

I submitted two questions, short notice questions, about affairs in Kashmir and the intervention of foreigners there, I was informed that the questions were disallowed. May I know, Sir, the procedure by which we can agitate this matter. Very recently, burning topics, scandals, have been going on. Whispering campaigns are going on abroad. How can we raise these questions on the floor of the House so as to get precise and correct information from Government? When these questions are asked in the interest of Government, they are unfortunately disallowed. How can we raise these important questions urgently on the floor of the House?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Parliament has been sitting since the third August. Now, we are on the 15th September—about one and a half months thereafter. That short notice question was tabled 25 days ago. A short notice question may or may not be accepted. It is open to the Minister to say: "I want more time." The hon. Member had sufficient time to table a 'long notice' question in which case I could certainly have admitted that question. But hon. Members need not depend upon the Ministers' convenience for other questions. They will be answered in due course. But in the case mentioned by Mr. More, I do not think it was pursued.

Now, so far as the practice is concerned, if a question is not allowed, there are a number of ways in which it could be brought to light. Resolutions and other things can be moved relating to that question. I am not able to say what exactly ought to be done. Naturally, if any question is found to be very necessary to be answered, the hon. Member concerned always writes to me or tells me. If it appertains to a matter on which the Minister is not able to gather information, then, on account of that, that question may not be allowed. It is not as if the hon. Member is without a remedy. But at the time of receipt of a particular question, the Minister might have thought

that, in the public interest, it was not necessary to answer that particular question. We cannot force a Minister to accept short notice questions. Hon. Members may know that though I might find no objection in a question put by an hon. Member, the hon. Minister may not like to have it answered for want of time and for various other reasons also. Under the circumstances, there need not be any fear. No apprehension need be entertained. If sufficient opportunities are not given to any hon. Member, he might always come to me; if that hon. Member does not want to come to me, he may write to me. I shall certainly look into this matter.

Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy: May I invite your attention to a particular matter? The hon. Prime Minister had given his consent to answer a short notice question. I came to you and conveyed the same information to you, and you were pleased to say that you will allow the question. But till now, it has not come up on the floor of the House. May I know why?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I do not know whether he has got a written letter from the hon. Minister. I am unable to say. But it is a very difficult affair sometimes. Hon. Members may feel that when they have a talk with the Minister, the Minister will be able to answer the question. They come away with that impression, and the Minister has another impression. In between, I got into trouble. I will proceed to the next subject—Short Notice Question.

Short Notice Questions and Answers

STOPPAGE OF PUBLICATION OF THREE CALCUTTA DAILIES

I. Shri M. L. Dwivedi: Will the Minister of Labour be pleased to state:

(a) whether any tribunal has been appointed to deal with the matter arising out of the sudden stoppage of publication of three Calcutta dailies, namely 'Times of India', 'Nav Bharat Times' and 'Satyug' with effect from

1st September 1953, thus rendering about a thousand employees out of jobs for no fault of their own;

(b) whether Government are taking any steps to see that the employees of these papers are restored to their jobs or given fair consideration for alternative employment pending a decision by the tribunal; and if so, what they are?

The Minister of Labour (Shri V. V. Giri): (a) Yes. The Government of West Bengal have referred to an Industrial Tribunal for adjudication the issue of payment of compensation and/or relief and/or other dues to employees whose services were terminated as a result of stoppage of publication of the three daily newspapers.

(b) Government sympathise with the employees who have been rendered unemployed almost suddenly and hope that the Management would give immediate and sympathetic consideration to the question of providing alternative employment to these employees. This matter, I am sure, must also be receiving the attention of the State Government.

Shri M. L. Dwivedi: May I know, Sir, if Government are aware that the management of these papers in a circular letter to the advertisers wrote that they had been compelled to suspend publication of these papers on account of power shortage and other difficulties?

Shri V. V. Giri: I take the information from the hon. member.

Shri M. L. Dwivedi: May I know, Sir, if it is a fact that appointments on a large scale were made in these concerns in Calcutta and huge orders were placed for printing machinery, etc., with a view to expansion of their activities in the month of August last? If so, what were the reasons for the suspension of publication of these papers in spite of the fact that they had intended expansion?

Shri V. V. Giri: The case for the employers is that financially they are

running at a loss. That is the information generally collected from representations received.

Shri Joachim Alva: Is Government aware that all this mess is due to,— and this kind of trouble may arise in future too—the unbridled ambition of one, two or three individuals who by any and every means want to control all organs of the Indian press with a view to muzzle public opinion in advance of the coming General Elections?

Shri V. V. Giri: The information is very interesting; but I cannot reply to that.

Dr. Lanka Sundaram: Is Government aware of the resolution passed by the Federation of Working Journalists in Trivandurum requesting for an amendment of the Industrial Disputes Act to bring newspapermen within the category of workers, so that they can go before an appropriate tribunal for immediate relief?

Shri V. V. Giri: That matter is being actively and sympathetically considered.

Shrimati Benu Chakravartty: Is it a fact, Sir, that the money that was invested in the papers is now going to be transferred to cement production, because it brings in more profit? Have the Government any machinery whereby they can look into the entire matter before retrenchment is resorted to?

Shri V. V. Giri: We have no information on that aspect of the matter.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I would not like newspapermen to lean out.

Shri S. S. More: They want to have a look at you.

Shri A. M. Thomas: It is of vital interest to them.

Shri H. N. Mukerjee: Is Government aware that one of the three papers concerned started its Calcutta edition only four months back and the staff employed increased by several hundreds as a consequence? Has Government therefore told the employers that

this kind of treatment of people whom they have employed is extremely reprehensible?

Shri V. V. Giri: I am certain that the Journalists' Association has been representing matters to the State Government and to the Chief Minister of Bengal.

Shri H. N. Mukerjee: Is Government aware, Sir, that the Labour Ministry of the Government of West Bengal appears to think, at least as far as certain sections of the employees of these three papers are concerned, that it comes under the ambit of the Government of India rather than of the Provincial Government?

The Prime Minister (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru): It seems obvious, *prima facie*, that the whole occurrence is most deplorable. It is a kind of thing, in which, normally speaking, it would be desirable to have a full enquiry—though it is a very small matter whether the Government of India deals with it, or the Government of West Bengal, because there is no difference of opinion between them in regard to it.

Our difficulty is that, since this matter, or a part of it, has been referred to the Industrial Tribunal, it has become a little difficult to start a rival kind of enquiry into the matter. Government would prefer a full enquiry to find out what the real facts are and why this sudden occurrence should take place.

Shri H. N. Mukerjee: Would Government take steps to make sure that the journalists, at least for the purpose of this tribunal, come under the ambit of the definition of "workmen" who are entitled to appear before the tribunal?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: As far as I know, we cannot do that except by a change of the law. As my hon. colleague has said, we are perfectly prepared to consider a change of the law, but cannot do it overnight.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: Since the Industrial Disputes Act does not apply to the journalists and as such they may not be allowed to appear before the Tribunal, will an enquiry be made in their particular case?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: If it is possible without coming into conflict with the other enquiry, we shall certainly consider that.

Dr. Lanka Sundaram: In view of the statement made by the hon. the Prime Minister, may I know, whether he is prepared to remit this case for enquiry by the Press Commission which is now in session?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: How can we do it?

Shri K. K. Basu: Do Government propose to supersede the present enquiry and appoint a special enquiry committee as has been done in the case of the tramway fares, to look into the matter with much wider terms of reference?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I cannot answer that straightway. It is very difficult.

Shri V. V. Giri: It is very difficult to answer that question unless it is considered properly.

Shri P. C. Bose: If the company, as is reported, are winding up all their business, what will happen if any compensation is ordered as a result of the enquiry?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: There is no such intention.

Shri Joachim Alva: Does the Ministry of Labour propose to place its views regarding newspaper employees, both editorial and non-editorial, before the Press Commission and does it intend to arm itself with sufficient powers in case the Calcutta occurrence repeats itself in Delhi?

Shri V. V. Giri: Certainly that aspect will be considered.

Shri A. K. Gopalan: Is the Government aware, Sir, that the workers who were thrown out represented to the State Government that if the State Government would help them they are ready to run it on a co-operative basis?

Shri V. V. Giri: I have no information.

Dr. Lanka Sundaram: I know, Sir, whether there is any provision or procedure for the Government of India to enquire into the losses or profits of an industrial undertaking of this type before they arrive at a decision to retrench people?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: It is a question of interpretation of law.

Dr. Lanka Sundaram: My question is rather limited. Is there any procedure to satisfy themselves that a particular undertaking is losing money for them to embark on retrenchment.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Why should Government be forced to commit itself to a view now? They will look into it.

डा० युगल किशोर सिंह: न्यूजपेपर्स इम्प्लायीज में जो लोग इंडस्ट्रियल डिस्प्यूट्स ऐक्ट के अन्दर वर्कमेन नहीं कहे जाते हैं और जिनका मामला इंडस्ट्रियल ट्रिब्युनल के सामने नहीं है ऐसे कर्मचारियों के मामले की जांच कराकर उचित कार्रवाई करने में सरकार को क्या प्राप्ति हो सकती है ?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I find that it is the same question, which has already been put. I will not allow any more questions on this.

STRIKE BY WORKERS OF BANKSIMULIA COLLIERY

II. Shri Vittal Rao: Will the Minister of Labour be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the workers of Banksimulia Colliery are on strike since 1st September, 1953;

(b) the number of workers involved;

(c) the demands of the workers;

(d) the action that has been taken by the Conciliation Officer and Regional Labour Commissioner on the demands of the workers;

(e) whether the Police have resorted to firing on the workers on 1st September 1953 resulting in the death of a worker and injuries to several others; and

(f) what action do Government propose to take to end the strike.

The Minister of Labour (Shri V. V. Giri): (a) Yes; the workers were on strike during the period 1st to 7th September 1953.

(b) About 10,000.

(c) The following were the immediate demands of the workers who went on strike:—

(i) Re-instatement of discharged workers.

(ii) Rates for tubs for miners.

(iii) Non-victimisation of workers.

(d) The Conciliation Officer (Central), Asansol, conciliated in the dispute and as a result of his intervention an agreement was reached between the parties. A copy of the Agreement dated the 6th September 1953 is laid on the Table of the House. [See Appendix VI, annexure No. 29.]

(e) Police had to resort to firing because a violent mob of about 4,000 workers forcibly tried to stop the work at the Poniat Workshop, raided the family quarters and beat the police party with lathies. As a result of the firing, a trammer was killed and two others injured. One Police Officer, three Police Inspectors and four constables were also injured.

(f) Does not arise. As stated in the reply to part (a) of the question, the strike ended on the 7th September 1953.

Shri Vittal Rao: May I know, Sir, of the cause of the strike was that the