

has also assured that additional information would be brought to the notice of the Members immediately.

[Translation]

SHRISURYA NARAYAN YADAV: Hon. Chairman, Sir, I want to move a motion in this regard. Such a serious incident has happened. Therefore, the House may be adjourned. There is no need of it.

[English]

SHRI MUKUL BALAKRISHNA WASNIK : Madam, if the proceedings continue, then we would have the scope that the hon. Minister can get back to the House with some more information.

PROF. PREM DHUMAL (Hamirpur) : The only point is, the Government must ensure that a statement is made before the House rises for the day.

15.15 hrs.

AGRICULTURAL WORKS (MINIMUM
WAGES AND WELFARE) BILL
by Shri Chandubhai Deshmukh -
CONTD.

[English]

SHRI CHITTA BASU (Barasat) : Madam, I really felicitate Shri Deshmukh for bringing about this Bill. I had also the privilege of introducing a similar comprehensive Bill concerning the working conditions and living conditions of the agricultural workers of our country.

Madam, I am really very fortunate that the hon. Labour Minister is here to listen to us and there are many facets of the problem now being faced by the agricultural workers of our country and it deserves greater attention. Now, the question is whether an agricultural worker is a worker. A worker, by virtue of being a worker, has got certain inalienable rights and in order to protect those rights, certain legislations have been

passed in this country right from the days when our country was not free. Therefore, the first question I address to the hon. Minister for Labour is, whether an agricultural worker is a worker and is entitled to certain rights. A worker is. A worker is entitled to certain rights today because of the Constitution of our country, because of the human rights, because of other rights as a citizen and because of his birth.

Madam, the rights of the industrial workers are being protected and the industrial workers have got many social legislations in order to improve their conditions of life and the Government responds. The Government responds to the workers' demands. On the 19th of March, this Government is going to face a strike for which the call is given by the INTUC of the country. Therefore, since they are organised, this organised working class can meet the inefficiency of the Government, callousness of the Government, insensitivity of the Government and they can get their demands redressed. But what about these millions of workers who also earn their livelihood by their sweat and blood? Are they not workers? What protection do you give them?

Now, if we look at the census report, the number of agricultural workers far exceeds the organised workers of our country. I think the number of Central Government employees is about 50 lakhs and the number of State Government employees will be another 40 to 50 lakhs and overall, including the Railways and other things, the organised labour does not exceed more than 1.5 crores. But what about the number of agricultural workers in our country? Now, various enquiry reports have been made available. There was All India Agricultural Labour Enquiry, there was Rural Labour Enquiry and there was an All India Seminar on Agricultural Labour in 1965. These are of early days. In 1965, it was estimated that the total number of agricultural workers was to the tune of 30 millions. Now, I have got with me the figure of 1971 census which says that the number of agricultural workers in India is 47 to 48 millions against 31.52 millions in 1961. This is the official report of

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the 1971 Census. In 1981, it must be much more. Generally there is at least 10 millions increase during the decade. That means, more than 5 crore people are agricultural workers in the country. It is five-time more than the organised workers. The Labour Minister is very much concerned and should be concerned, I am also concerned to protect the rights and privileges of the organised workers.

May I pose this question to the House and to the Government whose number is more. It is the agricultural labour who are five-time of the organised labour. They have got no right at all protected by any legislation except under the Minimum Wages Act. That is not only meant for agricultural labour but also for other workers also. The Minimum Wages Act for agricultural workers is more breached than executed. It is observed more in breach than in compliance. I shall come to those things later on.

Therefore, I demand, in the name of humanity, in the name of millions of our downtrodden, underprivileged and exploited masses of our country as to why the Government should not have a legislation to protect their rights as human beings. This is an insult. This is something which Parliament cannot all the time remain oblivious also. Therefore, Madam, Parliament demands that there should be legislation for agricultural workers. There might be some difference of opinion on the contents of the draft Bill. I will come to that later on.

As a matter of fact, the Government is not hostile. I do not say, you do not want the Bill. In July, 1975, the 26th Session of the Labour Ministers' Conference commended the Kerala Agricultural Workers Act, 1974 and suggested adoption of the uniform Central legislation on the subject. This is the year 1975. In 1978, a committee was appointed of which I was a member on the unorganised rural workers. The Committee deliberated upon the matter and visited different parts of the country. It felt the need for Central legislation for agricultural labor-

ers and a model Bill was also placed for consideration of the Government. After that, the Gurudas Das committee, a sub-committee of the Consultative Committee attached to the Ministry of Labour went into the subject in depth. They have described in details the miseries, the extent of exploitation of these vast millions of our agricultural workers in different parts of the country. They have also recommended for a Central legislation. The Government's response has all along been what is the need of having Central legislation. You go to your West Bengal for a legislation of your own as Kerala has done it. Why is West Bengal not doing? Why is Bihar not doing? Why is Uttar Pradesh not doing? Why is Madhya Pradesh not doing? So far as West Bengal is concerned, it would be happy to do it. But it is not the problem of a State. But the political problem lies here. I must say that most of the State Governments are being influenced by the big landlords. It is the big landlords lobby which has determined the fate of the State Governments. Therefore, they are not interested in having a legislation to properly protect the interests of the agricultural workers. Therefore, the moot point is that there should be political will. You have got the legislative competence also. Why central legislation should not be adopted? Is it because Parliament has not got the right to do it? It is a concurrent subject. This Parliament has got the right to do it. It is competent enough to have a legislation to protect the rights of the agricultural workers. Why not Parliament exercise this right? Why are you avoiding this responsibility? Why are you taking the position that the State Legislature should pass these laws? Therefore, these are merely the attempts of the Government to divert the issue.

So, instead of spreading my arguments, I straightway want to know why a central legislation should not be adopted on the issue of agricultural workers. The Government should come with a positive reply to these questions posed by me.

So far as the contents of the legislation are concerned, I have introduced a Bill comprising different aspects. It includes the

idea of setting up a tribunal consisting of the representatives of the agricultural workers, State Government etc. There should be certain provision for the formulation of welfare schemes for the agricultural workers so that on the days when there is no work, these schemes can be taken resort to and the agricultural workers can be provided with jobs. The whole idea is to see that all the rights of the industrial workers protected by several legislations of our country should be also guaranteed for the agricultural workers.

So far as hours of work, right to leisure, and right to pension and other amenities of life and right to health are concerned, all these are needed to be incorporated in a comprehensive legislation to be made by the Parliament and then and then alone the rights of the agricultural workers can be properly looked after and protected.

These agricultural workers belong mostly to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Even from that point of view, if you want to really provide economic muscle to these deprived sections of our society, a legislation of this nature will be a very potent weapon. Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes cannot improve their lot if they are not provided with adequate muscle and this economic muscle can be provided if there is this type of comprehensive legislation in the rural areas. You can break the feudal tentacles. You cannot remove the remnants of federalism in the rural areas unless you free the agricultural workers from their bondage. What is happening in Bihar? All the disputes relate mostly to the agricultural workers. I remember that even the Central Government, at a particular time when Shri Y.B. Chavan was the Home Minister, made a report wherein it was stated. If the Government does not take adequate interest in the welfare and well-being of the agricultural workers they should remain prepared for red revolution. Now, instead of red revolution we are seeing the counter-terrorism, on the part of landlords in Bihar and some Senas are being formed on the basis of castes, on the basis of certain sectoral interests.

They are also organising programmes of the agricultural workers, mostly belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Therefore, it is not merely a question of guaranteeing a certain amount of economic right. It amounts also to guaranteeing social and human rights also, to break as under the feudal tentacles in the rural areas, to free India from the feudal relics. I think from that point of view the question of legislation for the agricultural workers is to be considered.

From all counts, I find no reason, no viable answer not to have this kind of central legislation at an early date. Land reforms is very much a part of the long-drawn programmes. As a matter of fact there has been no land reform in many States, particularly in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and many other States except in Kerala and West Bengal. I have got figures to prove.

Therefore, if you can really have a legislation of this nature and if the agricultural workers are allowed to stand on their own legs, if they are made conscious of their rights, then the implementation of land reforms will also be easier. I would, therefore, urge upon the Government and all the Members that it is not the question of party. A vast segment of our Indian humanity has been dehumanised and are being forced to live inhuman life.

Has the Parliament not got any responsibility to them? It is the minimum responsibility that we can discharge. And that minimum responsibility is to have a legislation enacted in Parliament. We have got the legislative competence also.

In conclusion, I want to say that the Government should bring forth a legislation, a bill in incorporating the provisions of the Bill of Shri Deshmukh and take some provisions of my Bill. On the basis of the framework of Kerala Agricultural Workers Bill, 1974 they should bring some legislation. I think it should be brought as soon as possible. It should not be taken as a party issue. It should not be merely an issue

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which the Government should alone take up. The entire Parliament should take it up. With this appeal to all of you and that the Government should reconsider its view and instead of harping on that chivalry to bring a legislation of State legislature, they should straight forward introduce this Bill.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJVEER SINGH (Aonla) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I support the Bill presented by Shri Chandubhai Deshmukh. Through you I would like to say that the condition of agricultural labourers is very pitiable in India. Their economic condition is too weak to be described. They have no houses to live. They live in huts and go to work in the morning and make have to sustain themselves with whatever they get in the evening. They get foodgrains as wages in the villages. You can imagine that how difficult it is to make both ends meet with that foodgrain. Next day they are not sure that they will get work or not. It is creating a very sad situation today. Child of a labourer is becoming a labourer. He does not have means to provide education to his children. What to speak of education, he has to sleep empty stomach. If he falls ill he is not able to get any medical treatment. Such is the condition of agricultural labourers in the villages.

I would like to say something about the pitiable condition of these labourers. The main reason is that the condition of the employer of these labourer is also pitiable. Employer as well as labourers are poor. The employers/owners are also not in a good condition then how can they pay them wages. Unless the labourers do not get full wages they can't meet the needs of their families. Therefore, through you I would like to submit to the Government to enact a law and alongwith this improve the economic condition of the farmers. Another problem is if there is hailstorm or drought the whole crop is destroyed. I know the position of the farmers. Their position is that some farmers have five acres of land and others have eight acres of land only. It is also true that

Zamindari system has not been fully eradicated and at some places, they are possessing the land on false names. They may be big farmers and some businessmen who have blackmoney and to convert it into white money they purchase farms or there are some high Government officials who take bribe and invest that money there. I am not talking of fake farmers. The fact remains that after applying the ceiling, no big farmer has been left out now. Earlier it was said that a son of an I.A.S. becomes I.A.S., a son of I.P.S. becomes I.P.S. and a farmer's son becomes a farmer, but today the scenario has changed and a farmer's son takes birth as a labourer. The reason is that land holdings are being divided further. It results in conversion of farmers as labourers every year. The number of labourers is increasing. Today the situation is such that agricultural labourers cannot unite and they cannot form a union. They cannot get facilities from the labour department. They do not have labour leaders even. They cannot form their union in the villages. The result is that they are becoming poorer day by day. I would like that a law should be enacted for this. I want that this Bill should be adopted unanimously. Some steps should be taken in the interests of the labourers.

I would like that the Minimum Wages Act should be implemented. Hon. Member Shri Chandubai Deshmukh has made a proposal to give minimum wages at the rate of Rs. 30 per day. I know that these days Rs. 30 are not enough. They are getting Rs. 12 - 14 these days and the amount of Rs. 30 is definitely more than that. At least, they should get this amount. I would like to suggest that in every village registration should be done and a survey should be conducted as to how many labourers are there in the villages and what is their plight. After that they should be insured. I am saying so because sometimes labourers die while working. So there should be someone who can look after their families after their death. Under these circumstances, they should be insured by the Government so that their family members can avail the benefits of insurance.

Yesterday the weather was very bad and it was raining. The clouds were thundering. Whenever there is rain after Holi, it is followed by hailstorms. Had it rained before Holi, there was no danger. Yesterday when I looked at the sky I was afraid. Since I am a farmer, I know that if the hailstorms fall then the *rabi* crops, which are very good according to the hon. Prime Minister will spoil totally. Let us pray God so that the hailstorms do not fall, otherwise farmers will die and there will be no crops in the fields for the labourers to reap. Where from will they earn wages (*Interruptions*).

Madam Chairman, now the situation is that the crops will spoil. Where from the labourers will earn their wages and where from the agricultural workers will earn their wages when there will be no wheat crops in the fields. Therefore, I would like to urge the Government, through you, that crops of the farmers should be insured so that they can get some compensation and the poor labourers can get something out of it. Therefore, insurance is a must and the insurance should be on individual basis and there should be no group insurance. A new law has been enacted to introduce group insurance. A new law has been enacted to introduce group insurance. When I talked to the insurance authorities they said that the total percentage of loss of the entire village will be worked out. What is this force? If my crops are damaged by hailstorms and my neighbours' field is saved then I will not get compensation just because my neighbours' field was not damaged by hailstorms. Why his crops have not been spoiled? That means the family of a deceased person will not get the claim because his neighbour did not die. This is not the way. Therefore, there should be individual insurance. Every farmer should be insured and on that basis he should get the claim.

Madam Chairman, this Government does not take all these things seriously. It thinks in a very hi-fi manner and never ponders over a proper way. Now the condition of the agricultural worker depends on the farmer. If the condition of the farmer

is deplorable then he will not be able to pay wages to the labourers even if numerous laws are enacted. Now the sorry state of affairs is that if the Dunkel Proposals are accepted then the situation will deteriorate further. Only God knows what will happen then. Therefore, I would not like to stretch this issue any farther since many other hon. friends are to speak on it. I would like to urge the Government, through you, to enact the Minimum Wages Act to improve the lot of the agricultural workers. Shahbuddin Sahib was saying that they should get Rs. 50 daily but I say that in this age of price hike Rs. 50 have no value. Therefore, I would like to say that the amount of Rs. 50 is not enough for the survival of 5-6 people but our hon. Member has brought a Bill to raise it to Rs. 30. I make an appeal to all the opposition parties and the Government that if we cannot give Rs. 50 then this proposal of Rs. 30 should be adopted unanimously. I also make an appeal that this Bill, brought forward by Shri Chandubhai Deshmukh should not be opposed. There should be no foul play of politics in it, since he has brought a right Bill for a right purpose. My submission is that in order to improve the lot of agricultural labourers, they should be given minimum wages. They should be provided the facilities mentioned in it. The Bill should be passed unanimously.

SHRI KIRIP CHALIHA (Guwahati):
Madam, Chairperson, I must thank Shri Chandubhai Deshmukh, for his Bill which is revolutionary in many respects. As Shahabuddinji has rightly pointed out, this is a Bill which speaks about the plight of the *Didra Narayan*. It is so pleasant to hear Shahabuddinji talking about *Didra Narayan* than on Babri Masjid. It is also nice to hear our B.J.P. friends who have devoted sometime to speak about the fundamentals relating to Indian labourers, agricultural labourers than on Ram Janmabhoomi. Madam Chairperson, I am saying all this in a lighter vein and meant nothing personal. I must express my heartfelt thanks to Shri Chandubhai Deshmukh for this Bill which is laudable in many respects.

As you all know, agriculture is the very

[Sh. Krip Chaliha]

foundation, the basis of Indian life and our economy. It is the basis on which, everything else in India stands. I think 70 per cent of our people, if not more, are dependent on agriculture. Our culture, ethos, believes and everything is based on agriculture. Even religion is connected with agriculture.

It is really unfortunate that, by and large, the agricultural labourers remain unorganized. And in many respects they feel that they have been far more neglected than the industrial labourers, who are considered to be a privileged lot.

I must also appreciate the spirit and I understand the spirit in which the Forward Block leader, Shri Chitta Basu had expressed the cause of agricultural labourers. I am sure he did not have the intention of capturing the votes of agricultural labourers like the industrial labourers. I am sure he really had the welfare of labourers in his mind, when he spoke and espoused the cause on this occasion.

The Bill rightly seeks a kind of uniform base for the agricultural labourers all over the country. My friend, Shri Ramesh Chennithala had already given the background about this Bill is already in operation in States like Kerala. I may be wrong but I think we already have this kind of a Bill in many States. The only problem is that there is no uniformity in the acts existing in different States. I think there is no central legislation which regularises the implementation and to give effect to this Bill.

There is no doubt that the agricultural labourers or the person who are engaged in the profession of agriculture, have been worst affected victims of all kinds of exploitation and misfortune of the Indian system of living. For example, we have no protection against the use of children as agricultural labourers, no pensions, no insurance, as has been pointed out by the previous speaker and no legislation, whatsoever to protect them against any kind of exploitation by the employers.

I come from a State which has been more or less free from this kind of an exploitation, in a sense, we do not have the feudal and big landlords in our State of Assam. When we watch Hindi movies and watch the atrocities committed by the landlords on the labourers and their beating them up with all kinds of weapons keeping them and misusing banded them in all respects, we do feel puturbed and naturally, if those things are portrayal of truth, then, this country needs far more stringent laws to protect the cause of agricultural labourers. This may be a very small but significant step in that direction.

I must say that while today we are trying to make the entire agricultural sector export oriented, when we are looking beyond the boundaries of our country, we are exploring into newer markets, we must have a very progressive legislation to protect the plight of the workers within the country. We must compare the plight of our agricultural workers with the positions which they enjoy in other countries. I understand that with even less arable land, China produces twice the total produce of India. Anybody who has a basic knowledge about the Chinese agricultural labourers' condition and the condition of the Indian labourers would know that the conditions differ vastly. Some efforts are needed to narrow the gap.

The objects of the Bill has to be supported by everyone. In the statement of Objects and Reasons the working conditions have been pointed out. There cannot be any dispute whatsoever about it. As my friend from the BJP has rightly pointed out, we have to rise above all political considerations in improving the lot of the peasants, about their wage structure, pension and other social security measures. These are pending for quite a long time and it is high time that some initiatives are taken in this regard. We in Assam already have a portion of the agricultural labourers - those involved in the tea cultivation - who are almost treated on a par with the industrial labourers. Our hon. Labour Minister belongs to our area. He has vast experience. In fact, he was my teacher

also. He was in school where he taught a vast number of tea labourers. He knows their plight very nicely.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Which subject was he teaching? Not the Labour Law, I suppose.

SHRI KRIP CHALIHA: He was my Geography class teacher. he was a competent teacher of course - including Law and Marxism !

I am sure our hon. Labour Minister will seriously consider taking up this legislation not only in the Kerala model; he can also consult the Minimum Wages Act applicable to the tea labourers. I am very sure that he will take some definite steps to improve the lot of the agricultural labourers.

Coming to the contents, I fully share the thoughts and ideas given about the quantum. In fact, Rs. 30 is a very meagre amount. Rs. 30 for an agricultural labourer is very negligible and I do not think we are doing justice to him. Even a manual labourer at least in my State today gets Rs. 50 per day for doing household work. So I would suggest that instead of Rs. 700 per month, we should at least try to give them Rs. 1500 per month as the minimum wages.

Clause 14 of the Bill says that there will be an involvement of Rs. 40 crore per annum and another non-recurring expenditure of Rs. 50 lakhs from the Consolidated Fund. I do not think that fund is unmanageable. In fact we have so much of faith on Dr. Manmohan Singh and his genius brain that he will definitely be able to find something for them. In fact the other day I was observing that when Rs. 100 crore can be given to terrorists in Assam who had been killing people - Maruti vehicles, Rs. 2 lakh per head has been given for killing people - this Rs. 40 crore is nothing. We can double it and triple it also for the agricultural workers. I fully support this Bill. (*Interruptions*) They are the backbone of our Indian life. As Gandhiji said, India and Bharat ad perhaps this is some of the rare times when even the intellectuals like Shri Somnath

Chatterjee, not making cynical comments about the Congress and thinking about the problems of India that is Bharat. This is a very pleasant occasion when I must share the thoughts of all who had spoken earlier.

With these few words, I fully support the Bill and conclude my speech. Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAMASHRAY PRASAD SINGH (Jahanabad): Madam Chairman, I support the Minimum Wages and Welfare Bill brought forward by the hon Member Shri Chandubhai Deshmukh. I thank him for this. Everyone knows that there are two types of laborers in our country, the organised and unorganised. We put the agricultural labourers in the category of unorganised labourers. Not only the agricultural labourers but those who work in brick kilns, majority of whom are women, also fall under this category. Even in the agricultural sector there are women labourers. Their number is five crore and the number of women is one crore.

I would like to remind the words the hon. Prime Minister uttered yesterday in this august House. The hon. Prime Minister emphasised that ours is an agricultural country, I have not forgotten it and I am ready to follow that path. Agriculture is our mainstay and through it our country can be saved from the economic crisis. When the crops are good, we feel that economic crisis will be removed. If it is so then who works in the fields. These people work in the fields, sow seeds and we are deriving maximum benefit from the fields. They are the agricultural labourers. What is their condition.

16.59 hrs.

[**SHRI PETER G. MARBANIAN** *in the Chair*]

Yesterday I had a chance to speak on the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address. I had made a subtle reference to it that the agricultural labourers are in the same condition what it prevailed 100 years

[Sh. Ramashray Prasad]

ago. Today they do not have good huts to dwell in. The Indira Awas Yojana is working and houses are being constructed but during the rainy season they live under temporary sheds. It is easy to speak on it than to give it a practical shape. You can deliver a good speech you are also an intellectual. One can come across the prevailing situation in the villages if he pays a visit to the villages. There is no one to look after the agricultural labourers at the evening of their life. The tradition is that when their children grow up they start living separately and the old people live alone. There is no arrangement for their care. There are a number of facilities for the organised labourers. The political parties have formed many organisations for the agricultural labourers but it is in papers only and there is nothing for them in real sense. We are talking of the minimum wages but the State Governments have already enacted the law, but the same has now been implemented. Unless the land is made fertile, agriculture is made remunerative, the laws will prove to be futile. Take the case of the Child Labour Act. Have you ever been able to implement it or stop any child labour from the torture of his employer. The area in which the crops have been continuously damaged for last two years, the Minimum Wages Act should not be made applicable there, but where there is proper irrigational facilities, not only the Minimum Wages Act but also the Maximum Wages Act could be made applicable there. Therefore there should be a Central Act to provide them protection in their old age. No matter whether the Government constitutes a fund for it or not, but there should be a law for it. Today there is no facility for providing them medicine and there are no educational facilities for their children. Today a confectioner's son does the same work what his father does. In this way their children fall victims of exploitation.

Mr Chairman, Sir, you must have heard the tragic incident today. This type of organisations are being formed in Bihar. They comprise children of agricultural labourers, the poor, the dalits and those who

do not have any work. That is why they are keeping themselves off the national main stream and taking recourse to terrorism. The Government should find some way out so that they do not do such things. The Government appoints commissions, holds enquiries and when the report comes, no action is taken. You know the report. Therefore something should be done to save them and the country. The agricultural labourers who work in crushers and in bricks kilns cannot maintain their lives with their meagre earnings. The Government should pay attention to it.

People in such a large number are segregating from the main stream of the nation. Proper arrangement will have to be made to keep them with the mainstream at an early date. The current session is likely to last long. The Government should consult legal luminaries and then introduce a Bill in this very Session and protect them.

Our labours are also becoming victims of pollution. They are becoming victim of disease like T.B. and Cancer and are dying of these diseases. The labourers working in crushers and kilns including children and women, inhale dust and settles in their lungs develop diseases like T.B. and Cancer. But no arrangement is being made, to check it. Are they not the citizens of this country? When they are apprised of their condition that they are not provided with even proper food for their hard labour done in the service of country and that they die of cold during winter, these things create an impression in the minds of those young persons that injustice is being meted out to them. They think that only that person is their true leader and they become his followers and they are instigated to take to terrorism.

It is a fact that our political party has been repeatedly demanding that a law should be enacted at the central level regarding minimum wages for the for the labourers so that their interests might be safeguarded. While making a mention about Jawahar Rojgar Yojana Our honourable Prime Minister has informed as that the amount allocated this Year is much more than what was

allocated last year. It is a fact, then we will have to see how this amount is spent. It has become a profession in villages that the village head selects contractors of his own choice to get a work done. While there is on such provisions under rule. The Government need to look into these matters as well. Moreover, an inquiry in this regard will also have to be conducted. The matter cannot be left to the State Government alone. The Union Government too has to look into these matters to assure that the money really reaches to the labourers properly.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, our late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had said in this very House that not even 15 percent of the total allocated money reaches to the actual persons whereas 85 percent of money is grabbed by the middle men. Keeping these point in view, he started Jawahar Rojgar Yojana so that the money might reach directly to them. But what is happening is hardly anything different. The Central Government should consider this point and the Hon. Minister should pay attention to it. It is not merely a matter of discussion. We should take into account the different voices of the public that are coming from different places. The voice is also raised in the region to which I belong. Now we have to assess whether these voices are proper or not and whether they are do some harm only.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, our state, Bihar is facing starvation and in Makhdam Pur Assembly Constituency in my area, there has been several starvation deaths. There is no crop standing in the fields of poor Harijans and the agriculture labours. There is no crop even this year. The rabi crop was destroyed by hailstorm and the State Government has provide only Rs. 100 to 200. What is the use of providing Rs. 100-200 when the crop is completely destroyed. That meagre amount can neither help them for farming nor can it help them to support their lives. The reports of death are received and the authorities of the Government pay visits. But is it not the responsibility of the Union Government to save Bihar? The issue of Bihar is being raised repeatedly. Well, the provisions of law or high amount is a matter of calculation,

but providing protection to humanity is a duty in itself. This is not the time for going into calculations. when you and we are together on this point, we can also do calculation. But at the moment we have to save the humanity otherwise it will be just playing with humanity.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would, therefore, like to submit that some additional amount of money need to be allocated for Bihar. The whole of Bihar is in a bad state. Without taking much time, I would like to submit that if the Hon Minister wishes to lend proper support to the agriculture-labours in order that they might feel that this is very much theirs country and that they are contributing their labour in the capacity of the citizens of this country and if he wishes to increase the production and if he also wants to strengthen the unity of the country, then the Government will have to generate a confidence in the youths that the Government would provide help for their development. It is, therefore, urgently required to provide money to Bihar and moreover, all the schemes concerning agriculture should be implemented immediately. None of the schemes in Bihar is implemented due to the paucity of funds. All the schemes can be worked upon if fund for it is made available. otherwise 80 per cent of schemes are going to be shelved. Farmers will be happy if the schemes are worked upon. Our labourers will also get the minimum wages and this will also provide maximum benefit to the labourers and the youths who are cut off from the main stream of the nation would return. With this I conclude.

SHRI SURYA NARAYAN YADAV (Saharasa): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I express my heartfelt congratulations to the honourable Member Deshmukh sahib who has introduced this Private Member's Resolution. He has tried in his own capacity, to have a discussion held in this House on the issue concerning the working class of this country. If at all any sections of our country is neglected, it is the worker class and along with them farmers are also neglected.

(Interruptions)

[Sh. Surya Narayan Yadav]

Sir, I was telling that the labourers and the farmers of this country the most neglected lot. I would like to explain it to you through an example. There are 4 metropolitan cities in this country—Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. The labourers throughout the country, who do not get employment in their villages, migrate to cities. Sir, you know the poor condition in which the labourers live in the villages. This Government has just declared that the labourers would be provided the facility of shelter in the cities. But I say it with certainty that even now the labourers living in villages have not been provided with land. They do not have land of their own. The labourers of the villages who work in the cities have even now got the facility of living in Rain Basera (night-shelter). The labourers who work for the farmers do, however, get foodgrains from the farmer, but the labourers who work in factories are removed from there after a month or two. Not only that, they are given salary of only one month as against their service of two months. And in spite of this they are removed from service. In this way they are paid lower wages and moreover, they are removed from service.

Mr. Sangma Sahib, the honourable Minister of Labour, please listen, I am addressing you. I have made repeated requests to you, but the Government does not pay any attention to it. Our honourable colleagues and Shri Desmukh Sahib have said today that the minimum wage of a worker should be Rs. 30 per day. This is certainly absolutely proper. Moreover, I would say that even 30 rupees per day is a petty amount. I would like to submit that the minimum wages for worker should be more than this. The hon. Minister comes of the same class, so he knows the condition of the labourers. I have also interviewed you in the capacity of a journalist of which you are aware. I would, therefore, like to submit that you should introduce a Bill definitely and through which you should bring about uniforming of rule in all the states where there are different sets of law.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, through you I would like to submit to the hon. Minister Mr. Sangma Sahib that labourers are there in his area as well as there are labourers in Bihar about whom I would precisely like to say that they are in a miserable condition.

There is nothing else to be found in the North Bihar except flood and water. Labourers do not get work there. There is nothing to do in the fields of the farmers. Labourers are forced to face starvation. You can know it through a survey that the labourers do not have clothes to put on. They cannot wear proper clothes nor can they provide education to their children. If at all there are schools in villages, they are located at far flung places that the students do not go there for schooling. Not even a single hospital in rural area is there where the children of the labourers could receive proper treatment. Nothing has been done in this regard so far. The Constitution also provides to them the right of living in this country. Living like human beings is their Constitutional right. They have the right to education. They need medicare and they need houses to live in. These things have so far not been done.

When Shri Paswan ji was the labour Minister, he took initiative in this regard. He wanted to solve the problems of the labourers. He wanted their participation in a factory or any other sector. But we could not do it. Now the Government proposes to deal with the same thing. The situation, as it prevails, is not worth mentioning. We live in villages. We are farmers, so we have tried to understand the condition of farmers properly. I have myself done farming. I have ploughed the land myself.

I know this fact that a labourer does not get his right even after doing hard work. Irrigation facilities have not been made available to our farmers. Moreover, some areas are flooded sometime. The farmers have to sow and plant at least five times in each field where labourers work, the farmers has to put in a lot of labour but the labourers do not get any wages. Therefore, I submit to you to kindly bring a legislation through which secure wages to labourers. When you fix the

minimum wages, please include farmers in it. The day the farmers and labourers become strong, there will be no bomb blast in city like Bombay, extremes will vanish from this country and unemployment will also come to an end. You should perform these two tasks. Unless you do so, the country cannot live in peace and prosperity.

I support this Bill. You have brought this Bill and Members of all the parties are ready to support it. With this I thank you.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: May I take the sense of the House? The time allotted for this discussion was two hours and its is over. shall we extend the time for this discussion?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRONICS AND DEPARTMENT OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT) AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI RANGARAJAN KUMARAMANGALAM): We extend the time by an hour.

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Yes, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The time is extended by an hour.

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI : (Deogarh): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have the pleasure of participating in the discussion on this Bill which is intended to eradicate the sufferings of the toiling masses in the rural areas. I thank the mover of this Bill, Shri Deshmukh for having facilitated discussion on the subject involving humanitarian consideration.

Sir, the plight of the rural labour is very bad. We all know in what pitiable condition millions of agricultural labourers are passing their time. Earlier their condition could be improved the better it is. There cannot be two opinions on that.

I was carefully listening to the speeches

delivered by hon. Members from both sides of the House and I also would like to associate myself with the feelings expressed.

As you know, this country is not lagging behind in the matter of progressive legislations, particularly relating to industrial labour and so on. But, when we look at the implementation part of it, we feel sad that they are not implemented. I am not saying all the legislations, but certainly, some legislations are not implemented properly. I can give you one instance here. Take the case of child labour. It is a healthy practice? It is not at all a healthy practice. We should not involve children in certain areas. There are children who are working in factories which are also injurious to their health but we cannot prevent them. There are legal provisions which are there but the condition is such on the ground that parents and send them for employment. You take the case of beedi factories. There, the children are employed for rolling the beedis. In the morning also, there was a question regarding provident Fund. The hon. Minister, Mr. Sangma who is here said that is is very difficult to implement it. The location, the nature of industries and so on is such that sometimes, some of the laws that are there for quite sometime are not implemented today. We must go all out for implementation of these laws in letter and spirit.

Today, we find some legislations are not capable of implementation. I would like to make this clear. I need not be misunderstood. Today, in our county, a the situation stands, I am afraid, it is very difficult to implement some legislations.

I support the spirit of the Bill. But there are certain provisions, like, establishment of an agricultural authority with branches established at different places or in district headquarters. Their job will be to maintain land records, to maintain registers of agricultural labourers, farmers and so on. If somebody is not registered, he should not be employed. If the employers employ him, he will be penalised with imprisonment or some fine.

[Sh. Sriballav Panigrahi]

Looking at the vastness of our country and agriculture being the main stay of our economy, if a legislation is passed today, do you think that it will be implemented? So many things are linked with this, viz. Provident Fund, Pension Commissioners and so on.

Today, we feel the need of having more officers, but we do not have more officers now at some central places where they are located.

There is an exodus of labourers from villages to urban centres, industrial centres, urban areas. India's rural economy is characterised by seasonal employment and under employment. And therefore, many people in our State, Orissa, people in large numbers, in thousands, are deserting their homes and hearths and moving elsewhere outside the State or their survival. So, like this, it goes on.

The minimum wage was fixed two years ago; it was fixed at Rs. 25 per day. When I was fixed, it so happened that some of the farmers left their cultivation. Although share-cropping is illegal, in law, it is not permissible, according to the provisions of the land reforms law, except in a restricted area, except for widows, those persons who were in the armed forces, minors, disabled persons. But it is a common knowledge, all our Members from the Left, CPI, CPM etc they know that it is going on a large scale. So, like this, many of them left farming. They say, it is not remunerative at all.

I share the feelings expressed by Mr. Surya Narayan Yadav that in some parts, in Punjab elsewhere also, in irrigated areas, the economic condition of the farmer is much better what to speak of Rs. 25, Rs. 30 much more is passed. In other areas, in the busy agricultural season, local labourers do not suffice; people in large numbers from Chattisgarh labourers, neighbouring State, Madhya Pradesh, come to Hirakund command area. Sometimes plantation is given on lease basis, on contract and labours get more than Rs. 60, Rs. 70; but that is also very seasonal, seasonal.

But in the dry area, sometimes labourers go and offer their services and they are not obliged by the landlords; they say, we cannot pay you this much; Rs. 25 we cannot pay you. They say, even Rs. 10 will be sufficient. Sometimes the situation is like this.

So, I would like to emphasise that we should have more of irrigation; we should give priority to irrigation; and more the irrigation we have, this problem will be solved. Of course, there will be a legislation; it should be regulated properly, as best as it can be done.

On so many occasions, this pitiable conditions, this sort of condition, the distress of the rural labour, has been discussed here and the House has felt concerned about it. I think in 1987-88, a National Commission was appointed on rural labour. They had gone in details into this task, into this matter; and they have come out with their report. As I read from the newspaper, that was discussed by the labour Ministers, something like that; and a panel was formed as to how the recommendations of that commission would be enacted upon; something like that can be implemented. What happened to that? And that Commission, I think, have recommended for land reforms to be undertaken vigorously and strictly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Time for the Private Members' Business is over, you can continue next time. Now we pass on to Half-an Hour Discussion. But before that the Home Minister has to lay some papers.

17.30 hrs

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE - *Contd*

[English]

Proclamation dated 11 March, 93 issued by the President under Article 356 of the Constitution in relation to the State of Tripura and the order made by the President in pursuance of the said Proclamation, etc.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P.M. SAYEED): On behalf of Shri S.B. Chavan, I