

है। बल्कि पीछे जिस लाइन को उखाड़ दिया गया उसी को पूरा करना है। आज तक इस तरफ कोई ध्यान नहीं दिया गया है। मैं आप से प्रार्थना करता हूँ कि इस तरफ आप ध्यान दें।

इसके अलावा एक बात और मैं अर्ज करना चाहता हूँ। आप जानते ही हैं कि हरियाणा और पंजाब में पिछले दिनों अनाज की पैदावार बहुत काफी हुई है। उसको देखते हुए हरियाणा और पंजाब में स्कीम बनाई थी और कहा था कि दिल्ली से करनाल और अम्बाला तक की लाइन को डबल लाइन कर दिया जाए। इसी तरह से दिल्ली से बाया रोहतक भटिंडा लाइन को भी डबल कर दिया जाए। उस तरफ ध्यान नहीं दिया गया है, आप तो जानते ही हैं कि बहुत से आदमी दिल्ली के बहुत पास सोनीपत, पानीपत, रोहतक आदि में रहते हैं जोकि पचास साठ मील पर हैं। अगर इसको डबल लाइन कर दिया जाए तो गाड़िया जल्दी आएगी और उन मुलाजिमों को तथा दूसरे लोगों को जो बाहर रहते हैं दिल्ली से उनको आने जाने में सहूलियत होगी। इसका अब तक प्रोग्राम नहीं बनाया गया है मैं और बकत आपका न लेते हुए यही प्रार्थना आप से करूँगा कि इन दो बातों की तरफ आप ध्यान दें।

17.02 hrs.

STATEMENT RE. STRIKE BY WORKING JOURNALISTS AND OTHER NEWSPAPER EMPLOYEES

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRI RAGHUNATHA REDDY): The Indian Federation of working Journalists, the All India Newspaper Employees Federation and the U.N.I. Employees' Union had given on 24th February, 1973 a joint call for a country-wide token strike on 20th March, 1973 in order to focus attention on their demands. According to available information so far, the strike appears to have been

fairly widespread (Interruptions) It is understood that in Delhi except for one newspaper, employees of all others abstained from work. It is learnt that in Bombay the employees of all the newspapers except three abstained from work.

On 7th February 1973 I received a letter dated the 5th February, 1973 from the President of the Indian Federation of working Journalists suggesting that I should intervene and settle the outstanding demands of the newspaper employees. These demands relate primarily to the revision of the wage structure, interim relief, revision of the dearness allowance and diffusion of newspaper ownership.

I had invited the representatives of the Indian Federation of working Journalists and the All India Newspaper Employees Federation on 24th February, 1973 in order to ascertain their views in the matters that fall within the jurisdiction of the Department of Labour. The representatives of the Indian Federation of Working Journalists explained their case for the setting up of a third wage board which, they stated, was obligatory under the Working Journalists (Conditions of Service) and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1955. It was their contention that enough time had already elapsed since the last wage board gave its award in 1967. The newspaper industry, they added, had registered a phenomenal all-round growth, including their revenues, during the last decade.

The representatives of the All India Newspaper Employees' Association, representing the non-journalist employees of the newspapers, whom I also met later on the same day, did not press for a wage board but showed their preference for bilateral negotiations with the employers. They desired that Government should exert its influence on the employers for entering into negotiations with their employees.

I followed this up by meeting the

[Shri Raghunatha Reddy] representatives of the employers—the Indian and Eastern Newspaper Society and the Indian Languages Newspapers Association—on 27th February 1973. The representatives of the employers said that they would furnish their considered views on the subject by the end of March 1973. They are being reminded to do so as soon as possible.

I would like to assure the House that I will have the matter examined, to the extent it relates to my Ministry, as soon as the views of the representatives of the newspapers employers have been received.

17.06 hrs.

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS (RAILWAYS), 1973-74—contd.

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS rose—

MR. CHAIRMAN: I am not allowing any question. The Railway Minister.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE (Kanpur): Not a question, but a clarification.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, please when it starts, then everybody will demand. I am not willing to allow this. The Railway Minister, please.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI L. N. MISHRA): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am indeed thankful to the hon. Members of this House who have participated in the debate and made a number of valuable points. My colleague, Shri Mohd. Shafi Qureshi, has intervened in the debate and tried to cover a number of points made by the hon. Members. At this stage, I will take up only two or three points before I sit down.

The first is the question, as was raised by Mr. Dinen Bhattacharyya who initiated the debate yesterday, about bonus. I will start with bonus, and Mr. Banerjee will perhaps be happy. On this question, as I have said earlier, our mind is open, and we have not come to any conclusion. Shri Dinen Bhattacharyya gave an argument, yesterday that these depart-

mental workers should be treated as the other public sector workers. This is a self-defeating argument. I will advise Mr. Dinen Bhattacharyya not to advance this kind of argument, which might force them to lose their case. On this bonus, I will say again that there is nothing I can say at this stage, especially before we get the report of the Third Pay Commission. But I will again repeat that my mind on this issue is open.

Then, Shri Dinen Bhattacharyya also raised yesterday,— and Shri Birender Singh Rao today,—and used some harsh words about the Railway Board. It has been unfortunate that in every debate on the railway budget the Railway Board comes into the picture and it is discussed.

AN HON. MEMBER: And rightly so.

SHRI L. N. MISHRA: Might be, not according to me. I have explained at length the character and the composition of the Railway Board. Even today I held that this a body consisting of wise, experienced officers presided over by the Chairman, and there is nothing special about it. We have got Secretaries in the Ministry of Defence. There is a principal Secretary in the Ministry of Defence. So, these four Members are nothing but Secretaries and the Railway Board is presided over by the Chairman who is more or less a Principal Secretary. It will be very wrong to suggest that the Board dominates in the Ministry and the Minister is nobody in the Ministry. The Board has to carry out the decisions and directions given by the Minister. As I had said earlier, it will be really a bad day if the Ministers are flouted by any civil servant and I hold that view; and it has never been my experience that if I pass some orders any Secretary or any officer had dared to flout my order or instruction. I still held that the Railway Board will have to follow what I want as the executive agent of this Parliament. As I said earlier, also, I will say that