

12.05 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER
OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

STRIKE BY PORT AND DOCK WORKERS

SHRI AMAR ROY PRADHAN
(Cooch-Bihar): I call the attention of the hon. Minister of Shipping and Transport to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon:

"Reported strike by port and dock workers and its repercussion on loading and unloading operations in the port areas and on public exchequer."

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (**SHRI CHAND RAM**): Ever since the Janata Government came to power, we have been trying our best to improve wages and other amenities for the workers in Ports and Docks Industry. Soon after assumption of office by the new Government, we arrived at a settlement in July, 1977 with all the Federations of port and dock workers increasing their wages retrospectively from 1-1-1974. With this settlement, Rs. 46 crores were paid as arrears to the workers and the total amount of wages and other allowances payable to the workers has increased by Rs. 19 crores per annum. The rate of *ex-gratia* in lieu of bonus which had been reduced to 4 per cent during Emergency was again raised to 8.33 per cent immediately after the present Government assumed office. Schemes for housing and provision of other welfare amenities for workers amounting to Rs. 5 crores have been sanctioned since April, 1977. The cases of victimisation of employees during the Emergency have been reviewed. In a number of cases where changes brought about in the conditions of work during Emergency had affected the workers adversely through curtailment of overtime earnings, etc., pre-

Emergency privileges have been restored. In Bombay port, the benefits accruing to workers on account of restoration of overtime alone is about Rs. 80 lakhs per annum. Apart from this, a number of measures have been taken in individual Ports also to remove the genuine grievances of the workers.

The Unions affiliated to All India Port and Dock Workers Federation (HMS) served notices of strike from 27-10-1978 onwards on port authorities of Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Visakhapatnam, Cochin, Mormugao, Kandla and Paradip threatening to call a strike from the 16th November, 1978 over a charter of demands. The unions affiliated to the Port, Dock and Waterfront Workers' Federation of India (AITUC) also served strike notices in Calcutta and Visakhapatnam. The Unions affiliated to Water Transport Workers' Federation of India (CITU) served strike notices at Cochin. The strike notices contained many local demands, while some of the demands are of all India nature such as revision of Piece Rate Schemes, rectification of anomalies and discrepancies arising out of the implementation of the W.R.C. recommendations, increase in rate of increment, etc.

One of the major pending demands of workers relates to revision of piece-rate schemes. Government has already agreed in principle that piece-rate schemes will be revised and also extended to new categories, wherever feasible. In June, 1978, discussions were held with the representatives of the Federations of port and dock workers for this purpose. The representatives of the Federations insisted that the revision should take place through negotiations at Port level. I am happy to say that these negotiations have been successful in Mormugao, Kandla, Cochin and Visakhapatnam. Negotiations in other Ports are in progress.

Another major demand relates to rectification of anomalies arising out

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of the implementation of the recommendations of the Wage Revision Committee. It took some time to set up the machinery for this purpose as there was difference of opinion in the matter between All India Port and Dock Workers Federation and the other three Federations. Eventually, an officers' level Anomalies Group was set up on 26th April, 1978. The Group has already visited all the Ports and held discussions with the Unions except in Bombay where some of the Unions affiliated to the All India Port and Dock Workers' Federation did not co-operative.

Our Government believes firmly in negotiated settlement of all labour disputes. In conformity with this approach, on 10-11-1978, I called a meeting of the representatives of four all India federations for port and dock workers, namely, All India Port and Dock Workers' Federation (HMS), Indian National Port and Dock Workers' Federation (INTUC) Port, Dock and Waterfront Workers' Federation of India (AITUC) and Water Transport Workers' Federation of India (CITU). Shri Ravindra Varma, Labour Minister also participated in the discussion for some time. The meeting was called by me to discuss ways and means to bring improvement and efficiency in the port operations and to increase labour productivity and to discuss major pending demands of labour. During the meeting I stressed the need for maintaining industrial peace in the major ports as the port industry plays a vital role in the economy of the country and appealed to the labour leaders for their cooperation. During the meeting I took note of some of the major pending demands of port and dock workers as identified in the meeting by representatives of the federations and assured the representatives that a decision would be taken on these demands by the end of November, 1978 at the level of the Government or

the Port Trusts, as the case might be.

While the leaders of the Indian National Port and Dock Workers' Federation, Port Dock and Waterfront Workers' Federation of India and Water Transport Workers' Federation of India agreed to these arrangements, the All India Port and Dock Workers' Federation did not respond to my appeal. However, with a view to arrive at a negotiated settlement over these major pending demands, I invited the representatives of all the four all India Federations for another round of discussion at Delhi on 24th instant.

While strenuous efforts were thus being made to arrive at the settlement on major pending demands expeditiously, I am pained to inform the Hon. House that the unions affiliated to All India Port and Dock Workers' Federation resorted to a sudden strike from the night of 15th November, 1978 in Bombay Port. The affiliates of this federation in the Ports of Madras, Mormugao, Kandla, Calcutta, Paradip and Visakhapatnam have also gone on strike from the mid-night of 16th November. They have also gone on strike in the Port of Cochin from the mid-night of 18-11-78. I am glad to inform the House that the affiliates of other three federations, namely, INTUC, AITUC and CITU have not participated in the strike, except in an isolated case in Madras where one of the INTUC Unions has also joined the strike.

As a result of the strike, manual loading and unloading operations in Bombay, Mormugao, Cochin, Madras and Kandla Ports have almost come to a stand still. However, the Oil Terminal at Butcher Island in Bombay is functioning and mechanical loading of iron ore and mechanical pumping of POL products at Madras and discharge of fertilizers through Marine Unloader in Kandla are continuing. Normal loading and unloading operations are continuing in Calcutta, Visakhapatnam, Paradip, Tuticorin

and Mangalore. The Marine Department in Calcutta Port has, however, been adversely affected.

The financial impact of strike in the port industry is multifarious, covering a variety of private interests such as shipping companies, importers, exporters, and indirectly agriculture, industry and consumers. It is not possible to compute all these losses on account of the strike. Losses to the Port Authorities, Dock Labour Boards and public exchequer also cannot be assessed so soon.

A strike in the Ports at this juncture will seriously affect our efforts at improving the lot of the people. The delay in unloading of fertilizers will deprive the farmers of the required fertilizers at this crucial time for sowing the rabi crops, which will adversely affect food production in the country and the income of the farmers. Shortage of petroleum products due to delays in handling of imported supplies will put many power stations out of commission, causing unemployment amongst workers engaged in the factories served by these power stations. Similarly delays in unloading of edible oils and other essential consumer goods will increase their prices for the poor consumers. Export efforts will also be adversely hit.

I hope that the All India Port and Dock Workers' Federation will call off the strike in the larger national interest and participate in the discussion called by me on 24-11-1978 so that negotiated settlement can be arrived at on the pending demands. Shri Ravindra Varma, Minister of Labour, is exploring the possibilities of the strike being called off by the federation and I hope that his efforts will bear fruit soon.

SHRI AMAR ROY PRADHAN: I am very sorry to hear the statement made by the hon. Minister. I had a faint hope that the Janata Government

would have learnt some lesson from yesterday's protest march against the Black Bill, the Industrial Relations Bill, but I am sorry the Janata Government is still suffering from its anti-labour policy.

The Port and Dock workers' strike is not a day-to-day affair. During the last 30 years, it was for eleven days in 1958, for five days in 1975 and now it has been going on for the last five days. My first appeal to the Janata Government and to the hon. Minister in particular is this: please do not make it as a prestige issue and do not be guided by anti-labour policy.

I do not agree with the hon. Minister in what he has said in his statement, in para 8. It is a fact so far as our information goes—that out of the ten major ports, Bombay, Mormugao, Cochin and Kandla are completely paralysed due to the strike while Madras and Calcutta also remain virtually paralysed. Moreover, it is a fact that Government is trying its best to break the strike through some unscrupulous and heinous activities in Calcutta such as posting of the Navy Ship, 'Nirdeshak', in Netaji Subhas Dock with naval officers. It is reported that as a result of the strike, 94 ships are stranded in at Bombay, 35 in Calcutta, 17 in Goa (carrying ore to Japan), 30 in Madras and 20 in Cochin. It is surprising that the Minister has tried to call it a partial strike.

Regarding their demands, I would like to say that the demands of the All India Port and Dock Workers Federation are quite reasonable and justified. They have submitted a memorandum long ago but nothing has been done so long. Even now they are ready for negotiations with the government for a settlement. In to-day's newspapers it has been reported:

“Shri S. R. Kulkarni accompanied by 121 dock workers' leaders has been here for more than two days.....”

[Shri Amar Roy Pradhan]

MR. Kulkarni is reported to have said:

"We do not want the strike and cause loss to the nation. We have not presented any new demands. There are several demands which have been long accepted by the government. It is for their implementation that the government has not given its formal approval."

It is reported in to-day *Statesman*.

"Mr. Kulkarni said at night that inter-union rivalry was not the issue germane to the strike. 'If the government is not prepared to have a negotiated settlement, the strike will continue.'"

I would like to know very clearly from the hon. Minister (1) Whether the government is ready to consider the Charter of Demands of the Dock Workers without asking them to first call off the strike or the Government will not insist that the Federation should first call off the strike?

(2) Will the Government immediately open talks for a settlement instead of waiting for the 24th, the date fixed for talks by the Ministry and which has been referred to in the last paragraph of the Minister's statement?

These are my two questions.

SHRI CHAND RAM: I think I have made the position of the Government very clear in the statement itself and I have always kept the door for negotiations open.

I have also made the position of the Government clear in reply to a call attention motion in the Rajya Sabha. Our doors are always open and we are not prepared and I hope the House will concur with me, that we are not prepared to talk to those people who say that they will go on strike and hold the whole nation to ransom. This is my position. We are always prepared to negotiate with

them and said that for the deadline... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI SAUGATA ROY (Barackpore): To strike in a fundamental right.

SHRI CHAND RAM: Even before the deadline of the 16th I was prepared to call a meeting with this Federation. (*Interruptions*) Our friends are talking. Need I remind them the days of the emergency? (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister, please answer the question and not the other interruptions.

SHRI CHAND RAM: We arrived at a settlement with this Federation and other Federations in July 1977 and most of their major demands have been met and as a result of that acceptance we have paid Rs. 46 crores as arrears with retrospective effect from 1st January 1974. Does this show any anti-labour attitude on the part of this government?

Moreover Rs. 90 crores is the annual burden that has come on the government as a result of that agreement. Now that also we have accepted.

I have also clarified that at Bombay which has been badly affected, we have also paid Rs. 80 lakhs as overtime, an amount which was given as a result of the restoration of the overtime that was stopped during emergency days.

On 20th October I settled with the BPT employees that those posts which were abolished during the emergency would also be restored.

These are the steps I have taken. Sir, we are always prepared but one federation is unreasonable, is it not the duty of this House to bring them round to the table and negotiate with us? I am prepared to discuss with them even today, even this afternoon, tomorrow and continue to sit with them if they are prepared. I

have made my position clear. This federation, in to-day's papers I find, have again insisted that they have given a draft agreement to my colleague, Mr. Varma, that they are prepared to talk with Government only if the Government is prepared to negotiate with this Federation only. This position we are not going to accept.

Sir, when the other three Federations have all stood by that they are agreeable to negotiate, why this Federation alone is not prepared to negotiate?

MR. SPEAKER: You have made your point. Mr. Barua.

SHRI BEDABRATA BARUA (Kaliabor): Sir, the Minister's statement leaves many things unclear. It is unfortunate that in a matter in which the nation's welfare is involved and a huge production loss is involved, the Government has not been able to settle the matters expeditiously.

Sir, first of all, I would like to know from the hon. Minister the extent of actual losses that the country has suffered in imports and exports in terms of loading and unloading. Government should be in a position to say as to the extent of loss suffered in the normal loading and unloading and the actual loading and unloading that is taking place in the country today. Rival claims have been made. This is not a question of who penalise the economy more. I do not agree with this type of thing. In a poor country like ours it is not necessary that this situation should have developed. I would like to know as to why the agreement had been reached by Government. Government says very benevolently and with a great amount of fanfare they have announced that an agreement was reached in July 1977. Why is it that it took just one year for them to set up this Anomalies Committee? I am not interested to know as a Member of this House as to who was responsible

for this. After all, it is the duty of the Government to set up the Anomalies Committee. Even after negotiations which they dragged on for more than a year, they did not come to any better position. After that, what did they do? They excluded the workers because the Federation did not want to sit in that Committee. So, naturally, the Government, by its dilly-dallying and prevarications did not really come to any settlement on this issue. The matter was delayed. It is very disappointing. I would like to know: what is the actual position and at what irreducible terms—terms and conditions—the Government would negotiate. It is not only that the workers are accused of standing on prestige but it is, I think, Government itself who is accused of standing on prestige. Who takes the credit for this? As a Member of this House or as a citizen of this country I am not involved in that kind of thing. I would certainly like to see that this matter is settled. It is not a question of somebody's taking the credit for imposing losses on the country. I would like to know really whether Government takes the position that the strike is illegal. The Minister was on record in the newspapers to say that the strike was illegal. In his statement he said that the strike is illegal. If the strike is not illegal, he must negotiate with the strike leaders. If it is illegal then he must try to convince us that it is illegal and he must justify that before the House.

About the whole thing, I would like to know: whether the Minister proposes to sit with the Opposition to negotiate with all the trade unions. I have got a feeling from the newspaper reports that the whole matter is a conflict between two sections of the Janata Party as well as two sections of the Union Leaders. It would be very unfortunate if this is so. Accusations have been made that the Government has not been able to function as one. In this particular

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situation, we would like to know one thing. On what basis the Government has said that there is not much of a difference and the workers have said that there is not much of a difference except for the immediate implementation. Government should have come forward with immediate implementation. It should not be allowed to the Bureaucratic bungling to stand in the way of the immediate implementation. Who is standing in the way of the Government for their implementing the decision unilaterally and discussing with all the unions at the same time? I would like to know whether Government would take steps expeditiously. They have been saying that the strike would be called off in four or five days. The issue is not so much of national loss. (*Inter-ruptions*).

MR. SPEAKER: You have made your point. Let the Minister reply.

SHRI CHAND RAM: Sir, I quite concede that the loss to the economy, of the country and to the poor consumers may be colossal. It is already immense. That is why I made my position clear in my statement that the hon. Members in this House can persuade those people to see reason as also see as to how the losses could be avoided. Sir, when the strike notice was given on 22nd October I fixed the meeting between November where all the federations were to be represented. This federation then said that they want some items to be singled out out of those items which have been referred to the Anomalies Group. I said, 'Alright'. I have no quarrel with that if you can identify those items which may be taken up by the Government immediately. Some items were identified with the consent of this federation when other federations were also present. With the consent of all these federations certain items were identified which could be taken up out of the Anomalies Group. I assured this federation

that we will be taking the decision by the end of November. I did not want the federation to wait upto 30th November but I was busy in the meetings of the Transport and P.W.D. ministers which I had called two months ago. Therefore, the first day I could be free was 24th. I also wanted my officers to consult Finance, Labour and other Ministries because say, for example, there is the question of disparity in pay scales and if we concede the demand as according to the federation it may have its repercussions in other public undertakings. Therefore, I said to wait for some time and I can decide by 24th November and then all the federations were informed by telegram that I am prepared to discuss with all the federations on 24th. They did not want to wait. That is why some friends have said that it is a question of inter-Union rivalries and there is quarrel between Shanti Patel and Mr. Kulkarni. I leave the inference to be drawn by the hon'ble Members. My position and Government's position is very clear that we wanted to negotiate and we wanted certain time. That time was not far off but this federation in order to establish its own supermacy and they are saying it in the statement which has been published today that they have establish the supermacy.

Sir, in the port it is not a question of establishing supermacy by one federation. Even if one worker stops the work on the crane then the whole port comes to standstill. Therefore, I said that I am prepared to talk with all the four federations so that some industrial truce could be arrived at. I offered that in addition to these demands I am prepared to sit with them for three to four days and we can arrive at a settlement which can last for coming five years. Regarding the loss I do not want to say as I have already made the position clear.

SHRI CHITTA BASU (Barasat): Sir, I have listened to the statement made by the hon'ble Minister. So far

as the spirit of the statement is concerned he has enunciated the Government's policy of negotiated settlement. To that extent I have no disagreement with the Government policy. But, Sir, the House should know the genesis of the strike. As has been amply made clear by this striking organisation, an agreement was reached on these very major issues as long ago as July, 1977 and all the workers, irrespective of their affiliation—whether they were in INTUC, HMS, AICU or CITU—have been agitating for the speedy implementation of the agreement reached in July, 1977. My charge against this Government is this. Why were they sitting all these 15 months over the implementation of their agreement? Sir, you will be surprised to know that they took one year's time and then there was one Anomalies Committee. I would also like to read out from his statement and tell you what they have done just to create another anomaly in the history of the trade union movement. Just look at his statement. He says: 'I am prepared to talk, but the condition is that the strike must be withdrawn.' This is not a democratic approach. Whoever might have called for the strike, whether the strike has been a complete one or a partial one, it is still their inherent right. It is the inherent right of the workers to call for a strike, to join a strike and to continue the strike. Now, he has got the audacity to say that they should withdraw the strike first and then only they can come for a negotiated settlement. What is this? This is not a democratic attitude or exhibition of a sympathetic attitude, towards the trade union movement. I do not think he can adopt that kind of an approach. The approach should be really to have a negotiated settlement and for that they should create a congenial atmosphere for such negotiated settlement. But instead of having that approach, they took the first possible opportunity of declaring the strike illegal. They declared the strike illegal at Bombay. They called for the navy in Calcutta,

and they were about to deploy the navy in Bombay. It is not in tune with the statement which he has made just now. But, I feel, the workers should unitedly fight for the redressal of their grievances. There is the necessity of calling for all the Federations. Therefore, Sir, I agree with the hon. Minister that settlement should be on the basis of negotiation. The settlement should be arrived at after consulting all the unions, not only after consulting one union. But a congenial atmosphere is to be created for that kind of a peaceful negotiated settlement. Negotiation should be started without any condition. There should be no condition that the strike is to be withdrawn first, and then only negotiation will start. Will the hon. Minister assure us that without that condition he would settle the dispute as early as possible

My second point is this: The Bargemen have also joined the strike in Calcutta. They are demanding that bargemen should be treated also equally with the other categories of the dock and port workers.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Chitta Basu, please conclude.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: Just listen, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: I cannot go on listening. You cannot make a debate. Kindly don't do it.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: My point is, the bargemen are also on strike, in the Calcutta port. My question is this: What does he propose to do to settle that? The Government appointed a committee called the Bargemen's Committee. The Committee did everything else, it went into the problems of the industry and so on, but it did not consider the question of the wage of the bargemen. They are party to the strike. May I know from the Minister whether they will also talk with them, discuss the matter with them and solve the problem of

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the bargemen so that there can be industrial peace in the port itself? May I know whether the Government will take action in this regard?

SHRI CHAND RAM: The hon. Member has said that we should talk to them even if they are on illegal strike. Sir, the position is very simple. As soon as the strike notice is given, negotiations are started, consiliatory proceedings are started. When the consiliatory proceedings are started and the union joins the strike, that strike automatically becomes illegal. Now, does he want to say that we should talk to them even when they are on illegal strike? But, even then, during the pendency of the strike notice..

SHRI CHITTA BASU: No strike is illegal.

SHRI CHAND RAM: This strike notice had not expired. It expired on the 16th. But the Bombay people went on strike on the 15th. One illegality and then another illegality was there. Even then what was the position of the government? We invited them for a meeting on the 10th November. We invited all the federations; three federations agreeable, but they are not agreeable to a negotiated settlement. They say that they will hold the country to ransom and he has again reiterated that... (*Interruptions*) In his first statement, he has said that all kinds of raw materials will be stopped. He is threatening like this and should we talk to him?

Sir, he has also talked of the genesis of the strike. May I read from the BPT Employees Union's statement; this is a constituent of this federation. They have issued a statement:

"The so-called demands which are made a cause of the strike do not cover all the sections of the port and dock workers. It must be mentioned that the Government

and the employees including the port authorities have honoured the settlement of June, 1977 in respect of pay-scales, overtime allowance, house rent allowance etc. As a result, all the workers in Bombay have received arrears ranging from Rs. 2000 to Rs. 20,000."

This was the first time that such a large amount was paid to the workers as arrears. This is not my statement; this is the statement of one of the constituents of the Federation, the Bombay Port Employees. And still the hon. Member says that we have not implemented the agreement reached in July, 1977. It is only in respect of certain one or two demands—minor demands relating to pay-scales etc—that we have not been able to agree. There also, the fault lies with the employees, not with us but with this federation. They first wanted that representatives of the labour should be associated with this anomaly group, but then they resiled. They did not want the representatives of the three federations to be associated; they wanted only their representative to be associated. How could we reconcile to this position? All the federations have made the agreement and we wanted to associate all the federations. They said, that only officers group should be associated with the anomaly group, no representative from the labour should be associated.

Now, we set up this officers' anomaly group and it naturally took time. This anomaly group was to give its report by the end of December. They had to visit ten ports. I think, there are more than 100 unions in the various ports. Each of these unions had to be addressed letters requiring them to appear before them. With one or two federations, this anomaly group had discussions and I think, on 17th, they had the discussions with the INTUC. As I said, this anomaly group were required to present their report by December and I assured these federation that we will take a decision by 15th January, but they were not prepared to wait. Even then, I

singled out those items which could be settled right now. Our anxiety is to settle the matter, but their anxiety is to be unreasonable and to show their strength. This is the position.

So far as the question of bargemen is concerned, they do not come under the category of port labour. In fact, their demand is that they should be declared as workers of the port. I have knowledge that Mr. Kulkarni went to Calcutta. These bargemen are not port employees, but he instigated them to go on strike so that we cannot bring the vessels from the sand-head... (*Interruptions*). Still, I have requested the hon. Labour Minister to look into the grievances of these bargemen so that they can be satisfied.

SHRI VASANT SATHE (Akola): Sir, it is a sad commentary on the performance of the present Government that the hon. Minister has made a statement which shows the attitude of the Government towards the working class and their way of 'divide and rule' among the trade unions themselves. The hon. Minister knows full well that the most powerful Federation of dock and port workers is this federation—with whom he is reluctant to negotiate—headed by Mr. Kulkarni. The statement now made also makes it clear that in principle, Government has already agreed to the major demand. So, there is no dispute actually on the merits of the demand. Now it appears to be only a prestige issue for the Government to say that till the strike is withdrawn, it will not negotiate. I would like to know from the hon. Minister... (*Interruptions*) Let us see your democratic approach. You persuade your people now. There are 10 union leaders of this very federation in Government and in power to-day. I would like to know their attitude. What have Mr. George Fernandes, Mr. Madhu Limaye, Mr. Madhu Dandavate and Mrs. Mrinal Gore to say on this? Do they agree with this attitude of the Government in saying that unless the strike is withdrawn, this Government will not negotiate with the employees? You cannot have double

standards. I would like to know from the Government... (*Interruptions*) You are having double standards. Mrs. Gore, come out with your standards now. (*Interruptions*) Why will they not negotiate, if on merits they have nothing against? And she talks glibly of illegality of strike.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, you have been a Judge. Can you tell me of a single strike that was considered legal?

MR. SPEAKER: I have stopped giving advice now.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Mr. Speaker, as a Judge, has not found any strike to be legal. It is so because the law is such. Mr. Ravindra Varma is there. Under the industrial law as it stands now, can any strike ever become legal? So, how do you talk about illegality of the strike? Talk about justifiability. They gave you notice on 27th October. You have been dragging your feet since June, on their demands. You did not have time to sit and even concede their legitimate demands, since June. And then they gave notice on 27th October. After that notice, why did you not, till 15th November, talk to them? You come and tell us that illegality was there because on 15th night they went on strike. Technically it is not so. The date is 16th, because if they did it from 12 midnight, it becomes 16th. But why did you wait till 15th and not negotiate with them? This is your attitude.

Mr. Chand Ram, I would request you not to stand on prestige. It is not democratic. You should negotiate and come to a settlement, when you concede that on merits the demands are justified. Don't make it a prestige issue. It will be to the tremendous cost of the country, if you make it a prestige issue. I would ask the Minister to be true to his democratic protestations and say here and now that he would not wait for the strike to be withdrawn. It is their right, as you yourself concede.

SHRI CHAND RAM: I think the hon. Member has brought in some irrelevant things.

MR. SPEAKER. In this House you cannot complain about irrelevancies.

SHRI CHAND RAM: In view of his statement that it was a sad commentary on the part of the government, I said so. I have already pointed out that an agreement was arrived at in July. Within two months, not one or two crores, but Rs. 46 crores . . .

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Have you given charity? It was their due.

SHRI CHAND RAM: Did we not restore the ex-gratia payment? I have already mentioned that. His government stopped this ex-gratia payment. We restored it even when we were running into loss. We issued an ordinance that bonus would be paid. He must remember all this. . . . (Interruptions) They stopped payment of overtime during the emergency. As a result of the agreement that will be implemented the minimum pay has gone up by Rs. 85/4 per month for each worker.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: That is not the point.

SHRI CHAND RAM: He also said that we were standing on prestige. For us it is not a question of prestige. As head of the conciliation machinery, Mr. Ravindra Verma talked to the federation, to Mr. Kulkarni. If I show you the draft agreement that he has given yesterday at about 9 O' clock, it will expose him that he is making unreasonable demands; he says, unless those are accepted I will not call off the strike. Is it the federation which is standing on prestige or the government? I want to know from the hon. Members of the House. With this government the doors of negotiation are always open. I invited him for a discussion around the table on 24th. They were not prepared to wait.

MR. SPEAKER: Even good points need not be repeated.

SHRI CHAND RAM: In this country there are many persons who are aggrieved and who are not getting what is their due. The producers, the growers of foodgrains, if they strike, if they say that they will have a strike, what should be done? He is not having the interest of those people who are not getting one meal a day but he is fighting for those persons who are getting Rs. 800 per month. . . . (Interruptions)

SHRI VASANT SATHE: You do not pay the cane growers; you cannot talk about the poor sugarcane growers.

SHRI K. MALLANNA (Chitradurga): I went through the statement very carefully and heard his speech also very carefully. I have got my own doubt whether the hon. Minister Mr. Chand Ram has got full facts with him. I read in the paper the hon. Labour Minister Mr. Ravinder Varma and Prof. Madhu Dandavate are involved in conciliation efforts in negotiations. That is why I say he is not fully aware of the facts. So far the effect on the economy is concerned, he has stated that it has got a bad effect on the economy of the country. Then why should he not come forward with sincere efforts to settle this issue? He has not come forward. He only says that it has a bad effect on the economy. He is indulging in sabotaging the strike, which is the inherent right of the workers. He used lathi charge in Vishakapatnam, Marmagoa and other places. He says the strike is politically motivated. Instead of going into the problem and solving it, he says it is a politically motivated strike. He says, Navy will be deployed at the ports and Army will be deployed at the ports. So far as the labour policy is concerned, the Janata Party is following anti-labour policies. Some of the Janata MPs say that the military should be sent to handle the situation. That means these people are not genuine and sincere in their approach to the problem.

What is the situation now? The entire working class, irrespective of their political affinities, are united in opposing this. In this context, the Minister should have come forward with negotiation on all the demands which were agreed to. May I ask whether the Minister is sincere in his efforts to end the strike, why this pre-condition was imposed on the workers and what is the effect on the economy in terms of money?

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister has already mentioned that. He may be satisfied or may not be satisfied with it.

12.50 hrs.

COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES

THIRD REPORT

PROF. SAMAR GUHA (Contai): I beg to present the Third Report of the Committee of Privileges.

SHRI SAUGATA ROY (Barrack-pore): Under rule 184 I move for a discussion of the report. The report has already come out in the papers today. There should be a fullfledged discussion in the House.

MR. SPEAKER: If you invite my attention to any paper, I am proposing to take action against the paper.

SHRI SAUGATA ROY: The report has come out in the papers today. I will write to you.

MR. SPEAKER: Please submit a cutting. This is a very important matter. If anything like that has happened, it is really very serious. Mr. Saugata Roy, I would like to talk to you about some procedural matters. Will you please meet me sometime?

SHRI SAUGATA ROY: Yes, Sir.

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN (Badagara): Under rule 315(1) I move that the report be taken into consideration.

MR. SPEAKER: Please give in writing.

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN: May I request that all the records and documents concerning the report, including details of it, may be made available to Members either in the library or some other place?

PROF. SAMAR GUHA: All the details are there.

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN: Only a summary is given.

PROF. SAMAR GUHA: Not summary; all details are there.

MR. SPEAKER: The published report is available. If you want anything more, I will make it available.

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN: All the papers must be made available to all the Members.

MR. SPEAKER: Some of the papers are rather important. I want to keep them as safe as possible.

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN: It can be in your custody. But before you fix a date, it must be made available to the Members.

श्री उग्रनेन (देवरिया) : यह जो रिपोर्ट है क्या इसको सदस्यों में वितरित किया जाएगा?

SHRI SHYAMNANDAN MISHRA (Begusarai): My respectful submission is that the motion should not be in the name of any other member except in the name of the Chairman himself.

In case the motion says that this be taken into consideration by the House and the House has to come to certain conclusions about it, then it would be proper for the Chairman of the Privileges Committee to come forward with a motion for the consideration of the Report. It should not be in the name of any other Member.

MR. SPEAKER: I cannot help it if somebody else gives a notice. Anyhow, I will look into it. Anybody can give notice of a motion.

SHRI SHYAMNANDAN MISHRA: The Report itself says....