

With the prevailing Rent Control Act, I understand, several of the house owners are keeping their houses under lock and key instead of giving them on rent. So, it adds to the problem; also escalation in prices, and so on and so forth. Keeping the impact of the Rent Control Act, will the Minister not lose any more time in making the rules or amend the Act if necessary taking into account the woes of the tenants as well as the owners.

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: It is very simple to say, 'take into account the interests of the owners as well as the tenants'... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI K.S. RAO: The Government has to do it.

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: We have to do it. That is why, an experiment has been initiated by the previous Government. It is going on. We are watching the situation. We will evaluate it. What the hon. Member has said is correct. It is not only in regard to Delhi, but also in regard to Bombay, Calcutta and other cities.

Anyway, it is a game. But at the same time we cannot simply abolish the Rent Control Act. We have to give due protection to the tenants also. At the same time we have to encourage the rental housing system. So, as you have put it, we have to find a via-media, a balance has to be struck. We are watching the situation. We will bring a Bill, if necessary, very soon.

National Policy on Construction Labour

*494. SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA:
SHRI CHIRANJILAL SHARMA:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to evolve a national policy on construction labour; and

(b) if so, when it is to be announced?

[*Translation*]

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND WELFARE (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) and (b). Government is examining various proposals for bringing forth suitable legislation for providing certain protections to workers in building and construction activities.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my question was as to whether the Government propose to evolve a national policy on labourers engaged in building and construction activities. But the reply that has been given is that the Government is considering various proposals for bringing forward a suitable legislation for providing some protection to building and construction workers. There is a vast difference between national policy and legislation. More than 50 lakh labourers are engaged in building and construction work. But no concrete steps have been taken for them. Besides, there is provision in the rules which ensures payment of minimum wages to labourers, because they are still not getting minimum wages to labourers, because they are still not getting minimum wages. They do not get bonus. The benefits of social security scheme are also not available to them despite the fact that maximum accidents take place in the construction industry. The number is three times more than in other places. A few days ago a seminar was held on this subject and some suggestions were put forward. There is also a National Campaign Committee on construction workers which had prepared a draft bill and made some suggestions. I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to what suggestions were made by the Trade Unions in the seminar? I would also like to know as to whether the Government will constitute a board comprising of representatives of labourers, builders, employers and the Government and look into the matter of providing minimum wages and social security to the labourers and solve their problems?

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, there are no two opinions that

the question raised up by the hon. Member, Shri Basudeb Acharia is very important. The construction workers are being exploited everywhere whether it is the case of payment of minimum wages, providing them social security or the payment of compensation to accident victims. Their names are not shown in the pay rolls. These are very serious problems. The hon. Member made a reference to the seminar. Yes, a seminar was organised in Delhi on 12th February 1990 which was attended by representatives of labourers, Government officials and the building association. A number of good suggestions came before the Government in the seminar and the Government is considering them. The National Campaign Committee was Constituted under the Chairmanship of Justice Krishna Iyer. The said committee made a number of suggestions, one of which suggests for constituting a board which would look into the labourers' problems, viz; providing guarantee to their engagement, deciding labourers' contribution to the board, registering their engagement and their recruitment through the above board. It is a good suggestion and the Government is considering it. Last year i.e. in 1989, a Bill was introduced in the Rajya Sabha about the National Campaign Committee and a discussion was about to take place on the said Bill. In the meantime, a memorandum was presented to the hon. Prime Minister through the Petition Committee with the request to consider the points given in the memorandum. The Bill is pending in the Rajya Sabha now. What I want to say is that the Government is considering the above suggestions and the question of constituting the board is also under consideration of the Government.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the biggest problem is that of the uncertainly being faced by the labourers. As soon as the work on some project is completed, the labourers are retrenched and they do not get some other work immediately. Will the Government consider a proposal under which a definite percentage of labourers—say 30 or 40 per cent—will be transferred to some other Government or

private projects or will be recruited by such projects as soon as a project work, they are engaged in, is completed whether it is a public sector undertaking project or a Government project? For example, certain States have made such arrangements. In West Bengal, the Government has taken such a decision. The West Bengal Electricity Board has also taken the decision that out of the labourers working under them, a definite percentage will be given the status of permanent employees and they will be employed in some other work. Is the Central Government considering any such proposal?

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: At present there is no such proposal before the Government. But while bringing forward a legislation on this subject, proposals which will come up with the general consensus of the House will be taken into consideration.

SHRI DAU DAYAL JOSHI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, of the total labour force in Delhi, 6 lakh labourers are the natives of Rajasthan and most of them belong to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Through you, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether a proposal to issue identity cards to labourers coming from other States is under consideration of the Government? There have been instances in which labourers while on work meet with accidents and die. Generally, most of the labourers work under contractors. In the event of death of a labourer, the contractor bluntly denies the fact that the accident victims was working under him. If he says yes, he will have to pay compensation. For the above reason, the condition of casual labourers have become very deplorable. Keeping in view the above facts, will the hon. Minister consider the suggestion for issuing identity cards to all labourers? A large number of construction workers coming from other States are working in Delhi. They are engaged in the job of beautifying Delhi. Will identity cards be issued to all labourers, viz., permanent, temporary and casual?

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: When a Bill in connection with the labourers is brought

forward in the House, the question of issuing identity cards will also be examined. It is a fact that if the labourer does not possess an identity card the Labour Commissioner cannot do anything for him. Therefore, such a provision is essential. We propose to provide for constitution of a board in the Bill and it is under consideration. It is also quite but natural that the labourer will register his name with the board and the board will maintain the detailed particulars of the labourer and also have the record of his employer and the site of work. The labourer will take up the work only with the permission of the board. The labourer also will have to make some contribution to this effect so that he could be assisted at the time of an emergency. Therefore, when the Bill is brought forward in the House, a detailed discussion with regard to issuing identity cards will also be held.

[*English*]

SHRIMATI MALINI BHATTACHARYA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, there are now between four thousand to five thousand construction workers building the first phase of the Metro rail Project in Calcutta and once this project is completed, they are going to be at a loose end, without any security or any future opportunities for employment. Of these, there are 250 tunnel workers whose health has been ruined. They are suffering from all kinds of diseases like deafness, rupture of blood-vessels, arthritis and impotency. So, my question to the hon. Minister is that when this Board for construction workers is constituted, when this Bill is enacted, will the Ministry consider the case of these workers who have been risking their life and health on a national project. In fact, they are mostly employed by sub-contractors under the Hindustan Construction Company. Now they are *na ghar ka na ghat ka*. No one wants to take their responsibility. So, will the Ministry do something about them?

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: Sir, on the 20th, we have convened a Conference of

Labour Ministers of States here in Delhi. There is a conference of the International Labour Organisation (I.L.O.) on 21st and 22nd. As to the question raised by him, I have already said that the Board which will be constituted will have to guarantee permanent employment to registered labour. The Board will be accountable for this.

[*English*]

SHRI K.V. THOMAS: Sir, I welcome the suggestions of the hon. Minister that a Tripartite Committee can be constituted to look into these problems. But my apprehension is whether this Tripartite Committee will have the same fate of the Tripartite Committee which looked into the D.A. and when that Tripartite Committee were going into the entire structure, Government unilaterally declared D.A. Sir, there is one major problem, that is, the insurance coverage. Sir, already there are some of the Union which are functioning in this area with the help of the Insurance Company in the country. Now, they have started their own insurance policy. I would like to know whether the Government will give direction to the Insurance Companies that they should encourage the insurance system which can function both by way of financial help to the workers and also ask the contractors who make use of their services.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: Sir, the hon. Member's second question relates to insurance. This is not relevant here. In reply to the first question, I want to state that the Board will not play a merely advisory role, but it will also have the necessary powers.

SHRI RAM NAIK: Sir, the labourers who work under labour contracts, face problems, but there is another aspect to this matter. Registration is done in case of small-scale industries. Does the Government have any policy which necessitates the registration of the new business community of builders and contractors? These people exploit

labourers and do not pay them even the minimum wages.

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: Sir, as I have already said, when the proposed Board is constituted, a provision will be made to ensure that builders will first have to take permission before starting construction work.

[*English*]

DR. VENKATESH KAHDE: Sir, the construction workers are at the mercy of the contractors or the middlemen who are making all the money. It is a sort of capitalist system. There is no consideration for the welfare of the labour. It is a good idea that the Minister is considering some reform in this direction. However, my question to the hon. Minister is whether in the interim period, the existing State machinery or the Central Government machinery could be used for making random checks at the construction site to see that the minimum wages are paid to the labourers, they are insured as also to see that there is no question of inequality in wages between men and women. There is a great deal of difference. I would like to know whether these matters could be checked by the existing State machinery or the Central Government machinery.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: Sir, the

laws are still in force and there is no laxity. In fact, it is the duty of State Government officials to ensure that minimum wages are paid and other labour laws are enforced. Whenever I get time, I shall also look into it.

[*English*]

Training to Orphans

*495. **SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS:** Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the approximate number of orphans living in orphanages in various States, State-wise;

(b) whether training is being given to them in technical skills under different technical trades to enable them to earn livelihood;

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) whether any guidelines have been issued by the Centre to provide necessary training to the orphans?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND WELFARE (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) to (d). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

(a) The Central Government is implementing a Centrally sponsored Scheme for the Welfare of Children in Need of Care and Protection through which assistance is being provided to voluntary organizations for the maintenance of orphaned and destitute children in Children's Homes. The State-wise number of children covered under this Scheme are given below:—

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>State/U.T.</i>	<i>No. of Children covered upto 31.3.90</i>
1	2	3
1.	Andhra Pradesh	3125
2.	Assam	1020