreed to revise upwardly the wages in the neighbouring States of Bombay to discourage shifting of industry from Vidarbha? If so, which States have accepted this suggestion and what wages have they fixed?

Shri Abid Ali: I have already replied to this question.

Shri Balkrishna Wasnik: May I know whether the bidi industry is shifting to neighbouring States due to increased wages and a large number of bidi workers are leaving Bombay State due to unemployment.

Shri Abid Ali: I do not think the position is serious to that extent. The works were closed because some of the employers were not prepared to follow the notification which was issued by the Government of Bombay. They went to the court and the courts gave the decision. Most of the factories have already opened.

Shri Balkrishna Wasnik: May I know whether the closure of the bidi factories in Vidarbha was due to the regulation of the chhat system there and if so whether the Government is contemplating to bring a suitable legislation in the Centre for regulating it in the whole of India?

Shri Abid Ali: This system was one of the items disposed of and the court also has given its decision in the matter. It is not necessary for the

Government to issue any further instructions in this behalf.

Loss suffered by Indian Airlines Corporation

S. N. Q. No. 18. Shri M. E. Krishna: Will the Minister of Transport and Communications be pleased to lay a statement showing the reasons for the steep rise in the losses of the Indian Airlines Corporation from the actual loss of Rs. 103 lakhs in 1957-58 to estimated loss of Rs. 224 lakhs in 1958-59?

The Deputy Minister of Civil Aviation (Shri Mohiuddin): I lay a statement on the table of the Sabha.

Statement

The reasons given by the Indian Airlines Corporation for the steep rise in their estimated losses for the year 1958-59 are, broadly, the estimated increase in depreciation, insurance and landing charges, and increased expenditure on fuel as a result of introduction of Viscounts. The Corporation could not also assess accurately the increase in revenue on Viscount services at the time the Budget Estimates for 1958-59 were prepared in December, 1957. The tentative revised estimate of loss for 1958-59 is that it may be about half of the estimated loss.

Shri M. E. Krishna: The revised estimate of losses for 1958-59 is now about Rs. 112 lakhs, that is, about Rs. 9 lakhs more than 57-58. Has it dawned on the Minister and the IAC that budgeting for a loss of Rs. 2.25 crores is likely to damage the reputation of the Corporation? May I also know, since the Corporation is subsidised to the extent of Rs. 1.25 crores per annum in the losses, whether any steps are taken to work the Indian Airlines Corporation, which is rich man's transportation, without loss and without expecting a subsidy from the Government?