

PAPERS UNDER COMPANIES ACT, STATEMENTS re. DELAY IN LAYING REPORT OF NATIONAL INSURANCE COMPANY LTD. CALCUTTA AND ORIENTAL FIRE AND GENERAL INSURANCE COMPANY LTD. 1974

SHRI H. M. PATEL: I beg to lay:

(1) A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (1) of section 619A of the Companies Act, 1956:—

(i) Review by the Government on the working of the *New India Assurance Company Limited, Bombay, for the year 1975.

(ii) Review by the Government on the working of the *General Insurance Corporation of India, Bombay, for the year 1975.

(iii) Review by the Government on the working of the *National Insurance Company Limited, Calcutta, for the year 1974.

(iv) Review by the Government on the working of the *Oriental Fire and General Insurance Company Limited, New Delhi, for the year 1974.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT-384/77.]

(2) A statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the Annual report of the *National Insurance Company Limited, Calcutta for the year 1974. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-385/77].

(3) A statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the Annual Report of the *Oriental Fire and General Insurance Company Limited, New Delhi for the year 1974. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-386/77.]

12.05 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE REPORTED NON-IMPLEMENTATION OF NOTIFICATIONS re. INTERIM RELIEF TO NEWSPAPER EMPLOYEES BY THEIR MANagements

SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE (Howrah): Sir, I call the attention of the Minister of Information and Broadcasting to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon:

"The reported non-implementation of interim relief to the newspaper employees throughout the country by the managements of the newspapers in spite of Central Government's order resulting in indefinite strike all over the country by newspaper employees."

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMEN-TARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR (SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA): It should be the Minister of Labour.

SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE: It is given officially to me just now.

SHRI RAVINDRA VERMA: With your permission, Sir, the Labour Minister will answer the Call Attention.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, the Labour Minister. It has been changed.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIA-MENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR (SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA): I made a statement before this honourable House on the 1st April, 1977, that notifications fixing interim rates of wages of the working journalists and non-journalist newspaper employees under Sections 13A and 13D of the Working Journalists and other Newspaper Employees (Conditions of Service) and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1955, would be issued immediately. Accordingly, two notifications, one relating to working journalists and the other to non-journalists-were issued on the same day i.e. first April, 1977.

*The Annual Reports were laid on the Table on the 6th April, 1977.

We have requested the State Governments to let us know the progress of implementation of the notifications. We have not yet received this information from a large number of State Governments. But from the reports that have appeared in the Press, and the representations that we have received, it seems a number of employers have yet to make the payments. Some employers have also gone to Court, and obtained absolute or conditional stay-orders. The main argument of such employers is that they have no paying capacity.

The House will recall that the newspaper employees had not had any general revision of their wage structure for the last 10 years or so. On a reference from Government, the wage boards made recommendations for interim relief and Government decided to notify the increases only with effect from first April, 1977 and not from an earlier date.

This decision was taken because the law as it stands does not clearly empower the Government to fix interim rates of wages retrospectively. In view of this Government believed that the newspaper employers would have no difficulty in implementing the notifications with immediate effect, while awaiting the final recommendations of the Wage Boards and Government's decision thereon.

The Federations of newspaper employees gave call for a token strike on the 16th June, 1977 to press their demand for implementation of the notifications and for an indefinite strike from the 17th June in those newspaper establishments where the interim payment has not been made.

Government are anxious that the notifications should be speedily implemented. The Government is also keen that the employees do not follow up the token strike with an indefinite strike. I am calling a meeting on the 22nd June, 1977 to discuss

the matter of non-implementation with representatives of the Indian and Eastern Newspaper Society, the Indian Languages Newspaper Association, the All India Newspaper Employees Federation, the Indian Federation of Working Journalists and the National Union of Journalists. I have appealed to the Newspaper employees not to go on an indefinite strike so that the proposed discussions can be held in a cordial and constructive atmosphere.

SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE: Sir, today there are no newspapers throughout the country. Yesterday throughout the country there was a strike. This shows how far the employees are agitated over this question of interim relief and from today a continuous strike will go on in those newspapers which have refused to implement even the modified order issued by this present Janata Government.

MR. SPEAKER, Sir, this is a serious matter. Government should have woken up to this question long before. This move by the Parliamentary and Labour Minister to call a meeting on the 22nd June is not justified because already the newspapers are closed and the employees are on a continuous strike. They should have acted long before.

Sir, the statements of the employees' federations and the organisations of the working journalists have made it categorically clear that their strike action is not only against the employers who have refused to implement the Wage Board awards but also against the policy of this Janata government which modified the Wage Board's recommendations because the recommendations of the Wage Board for interim relief was having retrospective effect, that is, from 1st June, 1975. Unfortunately they expected too much of the Janata government. At least, the Janata Government should try to give effect to the total award of the Wage Board.

[Shri Samar Mukherjee]

Sir, in his statement the Minister has admitted that the newspaper employees had not had any general revision in their wage structure for the last 10 years or so. During these ten years you know how much cost of living index has gone up. During these ten years how much profit the newspaper employers have amassed. All these ten years the employees and the journalists have been deprived of the rise in their wages. So they are perfectly justified in their action. The Wage Board has given the recommendations after going through the income and expenditure of all the newspapers. So, the Government should have gone into the reports of the Committee which was formed to study the economic of the newspapers. There was a Committee appointed to go into the economics of the newspaper. That Committee has gone through all the questions regarding the income and the sources of income and expenditure of the newspapers and on the basis of the recommendations of this Committee, the Wage Board have made these recommendations. Now, the employers are coming with a plea that they have no capacity to pay this interim relief as recommended by the Wage Board. It is absolutely possible for them to pay the interim relief.

MR. SPEAKER: Will you now come to the question? This is all a fact. After all you cannot take your own time. You are expected to ask a question but not to make a statement.

SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE: The whole background is that the employers have gone to the court. The Wage Boards have gone through all the processes and they have asked the employers to send questionnaires. Many managements have refused to send the questionnaires.

Then there was some meeting where there was a unanimous decision regarding the procedures through which the Wage Boards had to go,

and after following those procedures the recommendations have been given by these Wage Boards. The Prime Minister is present here. That is why I am drawing his attention to this fact. The employees went to his house to express their resentment on 12th May. But according to the report of the newspapers, it seems Mr. Desai told the delegation to go to the court. This they did not expect from the Prime Minister.

Whereas the employers had gone to the court, he is stated to have declared that he could not enforce the Government's decision. Government had done its duty they could do nothing more. This hurt the feeling of the employees. They expected something else from the new Prime Minister and the new Government. That is why I am bringing this to the notice of the Prime Minister. The employees asked the Government to take stringent measures to enforce the award of the Wage Board on the employers. The Government have so many ways to put pressure on the employers. They can stop the advertisements, they can stop granting quotas of newsprint, they can stop the permit of importing machines. All these measures must be used to force the employers to accept the demands of the interim relief as awarded by the Wage Board. I want to know from the Minister whether the Government is now prepared to put pressure on the employers so that they can accept to pay the interim relief to the employees. Whether the Government is prepared to revise the order modifying the recommendations of Wage Board? The employees have demanded that this should take effect retrospectively. So, I want clarifications on these points. One flimsy argument has been given by the hon. Minister in his statement that the law as it stood did not empower the government to fix interim rates and wages retrospectively. Taking shelter under law like this, I think, is not just. Government is sufficiently empowered to give effect

to the award of the wage board with retrospective effect.

SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA: I do not want to take as much time of the House as the hon. Member has chosen to do. As some of the prefatory remarks are such that need contradiction, you will permit me if I take a few minutes to answer his questions. First of all he said that the situation was quite serious. We agree that the situation is serious. We are keen that newspapers should come out and there should be no strike. There was a token strike yesterday. I am not sure whether the strike will continue as an indefinite strike. From the information available to us there is reasonable ground to hope that there will be no continuation of the strike unless it be that Mr. Samar Mukherjee has other special sources of information with which he can make such a statement in the House.

He said that action taken by the government was late. After the notification was issued government had to give time to the managements to implement the decision, the notification of the government. Meanwhile some of them went to the court, and the matter is now before the courts. Efforts are being made to make them understand the need to implement the decision and the notification of the government. One had to wait and see whether this was implemented. I refuse the charge that there was any undue delay on the part of the government. Government is interested in seeing that its notification is implemented. It is not interested in dramatic action which may jeopardise the chances of implementation of the decision, but in seeing that the workers may get the benefit of the notification issued by the government.

We also stated that there was considerable resentment against the attitude of the janata ministry. Perhaps he has some special source of information. As far as our information

goes, there was universal welcome accorded to the decision of the government and the announcement in the House. Many organisations of working journalists as well as other employees have passed resolutions, and written to the government welcoming the decision of the government and thanking the government.

Reference was made by the hon. Member to what the Prime Minister said on the 12th. Of course the Prime Minister is present here, and he is quite competent to defend himself. But since it falls within the purview of the remarks that have been made in relation to the call attention notice, you will permit me to clarify the position. The Prime Minister said that they could go to the court because they were the aggrieved party; any aggrieved party has a right to go to the court and seek justice. Since this question has been raised, I should like to read out to you section 17(5) of the concerned Act which clearly says that "where any amount is due under this Act to a newspaper employee from an employer the newspaper employee himself or any person authorised by him in writing in this behalf...without prejudice in any other mode of recovery make an application to the State government for the recovery of the amount due to him, and if the state government or such authority as the state government may specify in this behalf is satisfied that any amount is due to him it shall issue a certificate for the amount to the collector and the collector shall proceed to recover that amount in the same manner as arrear of land revenue. This method of recovery is specified in the Act. Therefore, what the Prime Minister said did not show any lack of sympathy and did not mean an abdication of responsibility on the part of the government, but only indicated that it is open to them to follow this course.

His main question was about retrospective effect, and he chose to use the

[Shri Ravindra Varma]

adjective flimsy. He said that the argument that we had mentioned in our statement was flimsy. I am sorry a senior Member like Mr. Samar Mukherjee chose to use such an adjective Sir, the law exists. It is not flimsy for us. It has to be respected. As the law exists today, 13(A) does not clearly empower the Government to give retrospective effect as far as interim relief is concerned. This was examined not flimsy, but seriously, with all the attention that law deserves, and after the examination we came to the conclusion that there was no clear authority. I wish, Sir, to point out to the House what would have happened if, when there was doubt on this question, we had come out with a notification which might have been challenged in the court. Even where we have full authority, our decision, notification is being challenged in the court. So where there was reasonable doubt about the position or the competence of the Government, if we had come out in a spirit of bravado, with some declaration or notification, it would also have been challenged and it is in that context, Sir, that we have stated that the law, as it exists, does not empower us to give retrospective effect. But this is a matter which the Government can consider and examine. This is what was stated in the statement.

Sir, as far as the other question that he raised are concerned, we are making every effort to see that the managements, the employers implement the notification. Quite a few employers have already done so and I have called this meeting on the 22nd June precisely with the purpose of ensuring that the notification is given effect to.

श्रीमती मृगाला गोरे (बम्बई-उत्तर) :
अध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं मंत्री महोदय से जानना चाहती हूँ कि कौन-कौन सी स्टेट्स हैं, जिन्होंने अभी तक इन्फॉर्मेशन नहीं दी है। दूसरी बात जो बड़े-बड़े न्यूज पेपरवाले हैं,

उन में ऐसे कितनों ने इस को इम्प्लीमेंट कर दिया है, कितनों ने इम्प्लीमेंट करना शुरू किया है और कितनों ने इम्प्लीमेंट नहीं किया है।

कई न्यूज-पेपरवालों ने कहा है कि फाइनेन्शियल कठिनाई की वजह से हम इस को नहीं दे सकते हैं। क्या कोई भी समझदार घादमी इस बात पर विश्वास कर सकता है, जब कि बहुत से छोटे न्यूज पेपर्स ने इस को इम्प्लीमेंट कर दिया है। मिसाल के तौर पर औरंगाबाद का मराठवाड़ा है, जिस ने इस को इम्प्लीमेंट किया है। अगर छोटे न्यूज-पेपर्स इस का इम्प्लीमेंट कर सकते हैं तो यह नामुमकिन बात है कि बड़े न्यूज पेपर्स इस को फाइनेन्शियल दृष्टि से इम्प्लीमेंट नहीं कर सकते हैं। वे एक वहाना बना कर इस को टालना चाहते हैं। सरकार ने जो बात मान ली है, और जिस को सदन के सामने रखा है, अगर बड़े न्यूज-पेपर्स उस बात को ठुकराने की कोशिश करते हैं तो सरकार का यह कर्तव्य हो जाता है कि कर्मचारियों को न्याय दिलाये। अगर सरकार न्याय नहीं दिला सकती है तो एक तरफ बड़े-बड़े न्यूज-पेपरवालों, बड़े मालिकों का प्रभाव बढ़ेगा, दूसरी तरफ कर्मचारियों और मजदूरों के मन में यह भावना पैदा होगी कि हम को यह सरकार न्याय नहीं दिला सकती है। इसलिए मेरा अनुरोध है कि सरकार को इस के इम्प्लीमेंटेशन के लिए शीघ्र कार्यवाही करनी चाहिए।

आप ने 22 तारीख को मीटिंग बुलाई है, मैं समझती हूँ कि आप ने इस में काफी देर कर दी है। जैसे ही आप के पास स्ट्राइक का नोटिस आया था, आप को स्ट्राइक के पहले ही मीटिंग बुलानी चाहिए थी। आज तक सरकार का जो रवैया चलता आया है कि स्ट्राइक

होने तक सरकार कुछ नहीं करेगी, इस रविवे को आप को बलदना चाहिए था। आप को नोटिस प्राप्त होने के तुरन्त बाद मालिकों को बुला कर फैसला कराने की कोशिश करनी चाहिए थी अभी भी यदि आप तारीख 22 से पहले मीटिंग बुला सकते हैं तो वह ज्यादा अच्छा होगा। जैसा श्री समर मुखर्जी साहब ने सुझाव दिया है, मेरे ह्याल से सरकार अभी भी कुछ ठोस कदम उठा सकती है, उन लोगों की नाक-दबाने का काम हो सकता है। मैं जानना चाहती हूँ कि मंत्री महोदय इस के बारे में क्या कहना चाहते हैं ?

SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA: Sir, the hon. Member raised many important questions. I will try to answer them very briefly. I shall try to emulate her brevity. Sir, as far as the States are concerned, I regret to say that a majority of the States have not responded and we have not got information from them. Only a few States have responded and it is not necessary to go into each question because some States did not have popular administration at that time.

Now, as far as the next question is concerned, it is true that quite a few smaller papers, as she mentioned, have already implemented the award and one could expect, one did have a right to expect, that the bigger newspapers would follow the example of the smaller newspapers who have more hardships in many respects than bigger newspapers. She is right in pointing out the fact that smaller newspapers have given the interim relief. But I think it would not be fair for me to take the time of the House by giving the list of papers that have implemented. Some bigger newspapers have also implemented. I do not know, Sir, whether you would like me to be invidious and mention names. I have a list of both the smaller and the bigger newspapers that have implemented the award.

It is quite right that some major chains of bigger newspapers have not implemented it, even though smaller language newspapers published from non-metropolitan cities have been able to do so. It is a matter of surprise and regret, but this matter can be dealt with only by means which enable us to succeed and not by means which may prolong the stalemate if a stalemate is created.

The hon. Member said that the government should take steps to see that justice is done to the workers. I entirely agree with her. The policy of the government has been, and will continue to be, to see that workers receive expeditious justice in every regard. It is wrong to think that this government waits till a strike notice is given, or a strike becomes effective, for negotiations. There are many instances where action has been taken by the government in time to see that strike do not materialise. Even now in regard to many other things this is being done. It is an unfair and wrong conclusion to arrive at, that the government will act only if strike notices are given. I can assure the House that the policy of this government will be to look at grievances as they are formulated to avoid situations of this kind. But it is not in the hands of the government only. There are three parties, and government is only one. If the other two parties act in such a manner as to precipitate issues, of course the government can only help in alleviating the situation and promoting a solution.

श्री गंगाधर अथा बुराडे (भिर)

माननीय अध्यक्ष महोदय, जैसा कि हमारे साथियों ने कहा है, यह जो स्ट्राइक आज से शुरू हो रही है, इस के बारे में जो एम्प्लायर्स का यह बहाना है कि उन की पेइंग कैपेसिटी नहीं है, यह केवल बहाना ही है। लेबर मिनिस्टर साहब ने जो अभी स्टेटमेंट दिया है और उस

[श्री गंगाधर झा बूराड]

में पैरा 2 में यह कहा है कि कुछ स्टेट्स से जवाब नहीं आया है, क्या यह नहीं हो सकता कि इस तरह से जवाब न देना और अखबार वालों का कोर्ट में जाना, यह कहीं दोनों की साजिश हो जिससे कि जनता गवर्नमेंट को बदनाम किया जाए। जनता गवर्नमेंट जो मजदूरों के हित के लिए कानून बना रही है, उस को बदनाम करने के लिए स्टेट गवर्नमेंट्स और अखबार के मालिक दोनों मिल गये हैं, कहीं ऐसा तो नहीं है ?

साथ ही साथ मैं यह कहना चाहूंगा कि लेबर मिनिस्टर साहब जो अब मीटिंग बुला रहे हैं, इस को पहले ही होना चाहिए था क्योंकि अब जो मीटिंग 22 तारीख को हो रही है, उस से तो 6 दिनों तक मजदूर स्ट्राइक पर रहेंगे। इसका फैसला फौरन होना चाहिए।

SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA: It is unfortunate that some governments have not responded and we have not got the information from them. As far as the conspiracy which the hon. member suspects is concerned, I am not in a position to make any such statement because I have no evidence. Perhaps he is right in entertaining such a thought, but Government have no such information. Regarding the other question, if it is possible for us to have the meeting earlier, we would have no objection. But taking all factors into consideration, we thought it would not be possible to find an earlier date which would be convenient to all the parties concerned.

डा० बापू कालबते (औरंगाबाद) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, मंत्री महोदय ने कहा है कि बेतन पुनर्निर्धारण का सवाल कई सालों से पड़ा हुआ है। यह 10 सालों से या इस से भी ज्यादा सालों से हल नहीं हुआ है। इसलिए, स्वाभाविक है कि कर्मचारियों के दिल में इस के बारे

में बड़ा असंतोष है और उस का प्रदर्शन उन्होंने स्ट्राइक कर के किया है। यह हम समझे सकते हैं कि लोग हम से विशेष उम्मीद करते हैं और जो मीटिंग आने ने 22 जून को बुलाई है उस को मद्देनजर रखते हुए मैं दरदशास्त कहूंगा कि अनिश्चित काल का जो बे स्ट्राइक करना चाहते हैं उन को कहा जाय कि बे न करें, क्योंकि अगर ऐसा होता है तो सरकार इस मामले को कार्डियल एटमास्फेयर में सुलझा सकेगी। मैं श्रीमती गोरे से बिल्कुल सहमत हूँ जैसा कि उन्होंने बताया कि जो प्रादेशिक पत्र हैं और छोटे पत्र हैं उन्होंने अपने कर्मचारियों को अन्तरिम रिलीफ दे दी है लेकिन जो बड़े बड़े पत्र हैं और जो एडवर्टाइजमेंट से काफी मुनाफा कमाते हैं और उस से प्रादेशिक पत्रों को खरीद सकते हैं, वे क्यों नहीं उन को अन्तरिम रिलीफ देते हैं। मेरी समझ में यह नहीं आता है कि वे क्यों कोर्ट में जाने को कोशिश करते हैं और इस तरह से इसमें रुकावट डालने की कोशिश करते हैं। इस के बारे में मैं यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि सरकार इस के विषय में सोचे कि ऐसा क्यों है और वह उन पर कड़ी कार्रवाही करे। हम बार-बार यह कहते हैं कि हमारी सरकार जनता सरकार है यानी जनता की सरकार है, श्रमिकों की सरकार है और वह जहर इन के हित में काम करेगी। यह जनता सरकार जो लोग मुनाफा-खोरी करते हैं, श्रमिकों का शोषण करते हैं, उनके पक्ष में नहीं जाएगी बल्कि श्रमिकों के पक्ष में जाएगी। जैसा मंत्री जी ने कहा कि 22 तारीख को मीटिंग होने वाली है। मैं पूछना चाहता हूँ कि अगर इस मीटिंग में कोई परिणाम नहीं निकला तो सरकार क्या करने की सोच रही है ?

SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA: Sir, part of the remarks that the hon. Member made were somewhat on similar lines to the remarks that other hon. Members made. I entirely agree with him that the fact that for ten years there was no interim relief given was a serious matter, and that is precisely the reason why without waiting for even a single day, as soon as this Government came into power, it announced its decision in this regard and issued a Notification. The fact that within one week of our coming to power we issued the Notification itself shows how much we were concerned over this matter. If we were not concerned with the conditions of the workers and if we were not anxious to ensure that relief was afforded at the earliest opportunity, we need not have done so. That itself is proof of our intentions and these intentions will continue to rule all our policies and attitudes as far as workers are concerned.

Sir, then the question raised was about what had been done in this regard. I do not think, Sir, it would be right to conclude that there would be a continuous indefinite strike from today. As I said earlier, I have already made an appeal to the employees' organisations and I have reason to believe that there will be no continuous indefinite strike. I will use all the good offices that the Government can command to see that there is no continuous indefinite strike. The Hon'ble Member ended with a very interesting question, but I do not know whether it will be wise on anybody's part to ask for an answer to the question. That is a question which would plague us and it would be in our mind. But when we are calling people to discuss, can we make a statement about what we would do in case the discussions fail? I go to the discussions with an air of optimism. I have every reason to believe that the discussions will succeed. Therefore, I hope the hon. Member would not ask me to state what I would do if they fail.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYA (Serampore): Mr. Speaker Sir, my first query to the Minister is that when this strike notice was given and after receiving the strike notice what effort was made by the Government to bring the parties together so that there may be some sort of understanding between them. A positive reply is necessary in this matter. And the other thing is, the Minister was very much angry over the remarks that were made by Mr. Mukherjee regarding knocking out of the aspect of retrospective effect. For that reason the strike has been called by the two Federations not only against the employers' attitude, but also against the attitude shown by the Government in respect of the implementation of the interim recommendations and here is a Resolution. I may take one minute's time to read it:

"This meeting of the Federations also expressed strong resentment against the Government of India for not granting any retrospective effect to the payment of interim relief despite the fact that both the Wage Boards had recommended interim relief retrospectively from June 1, 1975. The reasons given by the Government for not granting retrospective effect hardly convince anybody. This meeting demands that the Government should modify its Notification to incorporate full retrospective effect as recommended by both the Wage Boards."

Sir, this is the feeling of the employees and journalists. My question to the Minister is: From June 1, 1975 the recommendation was to be implemented and now the Government has come forward with a modified Notification that the recommendation is to be implemented from 1st April, 1977. Why? Why should the amount towards interim wages have been denied to the employees for more than a year (*Interruption*) or for 22 months? After a lapse of 10 years, wage board was set up; the wages board has given the recommendations. I do not know how

[Shri Dinan Bhattacharyya]

he will explain this attitude of government to the country. Is it now becoming a practice of this government... about whom we became proud when they declared that they will take up the cause of the poorer sections?

MR. SPEAKER: Will you kindly give him a chance to reply to your question?

SHRI DINAN BHATTACHARYA: My apprehension is that hereafter, other wage boards will give recommendations in respect of the other employees. If this attitude is followed, what will be the result?

SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA: First of all, I would like to say that I do not take umbrage at any adjective that was used. I only expressed my surprise. As far as the question of the strike notice is concerned, it is not to the government that any strike notice has been served. On the government no strike notice has been served. On the employers, strike notice may have been served. (Interruptions) The resolution that the hon. Member refers to, was passed by one of the federations, in the month of May. The reasons why government did not call a conference of the working journalists' organizations as well as employers' organizations have already been stated by me. Mainly, the reason is that we wanted the notification to be implemented. I do not think that the hon. Member wants to suggest that the notification itself should become a matter of negotiations. That is not the attitude of the government. The government has announced its decision. It has been notified. If the hon. Member wants that the subject matter of the notification itself should become a matter of negotiations, he will be opening the flood-gates; and we would be creating a situation in which the workers themselves would find their position undermined. I hope, therefore, that that is not his intention.

As far as his reference to the modified notification is concerned, I am

afraid there is some misunderstanding in his mind. We have not modified any notification. There is only one notification that we have issued; and it is to that notification that I have referred.

Then, he has expressed his anger at the fact that for 10 years, nothing was done; the wage board's recommendation was there, and the government did not implement it, he said, for 20 months. We have not been in power for 20 months. It is known to the hon. Member as well as it is known to me that other gentlemen were in power; and if they had ignored it (Interruptions)... and the word gentlemen includes every body—we are not responsible for it. They have been punished for it and for other heinous crimes. As soon as we came, we issued the notification; and we intend to see that the notification is implemented.

12.40 hrs.

STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER
ON HIS PARTICIPATION IN COMMONWEALTH PRIME MINISTERS'
CONFERENCE IN LONDON

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI MORARJI DESAI): Sir, as the House is aware, I returned this morning after attending the meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government. In this tour I also stopped off for a few hours in Tehran at the invitation of His Imperial Majesty Shahanshah and for a day in Paris as guest of the President of France. Both of them are old and valued friends with whom I was very happy to renew friendships. In my discussions we were able to advance the cause of mutual collaboration and cooperation in matters of common concern and we found a great deal of similarity of approach to world problems particularly those pertaining to energy.

This was my first trip abroad after the assumption of office by our Government. It was a matter of great satisfaction to find that following our