

[English]

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI (Hawrah) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to bring to the notice of the Government a very important matter, for the last few days, an agitation is going on all over the country.

SHRI RAM NAIK (Mumbai North) : Sir, it is an entirely differently matter...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, whether this matter would be brushed away just like that and the Government writ utter even a word ... (Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : If the Government wishes to make a statement in this regard, it is most welcome.

JUSTICE GUMAN MAL LODHA : This Government calls itself a messiah of the poor, the labourers. The leader of the House is present here. He should rise to make a statement in this regard...(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : The Members belonging to left parties are also present here. Whether they would remain silent in this matter pertaining to the labourers ... (Interruptions)

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (Lucknow) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, my submission is that the incident of an attempt at self-immolation has occurred on the May Day in capital of India and this is the first time such an incident has occurred. Whether it is not an indication that the tolerance of labourers is crumbling and rather than gradually inclining towards death, they have got ready to embrace death by sprinkling kerosene on themselves.

This is such an incident which cannot be easily brushed away by the Government. The House also can not avoid this issue. The mills are being closed down. The labourers have not been paid any remuneration for last seven-eight months. What can the labourers do? There should be some alternative arrangement I do not wish to make it a political issue, but is this incident not a warning bell that the labourers are prepared to sacrifice their lives.

There is some fault with our system somewhere. The Government has failed to discharge its duty. If the number of such incidents increases, the situation would become terrible. Otherwise, also the country is facing several burning issues. If such a tendency grows, it would have bad consequences. I was surprised to note that nobody is prepared to give any reply on behalf of the Government. They are not prepared to express grief even. I fail to understand the silence of the Government of this issue. The entire matter should be clarified.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : As it is a serious subject, hence the Government should hold talks with the trade unions and political parties to arrive at a decision in this regard.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, Hon'ble leader of the opposition party and several other members of his party have expressed their concern. The Government is also concerned about it and I would like to give an assurance on behalf of the Government that the concerned Minister would apprise the House of the matter.

[English]

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : Sir, the INTUC is holding its three-day session since yesterday and a similar matter has been raised by the leaders of the BJP. I fully share their views that the matter is very serious not only as far as Delhi is concerned but also all over the country concerning the fate of the National Textile Mill workers and the National Jute Mill workers. A new threat has been posed by the new Budget of Shri Chidambaram concerning the fate of the insurance sector and the public sector.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker, I plead, through you, the Government that in the hour of crisis in the nation, when the national unity is the main agenda, please take the working class into confidence with utmost sincerity. The situation that is now prevailing in the BIFR is going to rake the Government and take the working class against the Government because whatever be the recommendations of the Cabinet and the Government, day in and day out, they are being purposely delayed in the name procedural tangle in BIFR. I plead the Government that more than two million people who are not getting their bread on the National Textile front in spite of the fact that the package was cleared by the earlier Government and everything was ready. But their budgetary support is withdrawn for the last three months. The workers are not getting their wages in any national textile mill all over the country for the last three months. They are about to commit suicide. They could not arrange the marriage of their daughters because loans are not being given to them.

Similar is the fate of the National Jute Mill Corporation which was nationalised by Shrimati Indira Gandhi from the hands of Ram Nath Goenka and the dream was that the jute mill workers will get their due rights. In spite of my repeated interactions with Shri Chidambaram and the Government, the budgetary support has not yet been given. While the Ministers are getting their bread and are getting our bread, the working class is not getting their bread for the last three months.

Yesterday, I was *gheraoed* till midnight to convey that

there is a serious speculation going on for which the Government is not giving clarification and that the insurance sector is going to the doors of the private sector very soon and that it is threatened by the private sector in the name of the so-called 'dream Budget'. By the threat to the public sector, the entire working class will come to streets. The Shaw Wallace management is enjoying like anything. I told many times to the Government that the management of Shaw Wallace and Chhabria Group is holding to ransom the entire property and the workers are going to commit suicide, if not self-immolation. As far as this matter is concerned, it is not only the call of INTUC but the call of everybody. It is very serious and INTUC is meeting here for the last two days and the Prime Minister is going to attend its meeting tomorrow. I am told that Rashtrapatiiji is also attending their golden jubilee function. My plea, through you, to the Government is to take the matter seriously regarding NTC, NJMC, public sector, insurance sector and the matter raised by the BJP. Self-immolation in Delhi is not merely a cause of immolation but it is a bad image for the entire nation to the whole world that such a thing has happened in the capital. Therefore, I plead, through you, the Government to take this matter seriously, scrap the BIFR and that the Cabinet should take an immediate decision to protect the working class.

And If you do not take working class into confidence, the national security and unity will not be protected.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : Sir, it is most unfortunate...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Let him speak.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : As we all know, the call for observing 'May 1' as 'May Day' was in order to reduce the working hours from 12 or 14 to eight. Today's situation is that the workers are not getting jobs even for eight hours. The point that has been drawn attention to is that not only in those areas but even in my own constituency, one of the biggest engineering firms, Jessop & Co., is there. For two months, they are not getting wages. And for the last three years, all those who retired have not got any maturity benefits. This is the situation in the countryside in terms of working class.

We also want that the working class—in order that the present order changes, in order that the present system changes—should rise to the occasion in the sense that they will be prepared to give up their lives in order to change the society and only then the society changes. But this is not the form that we wanted. This is not the form that we want an individual worker to offer himself for self-immolation.

Shri P.R. Dasmunsi has very correctly drawn attention to one point. I am told from the Ministry sources also that the Budget provision for the public sector enterprises is for interest-free loan and not for any public investment at all. This is the situation in the Budget. We shall discuss that when we discuss the Appropriation Bill and the Finance Bill. But immediate steps should be taken so that the wages are paid, so that the closed units are opened, so that the cases like self-immolation do not arise. These things should be done. I am not sure what to do with BIFR.

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : It is totally scrapped.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : That is not the only problem with BIFR. The problem is that even when the BIFR asks the Government that there is a viable project and if the Government advance funds, then that unit can be made viable, the Government keeps mum. This is happening with many units which have this kind of recommendation from the BIFR. Therefore, I want an assurance from the Government even before the Prime Minister comes. The Minister of Railways is here. He has done one good thing by absorbing the casual labourers in the Railways. I am told that the casual labourers are being absorbed in the airports sector also.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Be brief.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : I am concluding, Sir. Now, there should be an assurance before the House that there will be no delay in payment of wages from all those units which have been closed. If they are in the private sector, the Government will have to take steps to see that the workers are, at least, paid and such cases do not arise. He should make a statement on that.

*[Translation]*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Geetaji, your notice is pertaining to this very subject or some other subject?

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : If your name is there in the list, I'll call out your name Shri Chaman Lai Gupta.

...*(Interruptions)*

*[English]*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I have already allowed Shri Chaman Lal Gupta. Please sit down.

*[Translation]*

SHRI CHAMAN LAL GUPTA (Udhampur) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I would like to raise a very serious matter in the House. At present there are approximately one lakhs