

16.47 hrs.

STATEMENT re. NOTICE BY MEMBERS OF INDIAN HOCKEY TEAM FOR WORLD CUP TOURNAMENT

अध्यक्ष महोदय : इससे पहले कि मैं अगली आइटम पर डिबेट द, आपको पता होगा कि आज सुबह जो हाकी टीम ने फॅमला दिया है कि वह नहीं खेलेगी, उस पर हमारे कुछ सदस्यों ने सवाल उठाया था, बाजपेी जी, दास मुशी इत्यादि ने। उसका मिनिस्टर साहब जवाब देना चाहते हैं।

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): At the request of the President, Indian Hockey Federation, Shri M. A. Ramaswamy and on the recommendation of the All India Council of Sports, the Government of India have cleared the Indian Hockey Team to participate in the World Cup Hockey Tournament being held at Kuala Lumpur from 1st March, 1975. The necessary financial sanctions are being issued for the team which I hope will leave as soon as the formalities are completed. The President of the Indian Hockey Federation has recommended the same team including the manager, coach and captain which was trained and selected under the auspices of the Indian Olympic Association at Chandigarh.

16.49 hrs.

DISCUSSION re.-JUTE WORKERS STRIKE IN WEST BENGAL

MR. SPEAKER: Now we take up the discussion on the jute workers' strike in West Bengal.

Shri Indrajit Gupta

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: (Alipore): Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to you for giving us an opportunity of having a discussion on this very important issue in place of the call attention notice which you had originally admitted.

I may say at the outset that this

strike which is to-day in its 46th day is above all an industrial dispute, a dispute between employers and the workmen and I am well aware of the fact that both the Commerce Minister and the Labour Minister can, if they choose, take refuge behind the technical plea that the State Government is the proper authority to deal with industrial disputes. (Interruptions) I hope, Sir, that these Ministers will not seek to take refuge behind the plea that the West Bengal Government was seized of the matter and therefore they had nothing further to do with this. I may remind the House that in 1969 and 1970 on these two occasions similar general strikes in the West Bengal jute industry took place. The two negotiations to bring about a settlement, the drafting of the final arrangement and the signing of the agreement took place not in Calcutta but here in Delhi. It was at the initiative of the Central Government the then Labour Minister and the then Commerce Minister that both the parties the Indian Jute Mills Association and the representatives of the various Unions were called to Delhi for discussions and in the 1970 strike they were called on no less than three occasions during the pendency of the strike and then the matter was settled here. The agreement was signed here.

So I want to know this. This is my first question. I want to know what has transpired between now and then to make the Central Government so utterly indifferent and callous in its attitude towards this prolonged dispute in an industry which is the main foreign-exchange earning industry of this country so that they go on saying that the West Bengal Government is the competent authority to deal with it and they have nothing much to do in the matter. This change we notice, Sir since last year. The 1974 strike and the 1975 strike have been dealt with on an entirely different basis, with an entirely different modality, to the strikes of 1960 and 1970. Therefore I charge this Government which is

[Shri Indrajit Gupta.]

responsible for the export trade of this country and the Labour Ministry which is responsible in seeing that regarding disputes involving strikes in such major industries, if they are not being expeditiously settled by the State Government, they should discharge their responsibility in the matter, I charge them with having abdicated this responsibility under somebody or others pressure.

Now, the Minister has given us a long statement in which he has not forgotten to bemoan the fact that each day's strike means a loss of about one crore of rupees in foreign exchange earnings. Therefore, 46 days according to his calculations, should mean Rs. 46 crores of loss. Is this a matter which is the concern only of the West Bengal State Government which gets precious little out of these earnings? Anyway, this is a matter directly concerning the Central Government and, instead of these Rs. 46 crores, if a small amount of Rs. 5 or 6 or 7 crore, was sanctioned to meet the justified demand of the workers, the strike need never have taken place at all. I therefore say that something must be working behind the scene. My friends here are always saying this. I cannot always take issue with them.

16.57 hrs.

[SHRI VASANT SATHE in the Chair.]

Last year, that is, during the 1974 January strike, mid-term elections were pending in U. P., Orissa and in other States. This time we are in the election year. If this accusation is made and if this accusation is widely believed, who is to blame for that? You do not want to tread on the corns of the powerful Indian Jute Millowners' Association from whom your party, your party fund, will be the beneficiary during the election! In 1969-70 you were quick and prompt in settling this dispute. I must congratulate the Government on the role it played in 1969-70.

Now, Sir, something else is happening. As we all know, there are nine big monopoly houses dominating the jute industry in West Bengal. They are: Andrew Yule, Bangur, Birds, Birlas, Goenka, J. K., Mafatlal, Sahu Jain and Suraj Mal Nagar Mal. These are the nine houses which dominate our jute industry in West Bengal. And, these people are well known to everybody. Among them, of course, the owner of the largest Jute Mill—National Jute Mills—which employs 14,000 workers is Mr. Piloo Mody's friend, Mr. Ram Nath Goenka whom we know very well. (Interruptions).

SHRI JANESHWAR MISRA:
(Allahabad): He must be Lok Nayak!

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: I am not surprised that Lok Nayak has no time to bother about the jute worker's strike and the worries of these jute workers because Mr. Goenka is also involved in this. But, what is the Government doing? This is what I want to know. I wish to point out a few developments that reveal the attitude of the Government. The strike notices were served by the unions in the month of November, 1974. The date announced was 6th of January for the commencement of the strike. I think a sufficiently long period was given to enable the Government if it wished or if it was serious to try to bring about a settlement before any strike came about. I may remind the Minister that in 1972, such a settlement and agreement was brought about on the eve of the strike.

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE
(PROF. D. P. CHATTOPADHYAYA):
That was in 1972.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: That is what I am bemoaning. In 1969-70 and in 1971-72 it was one type of behaviour by you and in 1974-75 it was a different type of behaviour. Why don't you go back to 1972? I would welcome it. You have to answer that.

SHRI PILOO MODY (Godhra): This is the collusion here!

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: The first conciliation meeting was called in Calcutta, this time twelve days after the strike began. The strike began on the 6th but the first meeting was called on the 18th of January. I speak with firsthand knowledge in these things. I hope you will not question these facts which I narrate.

PROF. D. P. CHATTOPADHYAYA:
 You organised it.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: I organised it; your people also organised it. I am glad that all the trade unions irrespective of their affiliations, irrespective of their political colour, whether they are INTUC, AITUC, CITU, HMS, UTUC or any other Union, all the unions jointly together formulated the same demands—they put forward the same demands—the same strike notice and the date of conducting the strike and they to-day are conducting the strike jointly. So, you cannot say that somebody has got some political game behind it because, I am glad to say, the INTUC people are fully in this struggle.

17.00 hrs.

Now, Sir, twelve days after the strike began the first meeting was called by the State Labour Minister and today forty-six days after the strike began the State Labour Minister has announced that agreement could not be brought about. He has announced certain recommendations on behalf of the Government. The Jute Mill Owners Association are happy with these recommendations and they have promptly accepted these recommendations and opened the gates of the mills and told the workers to come. Today, inspite of 46 days of terrible privation—you can understand in these days what a strike of 46 days means to the workers—I hope, the Minister will not contest that a very infinitesimal fraction of workers has gone to work. The Minister in his own statement has

claimed that so far about 12 mills have resumed functioning out of 63 mills and in these mills also only 40 per cent of the workers have joined duty. The fact remains that an overwhelming majority of workers are out and they will remain out till the unions decide whether they should go in or not go in.

Now, Sir, let me just remind the House how the Central Government was indirectly connected with the strike. Some time ago last year a long pending dispute in the jute industry which happens to be one of the issues of the present strike was referred to Mr. Raghunatha Reddy—for whom we all have much respect—to go into and give his award. That was the issue relating to the question of relief for the badli workers, that is to say, when the badli workers are not provided with work and sit idle whether they should be given any relief. If so, what. Mr. Raghunatha Reddy went into the matter and gave his findings in a proper written award and the Indian Jute Mills Association has just flagrantly refused to accept or implement it. Actually, one of the jute companies, Hukam Chand Jute Mill which is owned by Mr. Birla was instigated to file an appeal against it in the court and now they go on saying, since it is *sub judice* nothing can be done. I want to know in such a matter what is going to be the role of the Central Government. All we were saying throughout the strike was the Central Government and the State Government should jointly tell the IJMA that they must prevail upon Hukam Chand Mill, which is one of their affiliated units, to withdraw the case from the court and settle it amicably outside. Are we to understand that IJMA has become so powerful in the mind of Mr. Chattopadhyaya and Mr. Raghunatha Reddy that they would have had the temerity to refuse in the interest of the settlement? But, no. The Minister went on saying 'It is in the Court; it is *sub judice*; we

[Shri Indrajit Gupta]

cannot do anything; it will amount to contempt of court'. Who is talking about contempt of Court? We were suggesting repeatedly that they should use their pressure and influence on the IJMA to see that the case is withdrawn from the Court. It is an award given by the Labour Minister of the Government of India. Is it a joke or what? Who is running the country, the Government of India or the IJMA? We want to know that. Nothing was done. This is one of the main un-resolved issues. These *badli* workers were treated like sub-human people since the days of the British jute mill owners. Of course, we have improved their condition through repeated struggles. Many of them have become permanent now. But, those who have remained as *badli wala*s are all at the mercy of the mill owners, whether they should be given work or they should not be given work. Mr. Raghunatha Reddy gave an award which did not satisfy us completely. In my opinion, it was a very modest sort of an award. Anyway, it was better than nothing. Even that, they are not willing to accept and implement. Did the Union Government do anything about it? Did they pull them up and tell them? Nothing. Now, many sermons are being told. 'I hope that the workers would have bigger sense of responsibility towards national interest' and so on. Don't deliver these sermons to us, Mr. Chattopadhyaya.

Then, Sir, there is another matter. That is a most mysterious thing. The State Government set up a committee their own committee, called the Bhattacharya Commission. There were no labour representatives in this. It was composed of economists, officials of the Labour Department and so on. The Commission went into the question whether the computation and compilation of the cost of living index figures was at all defective or not. I am telling you very briefly. I do not want to go into the details. Finally, they gave their findings, re-

commendations to the Government, in which they said that there is a serious defect in the various figures that are compiled and they pointed out, what is the defect and how it should be rectified. It was found by calculation that if it is rectified according to the Bhattacharya Commission's findings, then, each jute worker is entitled now to extra dearness allowance of Rs. 61 per month. At the time when the recommendation was given, it was about Rs. 54 or 55. Subsequently, if you follow the same computation now, it will come to Rs. 61. That is what they were being deprived of all this time. What did the State Government do? It came out with an order under the Defence of India Rules saying 'Herewith you are granted an increase of dearness allowance of Rs. 16'. Rs. '16, instead of 61 Why? They said'. The Simla Bureau of the Labour Ministry have made a calculation which worked out to Rs. 16. Therefore, you will get only Rs. 16'—not in hand, of course, because, Rs. 8 will be imputed under compulsory deposit. But, you will get Rs. 16. The Defence of India Rule is promulgated in order to thrust that down the throats of the workers. Now, sir, we went on telling the State Labour Minister 'Please change this thing; amend it; It is your order; you can amend it, you can change it, you can modify it'. He went on telling us 'I am sorry; I am helpless; my hands are tied; I cannot do anything'. We asked 'who has tied your hands'. He said 'I have to do this according to the directives from Delhi, I cannot do anything'. Then, Sir, there are some reports which have appeared in the newspapers which have not been contradicted. May I just quote from the Hindustan Standard:

"The West Bengal Labour Minister is reported to have claimed that his Government had accepted the Labour Bureau findings on the advice of the Union Labour Ministry. But, a spokesman of the Union Labour Ministry today disclaimed any responsibility for the decision taken by West Bengal. He said,

the Centre had merely forwarded to West Bengal the revised computation of the consumer price index made by the Simla Bureau and had given no views of its own. The computation made by a technical officer, did not represent the views of the Government, the spokesman said. The position was made clear in a letter the Labour Ministry wrote to the State Government on 21st August last. In that letter, it was stated that the Ministry would give its opinion if it was sought."

Then, Sir, it is said:

"The Labour Ministry in a letter to the West Bengal Government had noted with surprise the striking similarity between the method of and computation by the Labour Bureau and the Indian Jute Mills Association. Both the Labour Bureau of Mr. Raghunatha Reddy, sitting in Simla and the Indian Jute Mills Association arrived at the amount of Rs. 16 as additional DA payable to the workers after conversion of the base year. Knowledgeable sources think that such a similarity between the computation and methods of two separate bodies could hardly be possible without collusion. It is, therefore, thought that the invocation of the DIR for payment of additional DA at the rate of 16 has come as a boon to the jute millowners".

I am pointing out these issues which are all intricately connected with the Government in different ways and am charging them with deliberately washing their hands off the whole thing and doing nothing whatsoever to intervene in this dispute which has gone on for 46 days involving such a huge loss of foreign exchange.

Sometimes we are told the State Government is allergic to the Central Government, that they do not want them to interfere, they go on telling them, 'You mind your own

business; we are looking after this. These are all rumours. I do not know. Tell us what the difficulty is. I have never heard of such a thing, a strike going on for 46 days and at no stage does the Central Government come into the picture. Then they say we have lost Rs. 46 crores in foreign exchange. So obviously there is more than meets the eye in this.

Then he has tried to show in this statement that the Labour Minister there tried his best to work out all sorts of proposals, draft proposals and modified them, that he tried to get both parties to agree; but poor chap, what could be done? I do not want to go into all these details.

Now, I have with me Dr. Gopaldas Nag's draft, the original. It is not my draft. This is what he gave on the 4th February. In this, which we were prepared to accept, what was the proposal made regarding this item of *ex-gratia* payment in lieu of bonus? It is written:

"To help the workers to defray special expenses, the managements should pay to each one of them such an amount and within such a date as indicated below: Rs. 120 to be paid by 15-4-1975 and Rs. 130 to be paid by 31-3-1976".

In other words, the proposal by the Government was that this year and next two separate lump sum amounts of Rs. 120 and Rs. 130 respectively should be paid. But is that what the Labour Minister has now put forward in his final proposal? In that Rs. 130 for next year has just been cut out. We asked him why? IJMA is not willing!

In this draft—he can check up—it was said that all place-rated workers would be given an increment of Rs. 2 per month and in the revised draft, which the unions have now refused to accept, it has been modified to Rs. 2 to all niece-rated workers who operate more than two machine', Multiple machines. Either

[Shri Indrajit Gupta.]

Shri Chattopadhyaya does not know these things or he is conveniently slurring over them.

In the last draft—in this you will find there is no mention of it—the State Labour Minister had put in a little clause at the end saying that the Unions will not object to rationalisation measures to be carried out by the millowners. I know they are waiting to retrench a whole lot of workers in the name of productivity. We are supposed to agree to that. We may lose in this struggle; it does not matter. We may go down. After 40 days or 50 days, you cannot expect these poor workers from U.P. Bihar, Orissa and other places who have gone there for their livelihood to go on fighting. They have nothing to eat absolutely; they are starving. They may go back to work. The unions may tell them to do so today, tomorrow or the day after. I do not know. But we are not prepared to put our signature on such a document. We are not going to bow down like that before this kind of attitude of the IJMA before which this Government trembles, this weakened Government which bends its head before these millowners. What is the idea?

Shri Chattopadhyaya goes on giving concessions. I do not know if that is going to help our trade. Just recently he has reduced the export duty by Rs. 500 on carpet backing. They of course are not satisfied. They go on shouting, 'We must have total abolition of export duty'. Raw jute has been made available to them very cheap because the Jute Corporation of India is a flop, a fiasco. It cannot buy up jute even as proposed according to its own target.

The result is that raw jute is lying there. All the jute mill owners hope to mop up raw jute at low prices because the jute corporation is unable to buy any sizeable quantity of jute. Mr. Chattopadhyaya with whom I discussed this many times

always pleads that there is credit squeeze and that the Jute Corporation of India is not given enough funds by the Finance Ministry; they do not direct the banks to give enough funds. What kind of Government is this? Yet they will say that foreign exchange reserves are going down. It is a fact. Every penny of extra foreign exchange which we can earn is necessary but when it comes to buying raw jute through the nationalised public sector agency, we are told that there are no funds and no money. Now because for 1½ months the strike has been going on, about nine lakh bales of raw jute have not been used, which would normally have been consumed during this period if the mills had worked. That raw jute, I do not know whether you would call it surplus, some of it is with the dealers, some of it is in the godowns and some small quantities are with the growers still and the millowners are hoping that after the strike is over all this extra nine lakh bales of raw jute can also be bought by them at the price of air and water. Therefore, I suggested that you should announce; we will buy up this raw jute through the JCI and export it. Last year we exported about 4-5 lakh bales. If you had done that, it would have foiled the conspiracy of the millowners. That has not also been done.

I am sorry to say that we are not satisfied with this eternal story which is trotted out and is not again being trotted out, namely, the difficulty of selling jute goods in overseas markets. Therefore, they say that no strike should take place. All right. But what about the demands of the workers? Should they not be conceded? They say that there is a crisis in the export market of jute goods. I do not deny. Let us have a discussion and see who is responsible for it and to what extent it is a man-made crisis. (In 1971-72 the carpet backing market was so good The Bengla Desh mills were out of commission

as a consequence of the war. The members of the IJMA sold carpet backing in the world market at a premium of Rs. 1200 or 1500 or 1800 per tonne. They went on looting and profiteering with both hands. Were they directed to do so by the Government? Do they expect that market to remain? They ruined the market for the sake of immediate profits, because of their lust for profit. The Government did nothing to stop. Now of course there is recession in the United States in the matter of house construction for which carpet backing is required. We are not to blame for that. The most obstructive attitude towards the settlement of the strike has come from those groups of mill owners who had exported the largest quantity of carpet backing. The other mills which are mainly sacking or hessian, from the reports I get, were eager to settle the strike. But the few houses which in those days of reckless profiteering had changed over to bread looms for carpet backing were those to obstruct: Bird and Company, Mcneil and Barry, Ramnath Goneka's National and Sahu Jain's New Central Jute Mills. They held up the whole thing. They will not allow the strike to be settled. I do not want to enter into the internal politics of the IJMA. But what is the responsibility of the Government in this matter? Sacking market is good now. By how much the price of sacking has gone up? It is very good for them. It is very necessary for the country. He mentioned in the statement that huge quantities of imported food grains, fertilisers, etc. have come and they have to be put in bags; otherwise they could not be moved. The hessian market has gone down a little bit, the foreign market, because of some substitutes coming in to some extent, but if you take the thing as a whole it is not bad, and he admits that this carpet backing market is going to pick up because President Ford has announced some housing construction programme in the

United States, I do not know, but I hope it comes up for our sake. But is this any reason to go on allowing the IJMA to flout with impunity everything that even the Government has asked it to do, let alone our demands? What is the idea? Just because these big houses, these monopoly houses, are dominating this industry, are they going to dictate and do whatever they like?

Any way I do not want to take more time. I want to end by saying that is now clear on the admission of the State Government itself that it has nothing further up its sleeve by which it can bring about an agreement. They have said that they have announced their recommendations and they cannot do anything, that it is now upto the parties. So it is no use saying that you are waiting for the State Government to do something. They have exhausted their intelligence or resources whatever it be, but the strike is going on. It does not matter if some workers go in to work, the strike will go on unless the unions decide that it should be called off.

The old days of the jute labour moment are not there anymore. Some people are still dreaming of those days when the jute workers used to be referred to contemptuously as *chatkalias* or *budhus* or idiots who do not understand who cannot do anything. I am proud that I have been associated with the movement for the last 30 years. I am proud of the consciousness and unity and the organisation that they have been able to achieve over the years, and anybody who has the interests of labour at heart, who is against the brutal exploitation of the British mill-owners and their successors today, should be proud, should be happy about it. So those days are over. They will not give in like that, and even if they give in today, do not think that they are finished. Do you

[Shri Indrajit Gupta]
want this kind of thing to go on from year to year? We do not want it. We wanted a long term agreement. Shri Gopal Dass Nath first went on talking about an agreement for 3 years. We said alright. Then he came down to two years and he has now come down to one year. Who is to blame for this? Your INTUC Union was there. They know everything about it. Your top leaders of the INTUC are involved in the strike. We have no difference of opinion on these questions.

Therefore, since the State Government or Labour Department is unable to do anything further in the matter now on their own admission, I want to know whether this Government even at this stage is prepared to step in and try to bring some order out of this law of the jungle prevailing there to see that some orderly settlement takes place on the basis of just demands of the workers.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA (Serampore): I also emphatically state that because of the intransigence of the IJMA and the direct encouragement of the Central Government, the strike has been prolonged so long a time. Shri Indrajit Gupta has correctly pointed out that from the very beginning of the strike the Central Government has been taking the plea that they have got nothing to do with it because it is a State matter and that the State Minister and the State Labour Department has to deal with it. I know the conspiracy started last year when the workers placed a charter of demands and ultimately they had to decide to resort to strike. A section of the INTUC along with the State Labour Minister Shri Gopal Das Nath conspired and make an agreement which is known in West Bengal as a black agreement. Even the major section of the INTUC did not agree with that agreement and for 33 days there was a strike and ultimately an agreement was arrived at with the jute mills by the unions including the section of the INTUC

black agreement. That is known to Prof. Chattopadhyaya very well.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DAS MUNSI (Calcutta-South): The INTUC is united there is no section.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA: From the lessons which INTUC got in 1973 strike, it was quite clear to them that whether INTUC joins the strike or not, there will be strike, might be after a little more preparation.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DAS MUNSI: INTUC took the decision on 9th August. Do you know that?

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA: I am glad they learnt from the experience of the last strike and this year they joined from the very beginning. On the other hand, they initiated the strike as the millowners did not concede the demands. The demands are known to Mr. Chattopadhyaya very well. It is nothing new. By an agreement, Dr. Gopal Das Nath set up an inquiry into the faulty calculation of the cost of living index. That committee gave its award. As per that award, the workers were entitled to Rs. 63 per month, not Rs. 61 as Mr Indrajit Gupta said. Through the faulty calculation, the millowners cheated the workers to the tune of 15 to 20 crores from 1964. After that committee gave its award, it is very peculiar that the Simla Bureau and the IJMA reached the same calculation of extra D. A. to be paid on that award and came to the same conclusion of Rs. 16. How can it happen? Even now you allow the mill-owners to cheat the workers numbering no less than 2½ lakhs to the extent of Rs. 63 per month per worker. How will they tolerate it? This is not a new demand.

Mr. Chattopadhyaya is sitting here, sermonising through his statement that it is a great loss to the nation etc. He has made an appeal to the workers to go back to work. They will not go back. They may be forced under the DIR. The DIR has been applied in the case of the new conversion figures awarded by the Bhattacharjee Committee. I do not understand how you can apply the DIR. Majority of the

when we explain to them

“न रत सुरक्षा नियम कं अनुस र बुद्धारा
पैसा 63 रुपए से 16 रुपए आ गया है”

Is Bharat Suraksha Niyam meant for denying the workers their legitimate right as per the government Committee's own calculation? There is no answer to that in your long statement. You are very clear and you have said nothing about that. Has not the Central Government any responsibility in the matter? I say that the Central Government has deliberately conspired with I.J.M.A. Their policy has been clearly exposed this time, namely, to see that there is total wage freeze, which has already been started by impounding 50 per cent of the DA. There will be no increase in wages or bonus and the Government employees and other working people will suffer day after day. The prices will rise but the employees will not get their dearness allowance in full. That will be impounded to the extent of 50 per cent. So, it is also a reflection and indication of the policy of the Central Government. Now it is quite clear, beginning from Delhi and ending with writers' Building there is chain, a close link and both the Central and State Governments are helping the Indian Jute Mills Association to amass profits, not caring a bit for the interests of the working class in the jute industry.

For the last four days we are trying to draw the attention of the Government to this strike. Ultimately, a Calling Attention Notice was admitted. Of course, the Minister may say that it is the responsibility of the Speaker to admit such motions. On the very first day of the session, namely, 17th February we raised this issue and said that this concerns 2½ lakhs of workers, which means that at least 10 lakhs of people are affected by it. Yet, no action was taken. Now you say that you are losing foreign exchange. It is true. But who is responsible for this? I charge that the Central Government is in direct collusion with the Indian Jute Mills Association is responsible for the strike and its effect. So far as the State Government is concerned, it is nothing but go between Central

Government and IJMA to loot the country. The Central Government is responsible for this loss of foreign exchange earning, which you say to be very precious.

Now you want to give the impression that you are very much concerned with the difficulties of the jute growers. In this House everybody knows that when we suggested a remunerative price of Rs. 100 per maund and that the raw jute should be purchased directly from the jute growers, they simply fixed a floor or support price. Who cares for that support price? The result was that the price of jute went down to the extent of Rs 30 per maund. You can check it up from the jute-growing districts of West Bengal and Bihar.

I would say that the hon. Minister should not try to mislead the people or deprive a large number of workers of their genuine rights. This Labour Minister Mr. Reddy gave an award, on the basis of an agreement, which was arrived at after a strike, regarding the conditions of work of *badli-walas*, or temporary employees. Now this award has been put on the waste-paper basket by the State Government. Government's plea is that one of the employers filed a case in a court of law and it is subjudice. I can give you a guarantee that if Mr. Reddy straightway insists on IJMA to withdraw the case, the jute mill-owners will not have the courage to continue their case in the courts and the workers will automatically get the benefit. But I also know that Mr. Reddy will never do it. Because, the Government is thick and thin with the Indian Jute Mills' Association, which was associated with the British for a long time. Now they are dominated by the Indian monopolists, about whom only a day before Prof. Chattopadhyaya gave a list. It is these big monopolists who are controlling these jute mills. How would you go and face the workers there?

Against these monopolists, the jute mill workers fought unitedly. The

[Shri Dinen Bhattacharyya]

INTUC, the AITUC and CITU, all combined together and there was no difference among them.

Now when it is hitting the owners you have come forward to play the role of an open and naked betrayer. From Delhi it is circulated in the papers that so many mills have started work. But that is a bluff. What is the headline, in the *Hindustan Standard* of 19th? It is: Settlement of Jute Strike Not in Sight. But you read today's Delhi *Hindustan Times* and there you will see that it is stated that many mills have opened their gates and large numbers of workers have gone back to their duties. It is absolutely wrong, I tell you. This afternoon all the unions will meet together and take a decision as to what is to be done. So far as we are concerned, we will appeal to all the unions there, including the INTUC, not to accept the anti-worker recommendation of the State Labour Minister.

Now is the time when the mill-owners as well as the State and Central Government's *dalals* are feeling that it is really hurting them, when the market is picking up—you Mr. Debi Babu also have admitted that—that instead of taking some steps at least to see that this Bhattacharjee Commission award is implemented in toto you are betraying the workers' cause. How can DIR be applied here? Can you defend it anywhere? Can you say that it is justified? Outside this House you will say, "No, it is not justified; but what can I do; I have no hand in it." You as a Minister of the Government are responsible for it and I accuse you as an instrument in the hand of IJMA.

Do not blame only Gopal Das. Shrimati Indra Gandhi knows it well that on the right of workers, on their due dearness allowance, DIR has been applied. When the DIR was passed here it was categorically stated that it would be used against the anti-nationals. Are these 2,50,000 workers

anti-nationals? I emphatically say that you have applied the DIR there only for saving the interest of IJMA.

It is a matter of shame to you that your State Minister, after 46 days' strike, recommended only Rs. 120 to be paid to striking workers and that also not in one instalment but that will be paid in two instalments—one instalment in the month of March and another in November, 1975.

Shri Indrajit Gupta has stated it very ably. I am also connected with the movement of the jute mill workers, but I have never seen, this sort of treachery in my life by a 'Garibi Hatao' Government. Even the Britishers did not have the guts to betray the movement, the struggle of workers, the strike of workers in this way as you are doing now. You will be responsible to the 2,50,000 workers of West Bengal and also in other parts of India. In Bihar, in Andhra, in Madhya Pradesh, they also will suffer on account of this.

Then, you are sermonising that the country is losing foreign exchange daily to the tune of more than Rs one crore. The workers are losing Rs 300 to Rs 350 per month. Now, you are satisfying them by giving only Rs 120 Is it justified? What is your answer to that I want to know

Why not scrap the DIR imposed on the extra DA, as per Bhattacharyya Committee? Why not ask the Indian Jute Mills Association to immediately withdraw the court case regarding the Badliwala issue about which Mr Raghunatha Reddy gave an award? The conditions are ripe enough and this is the proper time for you to take the initiative. Mr Chattopadhyaya, you may be here for some time more as the Minister but you will have to go back to West Bengal to explain how you took the stand of a betrayer. The people and the workers, will not forget that you betrayed their cause. It is because of your Government that they are now suffering. Are the Indian Jute Mills Association the rulers or Shri-

mati Indira Gandhi the ruler of the country?

SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE (Howrah): They are the real rulers.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA: The West Bengal Minister have no backbone. They did not become the Ministers by the vote of the people. They came....

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DAS MUNSII: Under your mercy.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA: Not under my mercy but by rigging the elections and by *goondaism*.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DAS MUNSII: You will be replied in time.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA: I am not going to argue with him.

I only want to mention that the Frankenstein that they (youth Congress) created, the same Frankenstein is now causing a member of one faction of the Congress to be killed by another faction of the Congress. Even the Ministers and M.L.A.s are not spared. When Mr. Chandi Mitra, a Congress MLA was murdered by a rival faction and when the murders were discharged by the court, you (Shri Das Munsii's group) celebrated it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You are now going off the track.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA: He interrupted me. I am replying to him.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude now.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA: I am concluding.

I will cite one example only. We are observing now "World Women's Year". Shrimati Indira Gandhi has given a slogan. 'Women of the world unite'. But do you know that their number was 30,000 sometime back and now you find hardly 2000 women workers in the jute mills? This is the condition. Now, your Minister, Dr.

Gopal Das Nag, under the instructions from the Centre and with collusion with the Indian Jute Mills Association, is now trying to reduce the total number of workers in the name of rationalisation, in the name of production, etc.

So, I would humbly appeal to Mr. Chatopadhyaya and Mr. Raghunatha Reddy to take the chance now for an amicable settlement. Let them take the power from their supreme head, Shrimati Indira Gandhi. We will not tolerate this injustice. You go there and settle it or you ask the workers' representatives to come here. In 1969 and in 1970, you settled it here. Why not this year, in 1975, when there is a strike for 46 days.

With these words, I would again tell them that they must take some concrete steps. There are certain other demands.

Twenty per cent bonus they demanded. But they did not stick to that. After some discussion, they even agreed to reduce the amount. At one stage, I know, the union leaders might have proposed that they could agree at Rs 400. What is the harm if you compel IJMA to give that? Crores of rupees have been looted during the Bangladesh War. Some Central Minister gave a statement some time back in Calcutta— you will be astonished to hear this, Sir—that only from jute and tea they are getting Rs. 400 crores as profit per year. Mr. Chairman, why don't you ask these people who are posing themselves as very rational and patriots and are saying about loss of foreign exchange and about distress of jute growers, not to give the bluffs to the people? By giving such bluffs, the Minister cannot make his post permanent. Ask them to go there and settle it. Then, he will be taken by the West Bengal people as their real representative.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, what is the wish of the House? How long do you want to sit? There are eight members

[Mr. Chairman]

who have yet to speak. The first two members have taken almost 50 minutes. The call-attention is limited to a total time of one hour. How much time should I give to each member?

THE MINISTER OF WORKS AND HOUSING AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI K. RAGHU RAMAIAH) Five minutes each.

MR CHAIRMAN There is no use repeating the same points. These two members have covered most of the points.

SHRIMATI PARVATHI KRISHNAN (Coimbatore) How do you know?

MR CHAIRMAN Persons like you may add some new points. You need not repeat the points already made.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (Gwalior) She is not a person. She is a personality.

MR CHAIRMAN I agree on that. Now, how much time should I give to each member? Five minutes?

SOME HON MEMBERS No, no.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE Seven minutes.

MR CHAIRMAN Allright. Let us have a compromise. Mr Hari Singh

श्री हरी सिंह (खर्जा) जूट मजदूरों की हड़ताल एक लम्बे समय में चली आ रही है। करोड़ों रुपये का उमरें जा हम विदेशी मुद्रा का अर्जन होता था, उमरें जा हानि हो रही है। केंद्रीय तथा राज्य सरकार न हम हड़ताल का समाप्त कराने के लिए बड़ी दिल-चस्पी दिखाएँ हैं। लेकिन हमें भी कोई समझौता नहीं हो पाया है। मरा केंद्रीय सरकार में यह आग्रह किया जा रहा है कि जूट उद्योग में डील कर, पूरा दिल और मन से काम लें। मजदूर हमारा भाई हैं। यह सरकार भी उन्हीं की है। सरकार को चाहिये कि मजदूरों के साथ वह कोई समझौता कराने की कोशिश करे। वह यह भी देखे कि मजदूरों का कोई

शोषण न हो, शोषण का शिकार उनको कोई न बनाए और उनका जो ड्यू है और जो मुनासिब हिस्सा है, वह उनको मिले।

मुझे कलकत्ता जाने का मौका मिला था और मैंने जहा तहा उनकी बातें सुनी। मैं उनकी मांगों का तहे दिल से समर्थन करता हूँ और चाहता हूँ कि उनको स्वीकार किया जाना चाहिए।

मैं यह भी समझता हूँ कि जिस ट्रेड और उद्योग में इतनी बड़ी तादाद में हिन्दुस्तान के मजदूर लगे हुए हैं, जिससे काफी विदेशी मुद्रा अर्जित होती है, उसको कभी प्राइवेट हैडम में नहीं छोड़ना चाहिए। मेरी मांग है कि जिस उद्योग के माध्यम से हम करोड़ों रुपये की विदेशी मुद्रा पैदा करते हैं, उस पर कारखानों को केंद्रीय सरकार द्वारा अपने हाथ में लिया जाना चाहिए। उनका राष्ट्रीयकरण करना चाहिए। हिन्दुस्तान के लिए विदेशी मुद्रा प्राप्त करने का बहुत महत्व है और इस लिए हम उद्योग को प्राइवेट उद्योगपतियों का दया पर नहीं छोड़ना चाहिए।

प्राइवेट मिल मालिक का इरादा होता है ज्यादा से ज्यादा मुनाफा कमाना, मजदूरों के प्रति लापरवाही बर्तना उनसे शोषण पर ज़ोर देना उनसे साथ बढ़ने की भावना से व्यवहार करना और उन पर तरह-तरह के अत्याचार करके उनको डीमारलाइफ करना। आज समय आ गया है कि जब कभी प्राइवेट एन्टरप्राइज या मजदूरों के बीच किसी मुद्दे पर विवाद हो, तो हम मजदूरों का पक्ष लें। यह समय है। पुराने हैं। यह सरकार हो या किसानों या मजदूरों की सरकार हो, उस नीति से हटने पर उम्मीद जीवन दुश्वार और कठिन हो जायगा।

मैं चाहता हूँ कि केंद्रीय सरकार इस बारे में एक जायजा पेश करे कि जूट कर्मचारियों और केंद्रीय सरकार द्वारा संचालित पब्लिक

एन्टरप्राइजिज में काम करने वाले मफ़द्रों के बैतनमानों, भत्तों, मकान के एलांसिफ़ और अन्य सुविधाओं में कितना फर्क है। अगर मंत्री महोदय के पास ये आंकड़े हों, तो वह जवाब देते हुए उनको सदन के सामने रखें। आज स्थिति यह है कि प्राइवेट हैंड्स में जो कारखाने हैं, उन में मफ़द्रों के साथ बड़ा अन्याय होना है। बताया जाता है कि वहां मफ़द्रों को पमनिंट नहीं किया जाता है, बल्कि वे सालों साल डेली वेजिज़ पर रह जाते हैं। इस कारण पमनिंट मफ़द्रों को जो सहूलियतें मिलनी चाहिए, वे उनको नहीं मिल पाती हैं। उन के परिवारों को जो सुख-सुविधायें मिलनी चाहिए, वे भी उन्हें नहीं मिल पाती हैं। मैं चाहता हूँ कि केन्द्रीय सरकार उन लोगों की पमनिन्सी, विभिन्न सुख-सुविधाओं और प्राविडेंट फण्ड आदि बातों के सम्बन्ध में जायज़ लेने के लिए एक बोर्ड नियुक्त करे।

भारत सरकार एक तरफ़ तो विदेशी मुद्रा के एक एक पैसे के लिए तरसती है और दूसरी तरफ़ उस ने इतने महत्वपूर्ण उद्योग को प्राइवेट हैंड्स में रहने दिया है, जो मफ़द्रों का शोषण करते हैं और अपनी जेबें भरने हैं। एक बहुत कान्वास नागरिक होने के नाते मैं कहना चाहता हूँ कि यह धंधा प्राइवेट हैंड्स में नहीं छोड़ना चाहिए। सरकार को इस उद्योग का राष्ट्रीयकरण करने के सम्बन्ध में इस सेशन में एक बिल लाना चाहिए इससे मफ़द्रों का भी भना होगा और विदेशी मुद्रा अर्जित करने काहमभारा उद्देश्य भी पूरा होगा।

मैं अपने मजदूर भाइयों के प्रति अपनी सहानुभूति प्रकट करता हूँ। इस समय उन का जो संघर्ष चल रहा है, सरकार मजबूती से काम लेकर उस का समझौता कराये और मफ़द्रों के सामने जो समस्याये है, उनको हल करने का प्रयत्न करे।

SHRI K. LAKKAPPA (Tumkur): I associate myself in expressing my support to the employees who are working in 4 jute mills out of a total of 62

mills in West Bengal. This 46 days old strike has revealed that Government is not evincing any interest so far as the conditions of the workers are concerned. Of course, my friends have stated about the demands of the workers. The workers have demanded for 20 per cent bonus, enhanced dearness allowance based on the recommendations of the Experts Committee on the revision of the consumer-price index, the maintenance of parity in wages in view of the nationalisation of electricity supply, implementation of the Union Labour Minister's decision in regard to the badli (leave vacancy) workers, provision of free housing for all jute workers, immediate takeover by the State of the entire export trade in jute products and the nationalisation of the jute industry among others. The workers have also demanded for a minimum price of Rs. 100 per maund of raw jute purchased by the jute mill owners from the jute growers.

Sir, it looks as though the State Government has inordinately delayed the matter in arriving at a settlement in regard to the genuine demands and bonafide demands of the workers. The situation has been aggravated which has resulted in the net loss in production involving Rs. 1.5 crores and sixty per cent of this is in foreign exchange which this country has suffered. The trade union demand is for increased bonus due to cost of living index. This matter was discussed at a meeting where Mr. Chattopadhyaya was there. This matter was engaging the attention of the Consultative Committee and at that time the hon. Minister stated 'hat the entire matter is a State matter and that it should be discussed and decided upon by the State Government and so on. I would like to know whether the entire industry is based on the labour oriented programme, involving 2.50 lakhs of workers and jute cultivators, who are mainly dependent upon this industry alone for their livelihood. The plea that the Centre is not able to intervene is not correct and that plea is also not convincing. In these cir-

[Shri K. Lakkappa]

cumstances it is not right on the part of the Central Government to sleep over the matter because this is involving not only the economic situation of West Bengal, but this involves the economic stability of the entire country. The issue involved is this. Why should there be complacency over this matter? The matter is interfered with by the millowners. The millowners are dictating terms to the growers. They are very happy when the strike is on because they can also reduce the price as much as they like, and they can play with the living conditions of the poor people and poor workers. It is also a most shocking news to see that when the strike is on the millowners have been telling the workers that they indulged in disruptive tendencies and that retarded production and brought about loss of production and so on. It is most unfortunate because I feel that the Government's labour policy is not well-implemented so far as jute mills are concerned. Why should the jute millowners be allowed to dictate terms like this? The issue involves millions of workers who are the backbone of the jute industry. And I would like to know why the State Government and the Central Government is so very complacent in the matter. Thousands of growers are in jeopardy. After the strike, the millowners are relaxing and they are telling us that foreign buyers are not coming. It is seen that so many stocks are lying there and they are not lifting the stocks. The small cultivators are not encouraged since the rate of raw jute is reduced very much, and the prices have been slashed down very much and as a consequence of this they are shifting from this jute cultivation to the paddy cultivation; the raw jute rate per maund is Rs. 65 and for paddy it is Rs. 115.

18.00 hrs.

(SHRI ISHAQUE SAMBHALI in
the Chair.)

Now the price has been raised. You know that this industry is highly labour-oriented industry. Only small people are working in the field many of whom are making out their livelihood from this. You are shifting the people who are engaged in this industry to some other avocation. This is one of the most important things that Government of India should see. This should evoke sympathies so far as these people are concerned who are engaged in jute growing areas of West Bengal. On a large-scale, if these people shift from the jute growing crops to other crops it will only mean the collapse of rural economy in West Bengal. Shifting from jute cultivation to the other crops will only create chaos and diminish the labour strength which will ultimately result in the sufferings of these people. Therefore, they are being threatened by the use of D. I. R. Using DIR against these people is not at all good. I do not agree at all. We are supporting the workers. The workers are responsible for the production. If you want to use D. I. R. against them I cannot support that. It is the millowners who are responsible for creating such a situation. It is they who are responsible for the decline in production in West Bengal. DIR should be applied against the millowners who are responsible for this. It is they who are cheating the Government of India in the foreign exchange earnings and it is they who are making fabulous profits. It is they who are cheating not only Government but also the employees who are responsible for the production as far as this industry is concerned.

Again the issue involves the attitude of the Indian Jute Millowners. The Indian Jute Mill Association has reported that they are unhappy about the strike. If the strike is prolonged the industry will suffer. The jute prices cannot come down at all. It is the industry which will be losing very

heavily if the strike is prolonged. It will adversely affect the jute growing as well. Since there is a demand from Bangladesh, this will certainly have an international repercussion and decline in the foreign exchange earnings of India. When a demand was made in the meeting of the Consultative Committee we were told that this matter was strictly within the jurisdiction of the Government of West Bengal; Mr. Gonaldas Nag, also announced his recommendations in February 1975 after the strike which lasted for about 40 days. I would like to know what were the definite recommendations made by him and what has been accepted by the Labour Ministry? It seems that the assurances have not been completely fulfilled. The strike at the same time continued. As a result of this, everyone connected with the industry incurred a huge loss. The industries suffered as a result of that in the matter of production. The loss was to the tune of about 4,000 tonnes of jute goods worth Rs. 1.5 crores daily. As long as the strike continues, everyone connected with the industry stands to lose. Out of the loss in production of about Rs. 1.5 crores, 60 per cent is in foreign exchange. The workers suffer a daily wage loss of over Rs. 50 lakhs. The decline in raw jute prices as a result of stoppage of mill production hits growers. In fact, any slump in fibre prices, particularly when the next sowing is not too far, acts as a serious disincentive to growers.

The strike is also leading to the accumulation of jute wagons at railway and mill sidings causing hardship to the entire raj transport in the country. The strike will also lead to untold hardships to the workers and to the entire Indian economy. The economy of the country will be paralysed if a decision is not taken in the matter of settlement of this strike. The Government of India is not taking a serious view of the situation that is prevailing in West Bengal. It is the jute mill-owners who are responsible who have been creating the situation thereby

destroying the entire economy and holding the State to ransom. As my friend Mr. Indrajit Gupta said, DIR was not used at all against Mr. Goenka. I want to know why the DIR has not been used against such people? Has any investigation been made about the profits they have made and has any action been taken? Is it not the policy of the Government of India to nationalise these jute mills? Why no action has been taken in this regard and why our Government is complacent so far as monopoly houses are concerned. I want that it should be implemented. The mill-owners are playing mischief and fraud against the striking workers and this is one of the main reasons as to why the entire economy of West Bengal is shattered. There should not only be nationalisation of export of jute but also the mills should be nationalised in view of the socialistic character of our party.

Therefore, Sir, I once again urge that Government should not allow any opportunity to allow to create a suspicion in the mind of the people, even in the mind of the striking people, that we are following an anti-labour policy. I know our Government is not following any anti-labour policy and prudence should be exercised to see that the relationship between the workers, their production, living conditions and just demands is maintained and a proper atmosphere is created. This is not only in the interests of West Bengal but also in the interests of the whole country. With these words, I conclude.

SHRIMATI PARVATHI KRISHNAN (Coimbatore): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I will not take up the time of the House at this late hour by reneating once again the history of the strike or of the dispute or of the demands which has been adequately dealt with by my colleague, Mr. Indrajit Gupta and also by others who have spoken so far.

I would like to make one remark about the statement that has been circulated to us in reply to the Call-

[Shrimati Parvathi Krishnan]

ing Attention. The reason why we have been agitated over this issue and have raised this issue in Parliament over the last three days is because of the importance of the jute industry and also because 2½ lakh workers have been striking over the last 40 days. We had expected that the Minister, Prof Chattopadhyaya, in a responsible manner, would at least reveal to us what practical and urgent steps the Central Government proposes to take in order to bring to an end this strike. Instead we have been given by him (a) A statement detailing and giving facts as to what the State Government have done. The State Government may have taken certain steps but these have not met with any response from the workers and obviously there is something lacking. Therefore, we expected that, as has happened in the past, the Central Government would also use its good offices to see that industrial peace is achieved and these mills get into production as early as possible. But that is absent totally from this statement. I hoped when I read the beginning of the statement where he says:

"As is well-known the industry relies completely for its health on its prospect in the export market. I have drawn attention in the past to the fact that there has been a continuous decline in the volume of our exports of jute goods"

Last year, when discussing this particular proposition, when his Ministry was under discussion at the time of Demands for Grants, this was the point that many of us on the floor of the House made out that the jute industry is being ruined by the big jute magnates. In regard to these jute magnates who have thrived like leeches on the sweat and labour of our workers, who have through their malpractices, under invoicing and over invoicing and so on, cheated the exchequer and the country crores of foreign exchange, who have been there in the forefront in West Ben-

gal manipulating the raw jute market and generating parallel black money, in regard to these jute magnates, why is that this Government has not moved in against them? This is the question that arises. The wider question that arises out of this strike. If the workers have been forced to go on strike, they are not to be blamed. It is because the Government both at the State and at the Central level are extremely chary and diffident of moving in against them, against these big mill owners that this situation has come into being. It is amusing that when the Labour Minister of the Central Government gives his decision on an issue, which is long standing, the issue of the badly workers, the mill owners are courageous enough to go to Court and now we are told that it is subjudice. Why should it be? Was this not sufficient for the Central Government to move in and say 'No; You are not respecting authority, So, we move in and take over?' Nationalise the industry, take over the export trade completely and step into the market of raw jute create a state monopoly, guarantee a remunerative price to the grower. This is what a responsible Government would do. This is what we expected that in your statement which was in reply to the Calling Attention, you would indicate what firm steps the Government is going to take against the industry when they are in this definite mood. The industrialists are not suffering. It is the industry, the workers and the nation who are suffering. For 42 days the workers are out of work and production is at a standstill at a time when we are being told that there is a crisis in the country. Today, we have heard a most moving and eloquent speech by Mr C. M. Stephen. But, we did not hear a word from him as to what is to be done about this jute strike, which is affecting our national economy. The workers have been forced to go on strike, when they have, time and again, gone to the Central and State Government to get their demands conceded. Yet, today, there is a united strike. The respon-

sibility for this strike is on the Government and on the magnates, and therefore, I would appeal to the Minister that he should, in his reply, heed our word and give us an assurance that he is going to step in a big way to see that this situation does not continue. Instead of just opening the mills and coming out with homilies and sanctimonious statements 'I do hope that the greatest spirit of accommodation would be displayed by both the management and the workers of the jute industry and a greater awareness of the wider national problems posed by the strike; I think there will be a greater awareness of the ills of the jute industry and the export trade of the jute products and the ramifications for the raw jute trade', what we expect from the Minister is that really dynamic action is taken by him by stepping in and nationalising this very important industry which used to have a pride of place in our country. The IJMA, that gignatic machine of the employer was challenged by the jute workers of West Bengal only recently. It took many years for the workers to be able to build up their challenge and pose the first challenge to these magnates. Now, that challenge has to be taken up by the Central Government and that challenge has to be taken up by nationalising the jute industry'. This is what I would ask of the Minister. Do not call upon the workers to have a spirit of accommodation. The spirit of accommodation is lacking on your side and it is you who are called upon to have a spirit of accommodation in terms of our national crisis and in order to meet our workers' demands.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA (Contai): Jute is known as the golden fibre. On it depends not only the economy of West Bengal but also the economy of the Centre at large because it is the largest foreign exchange earner. I feel very much constrained to make any critical remarks against my friend who is a colleague of mine in the University. But I am very sorry to say that this professor of philosophy

is either over-philosophical or non-philosophical about safeguarding the interest of the State or safeguarding the interest of the Centre.

Let me start with the interest of the Centre. According to Government's own calculations, during these 46 days of strike, they have lost Rs. 46 crores. What is the position now in West Bengal? Let me go back a little bit into history. Before partition, all the jute growing areas were in East Bengal and all the jute mills of West Bengal alone. Seventy-five in West Bengal. After partition, more than 12 per cent of the land which was producing paddy has switched on to jute. As a result, West Bengal has become now a State deficit in food. If this switchover had not taken place, there would have been no deficit of food in West Bengal. But for whose benefit was this switchover effected? For the West Bengal people or for the benefit of the Centre? It was totally for the benefit of the Centre—I use the word totally.

It was expected that the hon. Minister who is from West Bengal, who knows not only about the jute growers of West Bengal but also what jute means to West Bengal, who knows that the fate of millions of cultivators depends on this commodity as also the 2½ lakh workers who are working in this industry, would take some steps to do something. But unfortunately, knowing everything about it, I do not know what he has done.

Let us take the case of the jute grower. He knows that jute has been selling at below the cost of production. He also knows what as a result of this the fate of millions of jute growers is being sealed. What sort of farce is the Jute Corporation? Is it not a farce? This Government is surrendering to the pressure of monopolists and creating an artificial situation. If you have money to provide credit to all public sector organisations, why not money be given to

[Shri Samar Guha]

the Jute Corporation which will come back, which will not remain stagnant, which will not go down the drain, but will come back—it is only a question of time—with some interest also? If this cannot be done, the Jute Corporation of India is meaningless. It becomes a non-entity. Then why not liquidate it rather than have such a farce, when the fate of millions of jute growers is being doomed?

This hon. Minister has not the guts to say 'no' to the rising price of cotton because the pressure of the cotton lobby is much greater and he could not resist it so much so that so many times cotton price has risen. On the other hand, what to speak of a fair price, the jute growers are not getting even cost price. The price is ruling below the cost of production. And this happens with a person in charge who knows about it, who comes from that State, who is supposed to know what jute means to West Bengal's economy, what it means to the West Bengal workers. For 46 days the strike is continuing. It is unique in the sense that all the trade unions, whether they belong to the ruling party or the opposition, have combined. Even the trade union controlled by the ruling party had joined hands with the trade union of the opposition parties because they feel that the demand is just. Secondly, they have a feeling that the fate of 2½ lakhs of workers will be endangered.

Again who appointed the Battacharya committee? Battacharya is the head of the department of economics of Calcutta University. The committee under his chairmanship was appointed by the West Bengal Government. On the basis of the price index, they calculated that the dearness allowance should be Rs. 63. . . . (Interruptions) Now suddenly it had been referred to a technical officer of the Labour Bureau, Simla. Who is that gentleman? Is he a mere statistician or is he in the pay roll

of the big monopolists of jute mills. But what coincidence? The coincidence is neither strange nor mysterious nor accidental; it is intriguing coincidence that his calculations of DA according to the price index that he computed led him to the same calculation that was made by the IJMA, Rs. 16. That means that that gentleman is in the pay roll of the monopoly houses of the jute millers. The matter is pure and simple. What has the Government done? Is that gentleman superior in intelligence or in the knowledge of economics or in the capacity of computing price index, to the other gentleman who is presiding over the department of economics in a university? If you feel that your technical officer is so superior, why do you not have the courage to place it before two or three really eminent, independent economists who are not in the pay roll or under pressure of the big monopolies. The difference could have been resolved that way. He now says that the West Bengal Government accepted this recommendation.

What benefits do the jute millers get? The hon. Minister has become too much export oriented; the man is always moving in the Middleast or Hungary or where, I do not know; he will be moving towards the moon also perhaps if he could get reflections of radio isotopes for the benefit of telescopes here. Firstly, you have given them the benefit by reducing export duty. Secondly, all those Goenkas and Birlas and others have their other industries in Bombay and Ahmedabad and are earning large capital from West Bengal and diverting it to the production of terelene and polythene and what not and selling it in the Delhi and Bombay market so that follows with long hair can sport those pantaloons.

In an artificial way they are depressing the prices. Not they are not buying jute. The Jute Corporation will not buy, it will be stopped. The

jute is there in the hands of the growers. Whatever the price at the moment, my hon. friend said it is selling at Rs. 30, it will become less unfortunately because of distress sales and the mills will be benefited.

There is a report in the *Hindustan Standard* which says:—

"It is about 18 months that the panel of experts on the export of jute submitted its reports to the Government of India, identifying 60 items of jute manufactures as specialities that can be exported."

But Government is not giving any attention to it. When the jute strike is over, the specialities of production will give the benefit to the mills and they will earn more by exporting these 60 items of special jute production.

It is not a question of the economy of West Bengal alone. Seventy-five per cent of the jute workers come either from Orissa or Bihar or U.P. Therefore, it is a question of the workers of the whole eastern region, What stands in the way of the Government? Government becomes so much benevolent and non-interfering with whom? Our Chief Minister is known as the flying Chief Minister. He flies from Delhi to Calcutta and Calcutta to Delhi twice or thrice every week. Yesterday there was a report in the newspaper that Shri Sethi was a Chief Minister who flies very often. I think it is wrong he will not be able to beat our Chief Minister Shri Siddhartha Shankar Ray, the *Siddha purshu* flying over the sky. If he is so capable of flying so much, can you not have a dialogue with him, a discussion with him. Why are you absolving yourself of the responsibility? Why are you yielding? The mill-owners are trying to give an impression that they have already crushed the strike, that the strike has been broken, that these 12 mills have opened their doors, that the workers are coming forward. Who are the mill-owners? They are the big mono-

polists giving good publicity in the *Hindustan Times*, *Indian Express*, and *Statesman* that the doors are open, that the workers are going in, that the workers have accepted the recommendation of the West Bengal Government.

I think our friends will not be angry if I inject a little bit of politics into this because now it is either the election year or the pre-election year. Therefore, you do not dare to touch these jute mill owners or show even a little bit of blood in your eyes towards them to whom you have to go with folded hands for your what?—not contribution, but donation, election donation, popular election donation. If that is not so, what is the duty of Shri Raghunatha Reddy who claims to be a progressive? And Shri Indrajit Gupta also has given him a certificate. You also take your classes, you are not one of the socialist theoreticians among the Youth Congress. Would both of you—this socialist theoretician and the socialist practitioner—jointly go and try to have a talk and if it is not possible to solve the matter amicably at least refer it to an independent tribunal?

श्री राय सिद्ध भार्गव (इन्दौर) : मन्मथप्रति महोदय, बड़ी इन्तजार करने के बाद, आप ने मुझे बोलने का मौका दिया है, उम के लिए मैं आपका आभारी हूँ ।

श्रीमन्, जूट मिलों की हड़ताल के बारे में जो कुछ दिनों से चल रही है, उम से मुझे बड़ी निराशा हुई है और निराशा इस माइने में हुई है कि जो हड़तालकी मूल बातें हैं वे हाउम के सामने नहीं आई हैं । पहली बात तो यह है कि 44 दिन हड़ताल को हो गये । उम के बाद कल रेडियो पर यह न्यूज आई कि स्टेट नेबर मनिस्टर ने यह एनाउन्स किया है कि मालिक लोगों ने उनकी सिफारिशों को मान लिया है लेकिन ट्रेड यूनियन्स ने नहीं माना है और हड़ताल चालू रखी है । किन्तु आज जो मिल चालू हुए हैं उन में से 60 से 100 परसेन्ट तक लोग काम पर आये ।

श्री इन्द्रजीत गुप्त : मिनिस्टर साहब ने ऐसा नहीं कहा, यह उनका स्टेटमेंट है ।

श्री राम सिंह भाई : ठीक है, पिछले साल 33 दिन की हड़ताल रही। इस साल आज 46 दिन की हो रही है, तो अगले साल आप 100 दिन की कराना चाहते हैं ।

श्रीमन्, हमारी व्यापार पालिसी एक राष्ट्रीय पालिसी है, औद्योगिक पालिसी भी राष्ट्रीय है और लेबर पालिसी भी राष्ट्रीय है । इसलिये अगर राज्य सरकार सफल नहीं होती है, तो यह केन्द्र का फ़र्ज है कि उसमें दस्तन्दाजी करे और उस मामले को निपटाए । श्रीमन्, आश्चर्य तो इस बात का है कि जूट हमारा पहले या दूसरे नम्बर का एक्सपोर्ट का आइटम है और फारेन करन्सी लाने में इसका बहुत बड़ा हाथ है लेकिन हम देखते हैं कि हड़तालों को लेकर ज्यादा से ज्यादा काम के दिन भी इसी इंडस्ट्री ने खोये हैं। 1972 में लगभग 13 लाख काम के दिन खोये, 1973 में लगभग 15 लाख काम के दिन खोये और 1974 में 15 लाख से भी ज्यादा काम के दिन खोये । तो क्या आप यह चाहते हैं कि 1975 में 20 लाख से भी ज्यादा काम के दिन खोये जायें । जो इंडस्ट्री हमारे लिए विदेशो से घन कमा कर लाती है उस के ऊपर ज्यादा से ज्यादा ध्यान देना चाहिए लेकिन यह कहना कि यह केन्द्र का विषय नहीं है और व्यापार मंत्री और लेबर मिनिस्टर दोनों के दोनों स्टेट गवर्नमेंट के ऊपर छोड़ दें, तो यह ठीक नहीं है । अनुमान है कि इससे प्रतिदिन 1 करोड़ 50 लाख रुपये का प्रोडक्शन का लौस हो रहा है, 53 लाख रुपये का मजदूरों का नुकसान हो रहा है, और 3 लाख रुपये का कस्टम और आक्टाय वगैरह का लौस हो रहा है और ढाई लाख मजदूर हड़ताल पर हैं । तो हम लोग किस लिए हैं और यह सब कुछ हमारी छाँचों के सामने हो रहा है और हम दस्तन्दाजी तक नहीं कर रहे हैं ।

मैं एक निवेदन यह भी करना चाहता हूँ कि इसमें ट्रेड यूनियनों भी अपनी जवाबदेही बराबर नहीं निभा रही हैं क्योंकि जो जूट मिलों के मालिक हैं वे यह चाहते हैं कि हड़ताल हो, मजदूर घरना दें और वे भूखों मरें जिससे रा जूट के भाव गिरें और तैयार माल के भाव बढ़ें ।

श्री इन्द्रजीत गुप्त : रा-जूट किसानों के हाथों में नहीं है । वह तो व्यापारियों के हाथों में है ।

श्री राम सिंह भाई : मैं तो यह कह रहा हूँ कि जब व्यापारियों के हाथ में तैयार माल जाता है, तो उसके भाव भी बढ़ जाते हैं ।

दूसरी बात यह है कि जूट मिल आंगनसँ का एक मकसद है और वह यह है कि वे इन उद्योग को राशनलाइज करना चाहते हैं सब से पहली बड़ी बात उनके सामने यह है कि वे इस को राशनलाइज करना चाहते हैं आप देखिये कि मजदूरों की कितनी बुरी हालत हो गई है । आप बंगाल में वहाँ की किसी भी इंडस्ट्री में देखिये कि वहाँ के मजदूरों की गैर-हाज़री की संख्या जूट मिलों के प्रमाण में क्या है पर डे । दूसरी इंडस्ट्रीज में एबरेज 17 से 22 गैर-हाज़री है लेकिन जूट में आपको 10 से ज्यादा बड़ा हुआ नहीं मिलेगा । ऐसा क्यों है ? यह इसलिए है कि उन को इतना कम मिलता है कि उससे गुज़ारा नहीं होता । इसलिये मजदूर गैर-हाज़िर नहीं रहता है क्योंकि गैर-हाज़िर रहेंगा, तो उसका पेट नहीं भरेगा । असली बात यह है । वहाँ पर पमनिस्टर मजदूर गैर-हाज़िर नहीं रहता है और पब्लिक वह गैर-हाज़िर नहीं रहता है, तो बदली वालों को काम नहीं मिलता है । अहमदाबाद में यह एबरेज 15 के करीब मिलेगी और बम्बई में 17 के करीब मिलेगी, लेकिन जूट मिलों में करीब 10 होगी । इसलिये बदली वर्क्स में बड़ी बेचैनी है और इसके पीछे एक राख है कि वे छंटनी करना चाहते हैं, वे राशनलाइज करना चाहते हैं । इसलिये बदली वर्क्स में रोष है ।

अब आप देखिये कि जूट मिलों की वर्किंग कन्डिशन कैसी हैं और कैसी वर्किंग कन्डिशन में वे मजदूर काम करते हैं। श्रीमन्, जहां बोनस की बात है, आपने जो बोनस एक्ट बनाया है, जब से वह बना, तभी से जूट मिलों के वर्कर्स को बोनस मिलने लगा है। उस के पहले उनको बोनस नहीं मिलता था जब कि हिन्दुस्तान में दूसरी इंडस्ट्रीज के वर्कर्स को 1920 से बोनस मिल रहा है। 1920 से देश के मजदूर बोनस लेते रहें हैं लेकिन जूट मिलों के वर्कर्स को उसके पहले कभी बोनस नहीं मिला। अब भी एक्ट के अनुसार नहीं दिया जाता।

तीसरी बात डी०ए० के बारे में है। अभी मेरे कई मित्रों ने शिमला व्योरो के बारे में कहा। मैं आपसे निवेदन करना चाहता हूँ कि शिमला व्योरो अगर कोई गलती कर रहा है, तो क्या हम आख बन्द करके उसे ले लें। मैं 1958 में इसी पालियामेंट में था और मैंने देखा कि शिमला व्योरो ने हमारे यहां के इतने गलत आंकड़े लगाये हैं कि बम्बई अहमदाबाद का जो कोस्ट आफ लिविंग इन्डैक्स निकलता है, उसमें कपड़े के भाव बरसों से वही चले आ रहे हैं, जब कपड़े का भाव कितना बढ़ गया। हाउसरेंट भी वही पहले का चला आ रहा है। पहले घी के भाव लगाये जाते थे। जब घी गायब हो गया, तो तेल के दाम ही लगा दिये। मैंने यह मसला कई बार उठाया। इसके बाद बम्बई गवर्नमेंट ने और गुजरात गवर्नमेंट ने लाकडाबाला कमेटी और देसाई कमेटी मुकर्रर की थी और जो गलती निकली तो सारा रिवाइज किया गया और बाद में पिछला पैसा मजदूरों को मिला। तो मैं निवेदन करना चाहता हूँ कि कोई गलती हो, तो उसको सुधारने का काम किसका है? यह जूट मिल अोनर्स एसोसियेशन के सुधारने का काम नहीं है। यह सरकार का काम है। वह इस को भी देखें। शिबर गडवाइचरी कमेटी में भी यह सब्ग्न आया था। श्रीमन्, मैं आपसे एक निवेदन करना हूँ और अपने

साथियों से भी थोड़ी बात कहना चाहता हूँ कि आप मजदूरों के सामने ऊप्टाग मांग करके दरमियान में ऐसा समझौता क्यों कर लेते हैं जब कि हड़ताल की गुंजाइश होती है। अगर बोनस का मामला है, तो आप क्यों कहते हैं कि 100 रुपये एडवान्स के तौर पर दे दो। जो बोनस फारमूला है उस फारमूले के अनुसार आप चलिये। बैलेंस शीट जो इनकी होती है, वह हमारे बोनस के लिए नहीं होती है। हम इसको नहीं मानते। हमारे पास अपना एक मुनाफा गिनने का तरीका होना चाहिए जिससे बैलेंस शीट का पोस्ट मार्टम अच्छी तरह से कर सकें। मैंने माननीय मिनिस्टर साहब को यहां की ए.ग. मिल का बैलेंस शीट बताया था जिसने 30 लाख रुपये से अपना शेयर कैपिटल 6 करोड़ रुपया कर लिया। अपने प्रोफिट को बोनस शेयर में बदल कर अब वह 8 करोड़ रुपये का प्रोफिट करता है और उसने अलग अलग इन्वेस्टमेंट भी कर रखा है लेकिन बोनस जो व अपने मजदूरों को देता है, वह मिनिमम 8.33 परसेन्ट है। इसलिये मेरा कहना यह है कि श्रीमन् आपको सजग रहना है, आपको सावधान रहना है क्योंकि बनिये की बैलेंस शीट हमेशा धोकापूर्ण होती है। इसमें ट्रेड युनियन्स को भी सावधान रहना है।

अगली बात मैं आपसे यह निवेदन करना चाहता हूँ कि अभी थोड़े दिन पहले आप ने एक कानून बनाया है कि हिन्दुस्तान के अन्दर बढ़ा हुआ डिपरनेस एलाउन्स आधा मजदूरों को मिलेगा और आधा जमा होगा। अब आप एक जगह यह चाहें कि सभी हमको मिल जाए, जूट मिलों के मजदूरों को मिल जाए, तो फिर बम्बई के मजदूर भी हड़ताल करेंगे कि हमको भी मिलना चाहिए। मेरे यहां के मजदूर भी हड़ताल करेंगे और करेंगे कि हमें भी मिलना चाहिये। जूट मिलों के मालिक बैलेंस शीट्स में जितना स्टोर कंजम्पशन बताते हैं उसका आठवां हिस्सा भी वे नहीं लगाते हैं। उतना जूट मिलों में लगा

[श्री रामू ह भाई]

दे तो मेटनेस बहुत अच्छा रहे । उनकी हालत खराब है । वकिंग कडिगन्ज खराब है । वे वर्क लोड बढ़ाना चाहते है । मजदूरों की डिमांड मे वर्क लोड किस आधार पर हो एक यह भी डिमांड है । आपका फार्मला है वकिंग कडिगन्ज के आधार पर वर्क लोड हो और वर्क लोड के आधार पर वेतन हो । एक दूसरे से ये चीजे लिक्ड है । अगर यह हो जायेगा कि वर्क लोड बढ़ा दो श्री वकिंग कडिगन्ज को न सुघागे तो यह नहीं चल सकेगा । भट्टाचार्य जी ने कहा कि हम इस माग को छोड़ देते है और इगको हमने छोड़ दिया है हमारा महंगाई भत्ता दे दो । मे उनके से कहना चाहता हू कि थोडा नेकर भाग न जाओ । ऐमा करोगे तो फिर हड़ताल होगी । मारे मामले पर अ क. ध्यान देना होगा ।

जूट मिलों का ही यह ममला नहीं है बल्कि मारे बंगाल का है । आप कास्ट आफ लिविंग इडेक्स के आधार पर महंगाई भत्ता देते है । लेकिन इसमे ही न्याय नहीं हो जाता है । उमका पर पीटन्ट रेट क्या है ? आज भारत मे बम्बई, अहमदाबाद, कानपुर, दिल्ली और इन्दौर मे जो महंगाई भत्ता मिलता है कलकत्ता मे उमसे कम मिलता है । इन्दुस्तान के जितने भी बड़े बड़े सेंटर है उनके मुकाबले मे बंगाल का कास्ट आफ लिविंग इडेक्स बहुत कम बनाया जाता है । हमारे यहा 366 रुपये डी ए मिल रहा है । यह मे इन्दौर की बात कह रहा हू जो बहुत अच्छा खाने पीने वाला शहर है । लेकिन बंगाल मे 316 ही ठहराया गया है । यह मितम्बर की फिगर है जो गवर्नमेंट मे प्राप्त हुई है ।

सारे जूट मिलों के वकिंग का जो मसला है इसके अन्दर आप महंगाई मे जाए । यह न समझे कि मजदूर कुछ काम पर आ गए है इस वास्ते शान्ति ही गई है । दुबांग फिर एक दिन यह समस्या पैदा होगी और तब भी आपको ही इससे निपटना पड़ेगा । इस वास्ते इसको आप अभी जल्दी हल कर दे ।

श्री हुकम चंद कच्छोर (मुरैना) : पिछले 46 दिन से जूट मिलों मे हड़ताल चल रही है । इस विषय पर आज हम चर्चा कर रहे है । इस हड़ताल मे लगभग ढाई लाख लोग शामिल है । इससे विदेशी मुद्रा की बहुत बड़ी हानि हो रही है । उत्पादकों को भी नुकसान हो रहा है । इस हड़ताल का मूल कारण क्या है ? उनकी माग है महंगाई भत्ते मे बढोत्तरी, बोनस, शिक्षा, आवास, चिकित्सा की समुचित व्यवस्था, ठेकेदारी प्रथा को समाप्त करना और उनको स्थायी बनाना । ठेकेदारी, प्रथा मे जो बहा जारी है बहुत ज्यादा मजदूर काम करते है । मैं समझता हू कि बंगाल सरकार इस हड़ताल को समाप्त कराने मे असफल हुई है । कई प्रयास उमने किए है इसके लिए । भारतीय जूट मिल एसोसिएशन ने शिमला मे जो श्रम ब्यूरो है उनसे मत मागा था । उसके मत के अनुसार उनको जो देना चाहिये था महंगाई भत्ता वह माठ रुपये था । वह भी नहीं दिया । डा० नाग जो वहा के श्रम मन्त्री है उनकी बात भी मालिको ने नहीं मानी । तब सरकार ने एक त्रिदलीय समिति बनाई जिनमे अपनी रिपोर्ट दी, सारे तथ्य निकाल कर दिए । उसने कहा कि 60 से 63 तक उनको महंगाई भत्ता मिलना चाहिये । उसको भी मालिका न नहीं माना । उसके बाद केन्द्रीय श्रम मन्त्री व. मे. श्राए । उन्होने कुछ सुझाव दिए । नको भी मालिका ने टुकरा दिया । इस हड़ताल के इतने दिनों तक चलने का मूल कारण क्या है ? कारण यह है कि सरकार की मिल मालिका के साथ गोपनीय साठगाठ है और इन दाना के बीच कोई सोदेबाजी होने वाली है । ऐसी बात नहीं है कि सरकार कालिग एटेशन का इन्तजार कर रही थी और इसके बाद वह इनमे और ध्यान दगी । गात असल मे यह है कि एक बहुत बड़ी सोदेबाजी होने सकेत है । इसलिये मामला इना उलझा हुआ है । कच्चा माल पडा हुआ है । नौप्लाख ठे पडी हुई हैं । मिल मालिक मन्नेतामो पर कच्चा माल खरीद रहे हैं । इससे जो मुफ्रा होगा व उन मे और सरकार के बटेगा । हड़ताल सम्भी जो

खिंच रही है उस के कारजमजदूरो की आर्थिक स्थिति खराब होती जा रही है। मैं समझता हूँ कि सरकार को साहस का परिचय देना चाहिये और इन झगडे को शीघ्र सुलझाना चाहिये। सँ देबाजी करनेवाली बात को सरकार छोड़ दे।

बोनस मजदूरो को नियमों के अनुसार मिलना चाहिये। आज मालिक नहीं दे रहे हैं। वे कानून का उल्लंघन कर रहे हैं। घाटे में जो मिले होती है व। बोनस के उसी के अनुसार और कम दिया जाता है जबकि कोई ऐसी मिल नहीं है इन 62 मिलों में मे जिमने मुनाफा न कमाया हो। आप इनके बैलैम शीट देखे और आपक टसका पता चल जायगा इस वास्ते मजदूरों को बोनस उमी हिमाव में मिलना चाहिये, नियमों के अनुसार मिलना चाहिये न कि घाटे का मिलना चाहिये।

पिछली बार जब चर्चा हुई थी तो वहा की सरकार ने थम व्यूरो का मत मांगा था। थम व्यूरो में एक टैक्निकल अफसर है जो शिमला में बैठते हैं। उनका नाम है भ्रमर। पिछली बार कमिटी में हम उन से मिले थे। तब थम मन्त्री ने कहा था कि यह उनका निजी मत है। निजी मत पर सरकार क्या अमल करने जा रही है क्या सरकार ने उनकी रिपोर्ट को देखा है और उसकी समीक्षा नहीं की है। क्या सरकार पोस्टमैन का ही काम करती है? उन्होंने रिपोर्ट दे दी और इन्होंने भेज दी। क्या उस रिपोर्ट पर सरकार की क्या प्रतिक्रिया है यह वह व्यक्त करना नहीं चाहती है। इस प्रकार से सरकार काम न करे। ठीक ठग से समस्या को सुलझाए।

जूट मिलों के मिल मालिक बडे पूजी पति हैं जिन के नाम में लेना नहीं चाहता हूँ। मजदूरों का उनके द्वारा काफी शोषण किया जा रहा है। हडताल समाप्त कराने के लिए तीन बार वहा के प्रतिनिधि आ चुके हैं यहा। लेकिन कोई हल नहीं निकला है। सरकार निकालना नहीं चाहती है। पता नहीं क्यों उसको जल्दी हल निकालना चाहिये।

प्रधान मन्त्री ने एक नारा दिया। नारे देने में वह गड़बड़ बाहिर है, प्रसिद्ध है। गरीबी

हटाओ का नारा उन्होंने पहले दिया था। अब दिया है विश्व की महिलाओं एक हो जाओ। लेकिन स्थिति क्या है। जूट मिलों से मैं तीस हजार महिलाओं काम करती हूँ जिन में 28 हजार की छंटनी कर दी गई है और केवल दो हजार ही बाकी रह गई है। क्या इस तरह में केवल मात्र नारों से काम चल सकता है।

केन्द्रीय सरकार के आदेशों की, उसकी सलाह की अगर राज्य सरकार ने अवहेलना की है तो उसके खिलाफ कोई कार्रवाई आप करने में रहे है? आपको चाहिये कि आप अपनी मलाह को कार्यान्वित कराए। कांग्रेस पार्टी का जिस में हित होता है उसको मिद्ध करने के लिए वह आदेश निकाल देती है अपना काम करवा लेती है लेकिन मालिक अगर आपके आदेशों को या कानून की अवहेलना करते हैं तो आप उनको सुरक्षा कानून के अन्तर्गत बन्द क्यों नहीं करते हैं।

यहा राष्ट्रीयकरण की मांग की गई है। मैं इसके पक्ष में नहीं हूँ। मैं चाहता हूँ कि इन लोगों में मिर्च को छीन कर श्रमिकों को आप दे दे, उनको मालिक बना दे, पैमें की व्यवस्था करे उनकी देख रेख करे। मजदूर जब मालिक होंगे तो अच्छा काम करेंगे, अधिक उत्पादन होगा। जो इस में लाभ होता है वह आपक कर के दिखाएंगे।

हडताल के कारण एक करोड रोज की हानि हो रही है। मालिका का कुछ नहीं बिगड रहा है। वे फिर कमा लेंगे। सस्ता जूट वे खरीद रहे हैं। उनका पैसा इस उद्योग में लगा हो सकता है। लेकिन मजदूरों का उस में पसीना भी तो लगा हुआ है। जितनी पैसे की कीमत है उतनी ही पसीने की भी कीमत होना चाहिये। बराबरी के स्तर पर आपको इन दोनों को रखना चाहिये।

जो मिल मालिक केन्द्रीय या राज्य सरकार की बात को नहीं मानते हैं उन से मिलों की छीन कर आप मजदूरों को सौंप दे तो मैं समझा हूँ कि समस्या हल हो जाएगी।

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DAS MUNSI (Calcutta—South): Mr. Chairman, Sir, the jute strike in West Bengal is not significant this year only. We have been witnessing this strike for the last five or six years, and during this time every year we face this strike in our State.

What I would like to submit before you first is this. Possibly there is a feeling in the Central Government that this problem is exclusively the problem of the State of West Bengal and that the responsibility should lie on the shoulders of the West Bengal Government and not on the Centre. First, I would like to denounce this attitude, because the West Bengal Jute industry may lie, administratively, under the jurisdiction of the West Bengal Government, but its basic national importance in the fields of earning foreign exchange, employment opportunities that it provides and the other things which involve the whole country, should not be forgotten. Most of the employees in the jute mills are coming from Rajasthan, eastern part of Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, Orissa, Gujarat...

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Employees are coming from Rajasthan and not labour.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DAS MUNSI: The working class people come from various States. I am not making any political speech. I am speaking the truth.

The fact remains that the working class and the management there sat many times before this strike. When the strike notice was served, there was sufficient time available to the Centre and also to the State to deal with the situation before the strike started. But it is a pity that neither the Centre nor the State Government did apprehend anything of this sort, and the 46-day strike is still continuing in our State.

The first solution which I would like to suggest before the Government—I am not going immediately into the economic aspects of the usual demands of bonus and dearness allowance which

we face year after year—is that, since it is dominated by nine monopoly houses and this exploitation has become a continuous process, the basic policy decision should be taken by the Government immediately to put an end to the exploitation of the working class by the monopoly houses; the Government should come out with a clear-cut policy for the take-over of the jute trade and the nationalisation of all the jute mills. If we do not do that, the very purpose of the Jute Corporation of India would be defeated, because, as you know, in the Board of Management of Jute Corporation, the representatives of the Indian Jute Mills Association are also there and I have my very genuine information that, whatever radical steps or plans or proposals that the Jute Corporation wants to have, they come to the Board where the dictation of the IJMA is accepted rather than the views of the Government. This year, when the Jute Corporation went for jute purchases—I do not think the Minister of Commerce will be able to deny this fact—the Government of India and its institution, the Jute Corporation, completely failed in the face of the jute monopolies who were ready with huge amounts of black money to purchase jute in the market at any price, though I do feel that the jute growers did not get the remunerative price. The Jute Corporation was a complete flop.

What I would like to submit to you again today is this. The Labour Ministry, the Commerce Ministry and the Finance Ministry are three important Ministries involved here to deal with the situation. But unfortunately the Finance Minister is absent today. I do feel that the Finance Ministry is also a very important Ministry in our Government to deal with this situation. The Labour Minister will agree that there is no instrument in the hands of the Government at the moment to enable them to say that they can overpower these monopolies under the existing rules.

I have witnessed the Labour Minister's wisdom and his tactics with the industry. The Labour Minister is no doubt a good man but his instruments

are very much back-dated as a result of which, whatever onslaught comes to us from the monopolists every time, though Mr. Reghunatha Reddy is an able Minister and a good man and also a good thinker, but ultimately he surrenders to the instrument though I know he has good intentions. I know about the dispute of the Delhi Cloth Mills and the Jay Engineering Works and I know how deliberately the monopolists of the country had the courage to say, 'Let your Prime Minister say whatever she wants. We will not do it' I know they can do so because of many reasons and many problems.

Sir we have taken a journey in 1971 in the Parliament hitting the monopolists, at least slightly and we nationalised the banking industry and then we took over the coking coal mines, and I believe and I hope that the Government would come forward before the end of our term, that is, 1975, with another decision in which these nine monopoly houses in the jute industry should get a final lesson after which we will never have an opportunity to raise such matters nor the working class will have to go on a strike.

Comparing the coking coal mines with the jute industry, the coking coal mines were taken over by the Government two years ago. There were some disputes but the pattern of involvement of the working class is so significant and so excellent that there is a possibility which has been admitted by the Railway Minister in his budget speech to day of more production and better relations. But we have been seeing a reverse concept in the jute industry. So, now again I insist that the final solution to this problem is to nationalise the jute industry and take-over the export trade.

In Indian politics there are four important lobbies working behind, viz, the cotton lobby of the west, the jute lobby of the east, the sugar lobby of the north and I do not know what is important in the south, but I think it is the plantation lobby. Now, the jute lobby of the east is not only important for the present crisis but I

think it is linked up with the entire economy of the country. If you see and look at our economy, who are looking after the jute industry? The same people who are looking after the textile industry, the same people who are looking after the sugar industry and the same people who are looking after the newspaper industry of the country. Therefore, I support the entire strike and the positive demands of the workers are not only those that arise from *ad hoc* disputes with regard to bonus and DA but the working class has made a categorical suggestion before the Government for the nationalisation of the jute industry. I know the National Jute Mills, and the New Central Jute Mills, Budge Budge. The National Jute Mills which went on a strike, have not specified the demands in their strike notice. But here are the jute mills where the working class has been deprived of their provident fund for the last six years. The father of the 1942 freedom movement and the present adviser of the total revolutionary, Shri Ram Nath Goenka is not here today. Otherwise, I would have enjoyed his contribution to the jute strike and also his sympathy for the working class as also of his great friend, Shri Jhunjhunwala, another hon. Member of this House who is also absent to-day. I do not know why.

Our hon. friend, Shri Dinen Bhat-tacharyya has developed an art to accuse our government saying that it is a puppet or a *dadal*. I do not like to deal with that now because this is not a political subject and it is absolutely a matter concerning the working class. I will deal with that later on. But, Sir, I am very proud of the efficiency of my State Government. It is my State Government which in 1972 at least came forward with a very noble attitude in dealing with the jute workers' strike at that time and in the history of the jute industry, if there is any slight victory in a strike after Independence, that was in 1972 under the Government headed by Mr. Siddhartha

[Shri Priya Ranjan Das]

Shankar Ray. I was there during the settlement and the monopolists and the owners of the jute-mills were there. When they were not able to settle the disputes I found the Chief Minister saying that the demand of the workers is reasonable and genuine and that unless this is settled, D.I.R. would be invoked against the management and I found like a magic immediately things were settled. Of course, there may be changes in the economic set-up and so on and there may be a problem now. But what I find is that it is unwise on the part of the Centre to impose the entire responsibility on the part of the State Government and telling us that the State is doing nothing, we are helpless, and all that I think, it is a national responsibility. I think, it is a responsibility of the Central Government and they should deal with this matter, efficiently and effectively. This is my submission.

19 00 hrs.

The Labour Minister of my State of West Bengal is one of the architects in the modern concept of the working class movement and workers' participation and relations with the management and so on and I consider that if there is any slight improvement in regard to our working class, in regard to their pay scales and wages and bonus, in regard to the law which has been introduced in this Parliament, there is a very large contribution made by our State Government and especially by that Labour Minister; and so nobody can denounce him as a puppet or dalal of the jute magnates.

I have got one information about which I wish to tell you and it is this. Sahu Jain have got a new central jute mill and I have got some relevant information. I do not know whether the Labour Minister is aware of this thing or not. But I wish to tell him about this. They are thinking that if the jute strike continues,

they can flow huge amounts, they can collect goondas and they can compel these working class people to join in their factories because most of the working class people, you know, are coming from Bihar, Orissa etc. and they may threaten them in their localities, in their colonies and so on. So, I have got this information and I request the Minister to look into this. These are the sort of gimmicks played by the jute magnates. I do not know about the reports of the All India Radio. But what I feel is this I entirely agree with Mr. Indrajit Gupta. In spite of these various types of tortures, even if they have no food, in spite of these threats of the management, I do feel, this movement will be a strong movement. All the parties, that is, the AITUC, the CITU and the INTUC are united on this issue and I can tell you this that the party of my State unit is fully supporting this strike. We feel that this strike is one of the important strikes and also by this strike Government should get a lesson and finalise their policy in this jute sector.

So far as jute cultivation is concerned, the Minister will agree that jute-growers are not getting adequate price. They are shifting to paddy cultivation from next year and in this year alone fifteen per cent of the total production has decreased due to this lack of interest in jute cultivation. If such sort of things go on, and if we allow the monopolists to loot the working-class like this, Sir, I am afraid that jute cultivation as a whole will suffer most seriously and our national economy in general will also get a setback. So, this is my submission. And I do appeal to the hon. Ministers present here to apply their wisdom on the policies of the Government at this critical hour without considering technical formalities. Also I would say that I am entirely in agreement with the viewpoints expressed by the Members from the Opposition that the situation is now very critical. I find that my friend Mr. Samar Guha is not here. I want to state here and now

that even the movement of those who are trying to scuttle Parliamentary democracy in India would also be frustrated, because a huge sum is coming from their funds, that is, from the funds of the jute magnates. (*Interruptions*). The cars of the National Jute Mills were used whenever Shri J. P. went to Calcutta. I know it. I submit before the Minister to take steps immediately to call a meeting at Delhi so as to end this strike in the interests of the working classes. I think my friend Shri Raghunatha Reddy, the Labour Minister knows about rationalisation. We know what happens in the private sector when there is rationalisation. I feel that the Government should see to it so as to protect the working class also who joined in the strike after the strike is over. In this regard I would conclude by the following for which the Government should immediately come forward with a categorical answer:

- (1) Is it not necessary to nationalise the jute industry? Or is it within the policy of Government or not?
- (2) Whether the Labour Minister feels that the Simla Bureau's price index is correct or false. If it is not correct, whether any review can be made in this regard or not, and
- (3) whether the Government will see to it that the management of IJMA does not get any protection or any shelter.

I know that during the jute strike or before the jute strike, the President of the IJMA, Mr. Singhanian was one of the persons who was involved in all sorts of malpractices against whom a warrant was issued. But, suddenly, that was withdrawn. I want to know from Government as to why the warrant was withdrawn? Why is he still being protected for all these malpractices? I fear that the strike may be suppressed. But, still, I say that the working-class has

shown unity in Bengal this time and it will project its image all over India in right direction.

सभापति महोदय : मेरा ख्याल यह था कि मिनिस्टर के बोलने के बाद अगर आप क्वेश्चन कर ले तो ज्यादा अच्छा होगा ।

श्री एस० एम० बनर्जी (कानपुर) : यहां आप देखिएगा उनसे ही स.दमी बैठे हैं जो बोलना चाहते हैं । श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी । नहीं, हम मुनने के लिए बैठे हैं ।

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: It was at my instance this discussing has come about. You should not end the discussion without the prince of Denmark.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would raise only two or three points. The attitude of IJMA and the tolerance shown by the Government—whether it is Central or State Government—is something very strange. I cannot understand this. Not only this time but previously too when there was a strike and when Mr. Bhagat was the Minister here, we raised this question and he, at our instance, went to Calcutta for finding a solution to the problem. If the present Minister has done the same thing, probably, there would have been a solution and there would have been a negotiated settlement long before. Somehow the impression that went round was that perhaps the all-powerful people realised that the Centre was not interested so much in the settlement of the dispute. Perhaps they were capable of dealing with the situation by the proper handling of the State Government! Somehow I do not know why the Centre did not intervene at all. I had a talk with Prof. Chattopadhyaya and we were hopeful ten days before or twelve days before that a settlement could be reached. But, one fine morning we find that the Centre has gone out of the picture. The Centre's Labour Minister or the State's Labour Minister should find an early settlement of this dispute. Imagine the amount of loss which the country has suffered? It you

[Shri S. M. Banerjee.]

see the loss in terms of foreign exchange, the loss on account of this strike is estimated at Rs. 1.5 crores in terms of production, Rupees 53 lakhs in terms of wages and Rs. 3 lakhs by way of sales tax, octroi, etc. Some of these mills have completely misappropriated the provident fund dues. In Kanpur there are two mills—one J. K. Jute Mill and another an old mill which has now been purchased by Alok Jain, son of Shri Sahu Jain. The conditions are horrible in these mills. In one of the mills in Kanpur itself the condition is so horrible, the living condition is so bad, the working condition is so bad that it looks a great horror. I still feel that you consider it a dishonour to get more concessions for them on the one hand and on the other hand you try to introduce rationalisation for labour saving devices. Sir, as you know, we oppose rationalisation. In Kanpur we led a strike in the textile industry for 85 days. We suffered tremendously. The workers faced starvation but we decided not to allow to introduce rationalisation and it was said: Rationalisation without tear. There cannot be rationalisation without tears. It is a matter of pure and simple intelligence which one should know. I know the condition of these workers who go from UP to various places. Once they go on strike it is impossible for them to overcome the domestic as well as financial difficulties. Efforts have been made to divide the workers by categorising them as U.P. wallahs, Bihar wallahs, Bengal wallahs, etc. But I congratulate the brave workers of the jute mills and all the leaders who led the strike for the wonderful unity shown. Now, I want Mr. Raghunatha Reddy and Prof. Chattopadhyaya to realise that to day IJMA might take the excuse but what would be the fate of the jute workers and also what would be the prestige of the State Government before the public. The dock workers went on strike and it was settled in three days. Shri Kamalapati Tripathi who has recently joined the Cabinet sat upto 2.30 AM. He did not

allow either the union leaders or the officials go out of the room. He said we want to settle it here and now. Why such an effort was not made? We want the Central Government to become effective in this manner. These two Ministers, Shri Raghunatha Reddy and Prof. Chattopadhyaya have fought for the workers. Their heart bleeds for the cause of the workers. Why should they succumb to the pressure of IJMA? Is it because some members of IJMA were in Delhi and they had met the highest in the land and, therefore, no action was taken by the Central Government to solve this dispute or is it because 1976 elections are approaching and that is why they are not moving against IJMA? I support Mr. Munshi when he says that these mills should be taken over by the Government otherwise this powerful organisation like IJMA which can divide the workers and start slanderous campaign against the leaders will continue with its activities

So, I request you, and through you the hon Minister to immediately intervene. It is not enough that the strike is called off by the workers. There should be no victimisation and their demands, if found to be genuine, should not be referred to arbitration but these two Minister along with the State Labour Minister and the Chief Minister should decide and settle and tell IJMA that Government is more powerful than IJMA. The impression should not go round the country that whatever IJMA wants, they get it.

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (PROF. D. P. CHATTOPADHYAYA): Sir, I have already made a rather long statement and to some of our friends, it was perhaps annoyingly longish, a bit sermonising, full of sanctimonious statements etc. If I am brief and to the points raised by the hon. Members, I hope I will be compensating on the point of annoyance.

Sir, the point has been made why the settlement did not take place in Delhi and why did it take place in Calcutta. As you are aware,

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA. No settlement took place in Calcutta

PROF D P CHATTOPADHYAYA No settlement Perhaps, a sort of passing over of the impasse Sir, as you know, under the Industrial Disputes Act, conciliation is under the jurisdiction of the State Government I am not making a legal point or I am not submitting this as a point of debate It is a fact and in many cases, it has been like that The record of State Government's intervention and initiative for sorting out or settling this sort of disputes in the past is not very bad either In 1972, it was at the instance of I may even say so, it was at the insistence of this Government—I happened to be there—that IJMA in spite of its express reluctance agreed to accept the Government's suggestion Sir, at that time, it was decided that in the next three years, there will be no strike and that sort of thing Sir, within two years, there was another strike I am not going into the merits or demerits, the causes or reasons at that time for giving the strike call Within two years, that is, in 1974 there was again a strike Then before the expiry of the first year this is the second strike Sir some change has taken place between 1972 and 1974 This is not only in respect of Government's attitude but also perhaps a bit hardening of the attitude on the part of the trade union We on our part, whether it is the Central Government or the State Government, are very much in sympathy with the workers demands, and Sir, it is this Government which have agreed to the statutory formula of 8 3/4 per cent bonus It is this Government who have done it I understand the criticism, the anger and annoyance of the Opposition But, I wish that fairness demands they also mention the plus points of the Government and the plus points of the State Government Sir, instead of doing that they have made some unfounded, baseless allegations regarding fund-raising and imaginatively connecting this sort of Government's handling of the problem with

the coming Elections. It is extremely unfortunate and unfair I strongly repudiate these baseless, unfounded and unwarranted insinuations.

Reference has been made to badli workers Sir, there was a view expressed by the Union Department of Labour regarding the modality of absorption of casual labourers and we would be certainly happy if it could be executed But, unfortunately, one of the parties took the matter before the Court You will appreciate, once it is taken to the Court, whether it is good, bad or indifference, Government cannot intervene in the matter unless it is disposed of or withdrawn

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA Back to square number one

PROF D P CHATTOPADHYAYA If I cannot say something dramatic, it is because the fact do not warrant it About the calculation of the price index Sir, it has been done Whether it has been done rightly or wrongly, I would not like to comment on it. But even on sophisticated statistical issues there are differences of opinion It is nothing surprising It will be unfair again to impute motives that somebody has calculated in one way and it is strikingly or somewhat similar to the calculations made by another, and therefore, there must be the pre-established harmony or collusion between them It is allowing imagination to run riot

Reference has also been made to alleged unjustifiable concessions made by Government to the industry We have said before on the floor of the House and I would like to repeat it with humility and firmness, that the state of health of the industry is not only bad but grim Production, and export also, have gone down It is wrong to say that it is still the number one export earner It is not Steadily year after year, the production of jute manufacturer, has been coming down In 1971-72, it was 12,73, 000 tonnes, it came down to 12,11,000 tonnes in 1972-73, in 1973-74 it was 10 74 000 tonnes I will not be surprised if it is

[Prof D P Chattopadhyaya]

even worse this year. It is not imagination or out of love for IJMA that facts are being cited.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA Work is going on five days a week. Why do you forget it?

PROF D P CHATTOPADHYAYA Unutilised capacity is there. If there is no demand, what do you do?

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA It is not want of demand but power shortage.

PROF D P CHATTOPADHYAYA Something has been done about power shortage also. Even in this recommendation—if you do not like the expression 'settlement'—special provisions have been made for the workers who for no fault of their own but due to power shortage have suffered.

Most of the jute manufactures are now uncompetitive in the international market. I have said it repeatedly that it is the responsibility of the Government and the trade unions to see to it that the competitive character of our jute manufactures is maintained. I quite appreciate—more than that I quite agree—that the unions will look after all legitimate interests of the labourers as the Government of India together with the Government of West Bengal did in 1972 and again in 1974. Not that this year we are apathetic to the legitimacy of the demands. But you will also appreciate that the capacity of the industry has to be taken into account. Taking the industry in the wider sense, trade growers and export we cannot autonomously or secularly decide the many-sided issues. It is an integral whole. Sixty five per cent of production has to go abroad. Are they prepared to pay the price? Sections of the industry may be indulging in under invoicing and over-invoicing. I am not controverting it. But rules are there to take care of that contingency. I do not like to go into details because Shri Indrajit Gupta and Shri Bhattacharyya, among others, are very knowledgeable. They know much more than I do.

At the same time, we must take a little more integral view of the whole thing. We must be fair to the jute growers are not getting their due. We can look into the reasons. Industrial workers are getting it. Even if we take over the managements can we pay a higher price? Through the NTC we have taken over 103 mills. Our competitiveness is somewhat less than the other mills. We are in difficulty. I look after that sector. Those who think that nationalisation is the panacea for all ills are being oversimplistic.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DAS MUNSI Out of Rs 500 crores in textile mills, how much have you invested for the sick mills? Just Rs 39 lakhs.

PROF D P CHATTOPADHYAYA I am not one of those who think that mere nationalisation will solve the problem. Particularly at this time we are not in a position to take some such decision. We do not have the money. This is not a priority sector for spending money that way. I hope my friends opposite will agree that this is not the time for nationalisation particularly of this sort.

Shri Gupta had drawn attention to raw jute which has not been consumed but which was supposed to be consumed by the industry during the period of strike. It is certainly a pertinent point because the price of raw jute as has been mentioned by some other Members is rather sluggish. The jute growers do not get a fair price or encouraging price nor is the price such as to give them incentive to go in for jute production in a big way or a comparable way. If something is not done about accumulated raw jute stocks, there will be some problem. I cannot afford to be a loser on both scores. Export of jute manufacture had declined and if some raw jute could be exported, I will certainly look into the matter. But the problem is again one of funds shortage. For that reason we could not provide the Jute Corporation of India adequate funds for purchase programmes. If funds permit, I shall certainly think of exporting some more raw jute.

Mention has been made about alleged dictation to JCI by IJMA. It is a wrong notion. IJMA's membership of JCI is extremely minority membership. You will appreciate that in the board of the Jute Corporation of India which is trading in the raw material consulted by that industry, if the industry's spokesman is not there, I think it will not be productive of decisions. The allegation of dictation is based perhaps on inadequate information or wrong information.

I will not take any more time, as I have taken much time already and I think some of the points raised by the hon. Members deserve response from my esteemed colleague, Shri Raghunatha Reddy because he has handled some of the important aspects of the problem.

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI RAGHUNATHA REDDY): While I associate myself with the views expressed by my distinguished friend, the Minister of Commerce, I should like to confine my remarks to a few points that had been raised by Shri Indrajit Gupta and other friends with regard to badli workers and also the consumer price index that arose out of the Bhattacharya committee report. With regard to badli workers, I think the hon. Members are fully aware of the facts and the circumstances. It was a matter which was probably pending for nearly 40 years, if my recollection is correct. We thought it was time to settle this matter. It might be that the trade union leaders were not satisfied with the decision I had given. Unfortunately, since the Central Government is also made a party in the litigation that is pending before the High Court, I should be rather careful in my remarks so that my remarks might not be misconstrued nor could any advantage be taken. It must be said that in matters like this when settlements are arrived at, I know any clever lawyer can create a point before a court of law. It is not difficult. I am myself a lawyer; I know how it could be done. But in terms of industrial

relations, it may not help if litigation is the first resort, instead of the last resort. This aspect must be borne in mind by the employers as well as employees, if proper industrial relations are to be maintained. I do not want to comment any further on this matter because we are ourselves a party before the Court and you yourself might not like us to say anything more than this.

The second point that has been raised is with regard to the Bhattacharya Committee. There seems to be some misunderstanding about this. I do not want that the hon. Members should continue to have this misunderstanding with regard to the role of the Labour Ministry. The Bhattacharya Committee has been appointed, as the hon. Members know, by the Government of West Bengal and the Committee submitted its Report with regard to the consumer price index. When the Director of the Labour Bureau had given his comments on this Report, we just forwarded the Report to the West Bengal Government with his comments and we made it very clear that the views were those of the Labour Bureau and might not be taken as the views of the Government of India. We refused to express any view in this matter for this reason. If they had placed all the matters before the Labour Ministry and asked for the decision of the Labour Ministry, that would have been a different situation altogether. If only the technical view is asked from an officer, and if we unnecessarily come forward to express a view on that matter, it would be more or less an obiter dictum, because if the Government of West Bengal does not respect our view, the Labour Ministry would be placed in a very compromising position.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Has the State Government got direct diplomatic relationship with the Simla Bureau over your head. After all, the Simla Bureau is subordinate to you.

SHRI RAGHUNATHA REDDY: We come to understand that this Report

[Shri Raghunatha Reddy]

was given by the Labour Minister of West Bengal to the Director of the Labour Bureau when he was in Calcutta and he was requested to express his view more or less in a personal way, but since he is an officer of the Government, he sent his views to us and we forwarded them to the Government of West Bengal. This is what I am told exactly took place. That is the reason why we did not express any view.

The West Bengal Government in their wisdom considered all the circumstances and come to a certain conclusion. It is not for me to justify their opinion. I am not here to go into the merits or otherwise of the decision of the West Bengal Government because the Committee was appointed by them and it was on the recommendations of that Committee and having regard to all the circumstances of the case that the West Bengal Government had taken a view, and it would be unwise on my part to express any view with regard to the merits. I do not want to say anything further about this.

With regard to the role of the Labour Ministry whether the Labour Ministry had taken any steps for resolving this crisis of the Jute strike or it was only sleeping over this issue, I would only like to point out for the consideration of the House that, as has been very rightly mentioned by my distinguished colleague, the strike falls within the jurisdiction of the West Bengal Government.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Has this discovery been made after 1969-70? Was this law not there then?

SHRI RAGHUNATHA REDDY: I am coming to that. This is the strict legal view, and the concerned appropriate Government which has got the necessary authority to deal with this matter is the West Bengal Government under the Industrial Disputes Act. Notwithstanding that I had written two letters to the Chief Minister of West

Bengal offering my services to assist him if I could be of any assistance to him in resolving this issue, and the Chief Minister of West Bengal expressed confidence that the Labour Department of the West Bengal Government would be able to handle the issue. In the circumstances I do not think Hon. Members should expect me to take further steps, because having regard to the jurisdiction of the matter, the constitutional nature of the issue and the opinion of the Chief Minister, it would be further unwise on the part of the Labour Ministry to intervene in this matter because it is a matter that falls within the jurisdiction of the West Bengal Government.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Was the offer of help made before the strike or during the strike?

SHRI RAGHUNATHA REDDY: During the strike.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: So, he had an allergy towards you.

SHRI RAGHUNATHA REDDY: I do not have so much knowledge of medicine to go into allergy. Probably there may be some legal allergy so far as jurisdiction is concerned.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: The Labour Minister there is a doctor. He knows about allergy.

SHRI RAGHUNATHA REDDY: The Labour Ministry did not like to get afflicted by other things, because we did not want to cross the jurisdiction defined by the Industrial Disputes Act.

These are the circumstances. I hope IJMA would have the wisdom to realise the unanimous and strong view that has been expressed by various members on the floor of the House irrespective of party affiliation. I hope they would also realise the warnings of history. The warnings of history can only be ignored for a moment. They will have to suffer if they do not realise the strength of the working class. I hope they would realise it.

457 *Jute Workers' Strike in W. Bengal (Disc.)* PHALGUNA 1, 1896 (SAKA) *Business Advisory Committee* 458

With regard to my young friend Shri Das Muni, I am grateful for his very kind remarks. I hope and trust that the Commerce Minister and myself would not fall him in his expectations.

19.37 hrs.

BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
FIFTY-FIRST REPORT

THE MINISTER OF WORKS AND
HOUSING AND PARLIAMENTARY

AFFAIRS (SHRI K. RAGHU RAMAIAH): Sir, I beg to present the Fifty-first Report of the Business Advisory Committee.

19.38 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Friday, February 21, 1975/Phalguna 2, 1896 (Saka).