

16.08 hrs.

STATEMENT RE: UNDERSTANDING REACHED BETWEEN EMPLOYEES AND MANAGEMENT OF INDIAN EXPRESS GROUP

MR. SPEAKER: Before going to the next item, I think Shri Ravindra Varma wanted to make a statement. Are you making a statement now?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMEN-TARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR (SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA): At 4-30 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: I thought, before we take up the other Demands he would make a statement. Come along. I have with me a copy of the statement. I can give you.

SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, when I made a statement before the House on 27-8-1977 regarding the implementation of the notification on interim wage rates and the dispute that arose about it in the Indian Express Group of newspapers, I promised that I would keep the House informed of further developments. I am glad to inform the House that an understanding has now been reached between the representatives of employees and the management of the Indian Express Group not only in respect of the Delhi Unit, but also in respect of other units of this group of newspapers in the country. The understanding was reached on the following items:—

- (i) 50% of the interim relief notified by the Government will be paid from the 1st of April to the 31st of December, 1977.
- (ii) 100% of the interim relief notified by the Government will be paid with effect from 1st of January, 1978.

- (iii) Payment as in (i) and (ii) will be made irrespective of the decision of the Court.
- (iv) The lock-out and closure notice in Delhi and Ahmedabad will be lifted, and work will re-commence at all existing branches.
- (v) The strike will be withdrawn at all centres.
- (vi) Interim relief will be paid at the rates specified in (i) and (ii) at all the branches.
- (vii) There will be no victimisation.
- (viii) Absence during the strike period will be adjusted against leave.
- (ix) Both employees as well as management will do their best to create an atmosphere of cordiality and industrial peace. They will also strive jointly to improve the quality and expand the circulation of the newspapers published by the concerns.

The present basis for the understanding was one of the formulae that had been under discussion for the last days of June onwards. The attitude of the management to the core of the formula became known around those days. But some clarifications were sought, and alternative formulae too were discussed. For one reason or another, perhaps, due to a communication gap, the matter could not be clinched earlier.

I must place on record my profound gratitude to friends in and outside the House who made it possible to find an amicable way out of the impasse acceptable to both the parties.