

pared by IDBI for the modernisation of Forty-two chronically sick textile mills under National Textiles Corporation of India.

[Translation]

DR. ABRAR AHMED: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member has given the data about the present situation. I have already stated that scheme was withdrawn in July, 1991 and the amount which was to be disbursed is still being disbursed. No new mill will be covered under this scheme.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: The hon. Minister has not given complete answer to the question. I have just asked whether the NTC mills are covered under this scheme or not?

DR. ABRAR AHMED: There is no separate scheme for NTC.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Are they covered by this scheme?

[Translation]

DR. ABRAR AHMED: Not under this scheme.

SHRI SANDIPAN BHAGWAN THROAT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, food, cloth and housing are the three basic necessities of human beings. The textile policy of the Government is not proper. Finance is given to the mills in this country whether it is for modernisation or as project finance but its rate of interest is very high. I would like to know whether Government is formulating any policy under which the rates of interests on advances by IDBI or Financial Institutions will be reduced? If not, when it will be done?

DR. ABRAR AHMED: At present no such proposal is under consideration.

[English]

SHRI MATI GEETA MUKHERJEE: Sir, I want to know from the Minister that among

these amounts how much loan was given to West Bengal units, both jute and textile; such use they made of those funds, and in the nationalised sector, whether the Government is thinking to give some assistance to the textile and jute mills of West Bengal.

[Translation]

DR. ABRAR AHMED: Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Member has clearly asked about the assistance given to two states. I don't have state-wise details. We will let you know about the assistance given by the states, later on.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Question No. 424.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE: Sir, the Minister has just now given answer with regard to Madhya Pradesh. Then why not with regard to West Bengal also?

MR. SPEAKER: Now question No. 424.

Exploitation of Beedi Workers

[Translation]

* 424. SHRI RAMVILAS PASWAN: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state;

(a) whether the Government are aware of the news-item that appeared in Jansatta dated 25th February, 1993 under the caption "Beedi Majdooron ka shoshan aur utpaad shulk ki bhi chori";

(b) if so, whether the Government have conducted any enquiry in this regard; and

(c) the steps being taken by the Government to solve the problems of the beedi workers?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MIN-

ISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P.A. SANGMA):

(a): Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

No evasion of excise duty of any significance order under Jaipur Collectorate of Central Excise has been noticed by Government. From April, 1990 until February 1993, 21 cases of evasion of excise duty involving an amount of Rs. 7.15 lakhs have been detected under the Jaipur Collectorate of Central Excise and cases have been booked against the defaulting beedi manufactures.

As regards other matters referred to in the news item in Jansatta: No complaint has been received regarding non—supply of threads, rejection of beedis etc. from any Union or industrial beedi workers. There is no provision in the Beedi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966 to give permanent status to beedi workers who have worked continuously for 3 months. During 1992-93, 9 inspections were carried out under beedi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act and only 7 establishments were found not complying with certain provisions of the Act. Six establishments subsequently complied with the directives issued by the State Government. Against the remaining one establishment, cases have been filed in the Court under the provisions of the Beedi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966 and minimum Wages Act, 1948. Three cases are also pending investigation with the Assistant Labour Commissioner, Tonk.

There is no favouritism in the matter of award of scholarship to the school and college going children of beedi workers.

The State Government have reported that all the applications for housing facilities received from beedi workers were forwarded to the State Housing Board, Jaipur. No application has been received from the beedi workers of Rajasthan, including Tonk, un-

der the Build Your Own House Scheme of the Labour Welfare Fund.

The working conditions of the beedi workers are governed by the provisions of the Beedi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966. The State Governments have been addressed from time to time for strict implementation of the Act.

A number of Welfare Schemes under the Beedi Workers Welfare Fund have been formulated to provide housing, medical, education and recreational facilities to the beedi workers and their families. Recently, a group Insurance Scheme has been introduced with effect from 1st April, 1992 for beedi workers who hold identity cards and who do not subscribe to the Employees Provident Funds Scheme. Under the Group Insurance Scheme beedi workers are insured for Rs. 3,000/- in the case of natural death and Rs. 6,000/- in the case of accidental death.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, if you go through the news item that appeared in 'Jansatta' dated the 25th February, you will find that it covers issues concerning supply of less quantity and substandard leaves and other material viz. thread etc. required for beedi workers; non-confirmation of workers and non-implementation of welfare schemes for the workers. I read the question and then I will ask my supplementary on the basis of that question. (Interruptions) I have also been the Minister of this department.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: You know much more than him.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: During my tenure as the Minister of this department I had enacted a law and issued an order stating that the labourers had been deprived of their rights in the name of substan-

ard beedis and they got nothing. I ordered that the beedis which have been rejected saying that they do not conform to the quality should be returned to the labourers and they would not ask for wages for the same. I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to what happened to that order and what measures have been taken to check the exploitation of beedi labourers, supply of less quantity and substandard leaves and other materials viz. thread etc. to beedi workers. The rates of wages are displayed on a plate at the gates of the beedi factories. I would like to ask the hon. Minister as to what happened to these two things.

[English]

SHRI P.A. SANGMA: Sir, the hon. Member, having already been a labour Minister, knows so much about the subject. On going through the records I find that when he was the Minister he took very very keen interest for the welfare of the unorganised labour including beedi workers. In fact, the hon. Member, convened a tripartite committee meeting on the 3rd July, 1990 and on the basis of the deliberations in that particular meeting, he had addressed a letter to all the Labour Ministers of the respective State Governments on the 6th August, 1990. In that letter the hon. Member, as the Labour Minister, had specifically suggested that the Beedi and Cigar Workers (Condition of Employment) Act, 1966 - under which the respective State Governments frame rules - should be amended so that the quantity of beedi leaves rejected saying that they do not conform to the quality, should be returned to the beedi makers. That was the specific suggestion made by Shri Paswan when he was the Minister. Unfortunately there has been no response from the State Governments so far. I assure the House that I will take up the matter and try to collect the latest information in this regard and lay it on the table of the House.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in part (b) of the question I

have asked that the quality of leaf, quantity of tobacco and rate of wages should be displayed on the board. If the hon. Minister answers this part then I shall ask a supplementary question.

[English]

SHRI P.A. SANGMA: Sir, I have already stated that we have no response from the State Governments.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, H. Hanumanthappa had submitted report of the National Commission on Rural Labour on 31st July, 1992. Chapter 5 of the report contains detailed suggestions to curb exploitation of beedi workers. I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether the Government has studied that report? If so, what are the salient features of the report and what action has been taken by Government thereon?

[English]

SHRI P.A. SANGMA: Sir, the national Commission on Rural Labour has made a number of recommendations covering all sectors of working class in different areas of agriculture, construction workers, bonded labour, beedi workers, child labour etc. There are portions where action has to be taken by the State Governments; there are areas where the Central Government has to take action. So far whatever actions have been taken by the Central Government have been placed on the table of the House. The Report has been placed on the table of the House along with the action taken by the Government. I must mention that whatever action has been taken so far is not adequate. The major recommendations of the national Commission on Rural Labour are yet to be implemented. For example, important recommendations like a Central legislation for the agricultural labour, National Commission for Bonded Labour and others had not been implemented. We are examining all the recommendations. I hope that we will be in a position to implement most

of the recommendations of the National Commission on Rural labour. It is a question of time. In fact, today in the afternoon, we are discussing a Bill on the agricultural labour and I should be coming out with quite a bit of information on what action has been taken on this Commission's report. (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: A good question and a good answer.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: Whether any survey has been conducted or not (*Interruptions*). According to the report no survey has been conducted.

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: You can have a discussion later on.

[*Translation*]

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, fortunately I am concerned with the beedi industry about which Shri Ram Vilas Paswan has raised an issue. Therefore, kindly listen to my point of view also. (*Interruptions*) Excuse me, the issue is very important. This industry is the most employment oriented industry of India after agriculture and textile sector. About 50 lakh workers are engaged in beedi industry and predominantly they are women. People are engaged in this work in rural areas where there is no other industry or means of employment. Several points have been raised about this industry. Exploitation would certainly be there in such a big industry. I would not like to argue but I would submit that there are separate policies for different sectors i.e. small scale sector, Khadi and villages industry and cottage industry. But this beedi industry has not been covered under any industrial policy. No facilities including loan facility etc. have been provided to this industry by the union Govt. or the State Governments.

Further, the wage policy for beedi

labourers may be one of the reasons for their exploitation. Different wage policies are being implemented in different states. Sangma ji know it because earlier also he had been the Minister of Labour. Representatives of this industry have asked the Union Government to formulate a central wage policy for it. Exploitation would be checked by formulating a control wage policy and disparity in the wages would also be removed. (*Interruptions*) Kindly listen, I am raising an important issue. We have to find out its solution. All of us want the welfare of the labourers. The question is that we have to find out a better solution. Unless there is a central wage policy for beedi workers and this industry gets recognition under any of the industrial policies and assistance is given to the employers, who employ thousands of workers in this industry by providing loan at low rate of interest from bank, the Government cannot work for the welfare of the workers of this industry and for development of this industry. Therefore, my question is whether the Union Government has any proposal to formulate a central wage policy for beedi industry and whether the Union Government has any proposal to recognise this industry under small scale industry or cottage industry or nor?

[*English*]

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: Sir, Mr. Patel represents the manufacturers and he is also equally knowledgeable about the beedi industry as Mr. Paswan is, though they represent different interests. Mr. Paswan represents the workers' interests and Mr. Patel represents the manufacturers' interests.

Sir, the number of beedi workers - I beg to differ with the hon. Member - cannot be compared with the agricultural labour because ... (*Interruptions*)... the number of agricultural labourers in this country is 110 million whereas the number of beedi workers is 4 to 5 millions, so, there is a vast difference, but that does not mean that we should neglect beedi workers. I should say, if we compare what we have done for

agricultural labourers with what we have done for the beedi workers, in spite of the fact that their number is lower, we have done much more for the beedi workers than for the agricultural workers.

Coming to the main question whether there will be a uniform wage policy for beedi workers, Sir, it is true that the minimum wage is fixed according to the provisions of the Minimum Wages Act. Now it ranges from Rs. 17 to Rs. 31. In most of the States the minimum wage is Rs. 17 per thousand beedies, like in Andhra Pradesh, Assam, and Bihar. But in Gujarat the minimum wage is Rs. 31 per thousand beedies.

The question of having a uniform minimum wage not only for beedi industry, but the entire unorganised labour is under discussion, but the State Governments are not agreeing to that. In 1986, when we talked of national minimum wage, there was a thinking to first try with a regional minimum wage, by dividing the country into four or five regions. I myself took a meeting of the Labour Ministers, regionwise, but there has been no unanimity even among the State Governments in the respective regions. Therefore, we may talk about the national uniform wage, but practically it is not going to be easy because the State Governments have different views on that.

[Translation]

SHRI CHOTEY SINGH YADAV: Mr. Speaker, Sir, there are no separate Industries as such, for beedi making. The owners make the beedi workers work in their premises. These owners do not deposit crores of rupees of contributory provident fund deducted from the wages of beedi workers, with the Provident Fund Commission. (Interruptions) You are owner of beedi industry.... (Interruptions) Lakhs of rupees are also deducted from the wages of beedi workers in the name of welfare. Will the hon. Minister tell whether both vital amounts are deposited with the concerned agencies in time? Has the Government appointed any such official from time to time who can make an inquiry whether that amount is deposited

with the concerned agency timely or not?

[English]

MR SPEAKER: It is a good question ,

SHRI P.A. SANGMA: It is a good question, but difficult to answer.

MR. SPEAKER : On this point, I once again would like to say if the provident fund is collected from the workers and is not deposited , then that is not correct.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA; Sir, There are two parts in this question . The first is the question of depositing the amount. The hon. Member is emphasising that a number of beedi workers have not yet been under the scheme.

[Translation]

SHRI CHOTEY SINGH YADAV: Sir, crores of rupees are collected from workers in the form of contributory Provident Fund and the owner has to deposit equivalent amount. But neither share of labourers is being deposited nor the factory owners deposit their share. Similarly crores of rupees are deducted from wages of labourers in the name of welfare . The number of beedi workers is very high in Gursahaganj town, wherefrom I hail to.

MR. SPEAKER: If you want reply of your question from the Minister , Please , sitdown.

[English]

SHRI P.A.SANGMA: Sir, there are at the moment 44 lakh beedi workers in the country out of which only 11 lakh workers have been covered under the Provident Fund Scheme. So, a large number of beedi workers are firstly yet to be covered under the Provident Fund Scheme. As has been rightly pointed out by the hon. Member , there are very few factories which produce beedi in this country . It is a home industry and beedi is manufactured in the respective homes of the people on a contract basis. So

the real manufacturer is not known to the beedi rollers. A contractor comes to them and gives tendu leaves, threads and tobacco.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister, the main thrust of his question was the provident fund is collected and it is not deposited. What are going to do for that ?

SHRI P.A.SANGMA: So far, we have no case, subject to correction. But, I do not have any case before me so far, where provident fund has been collected and not deposited, as far as the beedi industry is concerned. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR: Here I challenge the hon. Minister. I have documents with me. *(Interruptions)*

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Let us be fair to the hon. Minister.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down. I think this is a good question. Let us be fair to the hon. Minister. Let him collect the information and if you want, ask for half-an-hour discussion. I will allow. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI V DHANANJAYA KUMAR: What is the role of a contractor? You have not defined the role of the contractor. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI P.A. SANGMA: I must clarify the position. May I inform the hon. Members not to think that I am less concerned about it than any other hon. Member here? *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Don't try to say who are the persons responsible and who are not the persons responsible. The hon. Minister is saying that he will look into it and do everything necessary. You give notice for half-an-hour discussion. I will allow it.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[Translation]

National Highways in M.P.

*425 SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH CHAUHAN: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be please to state:

(a) the details of the Projects submitted by the Government of Madhya Pradesh for the development of National Highways in the State during the year 1992-93 and the Eighth Five Year Plan;

(b) the details of the Projects approved by the Union Government; and

(c) the amount provided therefor, project-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TUYTLE): (a) and (b). Thirty three projects for development of National Highways in Madhya Pradesh have been submitted by the State Government of Madhya Pradesh upto 22.03.1993 during the year 1992-93 which is the first year of the 8th Five Year Plan. Out of these, seven project consisting of three packages of Jabalpur Bypass, two bridge works one feasibility study and one reconstruction of culvert aggregating to Rs. 1274.01 lakhs have been approved

(c) A provision of Rs. 30.00 lakhs for three packages of habalour Bypass and a provision of Rs. 5.56 lakhs collectively for the remaining four minor works exists in the Demands for Grants 1992-93. *[English]*

Export of Oil Cake and Allied Products

426* DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANBDEYA:
DR. A.K. PATEL:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be please to state:

(a) the quantity of oil cake and allied