

growers of dhanias in Madhya Pradesh and specially the agriculturists of Beenaganj, Chachooa, Kumbhraj, Biao-
ra of Guna and Rajgarh districts. The current prices fetch hardly Rs. 1.50 per kilo of dhanias which is barely 30 per cent of the total cost of production and inputs for this crop. This has brought a total ruin to thousands of agriculturists of Madhya Pradesh, particularly on the background of the failure of other crops in the same area due to hailstorm and unseasonal rains.

The whole economic structure of the farmers of dhanias in Madhya Pradesh has collapsed. Unfortunately, this downfall in the market prices of dhanias is the direct result of the ultimately and unwise policy of the Government in banning export of dhanias. Since the last two years the prices of this crop have fallen from Rs. 12 per kilo to Rs. 2 per kilo.

To avoid this plight of the poor farmers and growers of dhanias who are now driven to a stage of starvation and distress sale of their animals and belongings to keep up their families, the Commerce Ministry should be urgently advised by the Minister of Agriculture to immediately lift the ban on export of dhanias and further the Central Government as well as the State Government should come forward to subsidise the dhanias prices and purchase the unlifted stocks now riotting in the market yards at remunerative prices and save the farmers from utter ruin.

(v) **MEDICAL TREATMENT OF KHAN ABDUL GHAFFAR KHAN IN DELHI**

PROF. SAMAR GUHA (Contai): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am making this statement under Rule 377 for making immediate arrangements for medical treatment of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, as was agreed upon by the Minister of External Affairs.

On December 21, 1978, during the last session. I had the privilege to raise the issue of extending necessary facilities for medical treatment in India to

Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, popularly known as 'Frontier Gandhi' in our country. Hon. Minister or External Affairs informed the House that all steps would be taken for bringing him to India for his early treatment.

In the course of his statement, the hon. Minister for External Affairs stated:

"It is not only our national duty but our national dharma to arrange for Badshah Khan's proper treatment in India and we shall take early steps now that he wishes to come to India."

Although it is over two months since hon. Minister made this statement, steps could not have been taken yet for bringing Badshah Khan to India.

On 6th February, 1979, it has been reported in a Pakistani Paper (*Daily Maghribi Pakistan*) that Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan is reported to be seriously ill and lying in coma in Jalalabad hospital for the last six days. However, it is now known that although Badshah Khan is seriously ill, he is not in a state of coma.

According to available information, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan approached the Government of Pakistan, but it was suggested to him that he should go to Czechoslovakia for medical treatment. However, Badshah Khan preferred to come to India for his treatment.

We are anxious to know what stands in the way of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan's coming to India without further delay. During his visit to India in 1969 and 1970, there was no problem for his passport as at that time he visited India without any valid passport. If it happened earlier, why the Government is not in a position to allow Badshah Khan to come to India without further delay. It has been reported that the Government of Afghanistan is quite willing to provide him the facilities for early travel to India directly from Kabul to New Delhi.

[Prof. Samar Guha]

I would make an earnest appeal to the Minister of External Affairs for enlightening the House about the steps taken by the Government for bringing Badshah Khan from Kabul for his medical treatment. As the aging leader of the freedom struggle of our sub-continent who is suffering from serious illness in Jalalabad hospital, we hope that the Government will take every possible measures to remove the hurdles in the way of Badshah Khan's coming to India immediately.

Sir, I want to add that I had a talk with the Minister of External Affairs. As he is now in the Rajya Sabha, he would not be able to give any reply to my statement. I would, however, request you to kindly bring this to his notice.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is always done.

15.20 hrs.

**WORKING JOURNALISTS AND
OTHER NEWSPAPER EMPLOYEES
(CONDITIONS OF SERVICE) AND
MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS
(AMENDMENT) BILL.**

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR (SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA): Sir, I beg to move:*

"That the Bill further to amend the Working Journalists and Other Newspaper Employees (Conditions of Service) and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1955, be taken into consideration."

The Bill seeks to replace the Working Journalists and Other Newspaper Employees (Conditions of Service) and Miscellaneous Provisions (Amendment) Ordinance, 1979 promulgated on the 31st January 1979.

As the House is aware, two statutory Wage Boards—one for non-journalist newspaper employees and the other for the working journalists—were set up by the Central Government on the 11th June 1975 and the 6th February 1976 respectively, for revising the rates of wages of newspaper employees. The two Wage Boards had a common Chairman, Shri D. G. Palekar, a retired Judge of the Supreme Court and two common independent members, viz. Shri B. C. Bhagwati and Shri R. C. Dutt. Each of the Wage Boards also included two representatives of employers and employees.

The Wage Boards started working in 1975 and 1976 and submitted interim reports on the 16th of June 1976 (Non-Journalist) and 12th of October 1976 (Journalist). Immediately after the present Government took over, we took action on the interim report, and notified interim rates of wages for non-journalists and working journalists on the 1st April 1977. Some of the newspaper managements challenged the interim wage rates in various High Courts on the ground that they were excessive, and would have adverse effect on the newspaper industry. They also contended that the independent members were not really independent, and the Wage Boards were not therefore properly constituted.

Later, in December 1977, the representatives of the newspaper employers on the Wage Boards wrote to the Government that they were withdrawing from the Wage Boards under instructions from the Indian and Eastern Newspaper Society and the Indian Languages Newspapers Association which had nominated them. These two organizations also wrote to Government saying that the two independent members were not really independent and that they should be replaced. In the face of the withdrawal of the representatives of the employers, the Chairman felt compelled to cancel further sittings of the Wage Boards.

*Moved with the recommendation of the President.