

there was a general feeling that the pace of rehabilitation of bonded labour required to be speeded up and several suggestions in this regard were made relating to identification, release and rehabilitation of bonded labour. It was explained that on the basis of present information, there is still a backlog of 42,000 bonded labourers needing rehabilitation and the Centrally Sponsored Scheme in this regard is being continued during the 7th Five Year Plan period and an outlay of Rs. 5.00 crores is provided in the Annual Plan of the Ministry of Labour for 1985-86. It was expected that the process of rehabilitation of the bonded labourers would be completed by the end of the Seventh Plan period. The question of involving private voluntary organisations in the programme for identification and rehabilitation of bonded labourers is also under consideration of Government.

The bonded labour system has been abolished throughout the country with effect from 25th October, 1975 under the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976. Under the Act, the responsibility for identification, release and rehabilitation of bonded labour rests with the State Governments. With a view to supplement the efforts of the State Governments a Centrally Sponsored Scheme was launched by the Central Government in 1978-79 under which the State Governments are provided Central financial assistance on matching grant basis (50 : 50) for rehabilitation of bonded labourers. In order to complete the process of rehabilitation of bonded labourers as a time-bound programme, annual targets are being fixed from 1982-83 for different States and the progress made in this regard is being monitored. In order to ensure that the bonded labourers are rehabilitated on a permanent basis and do not slip back into bondage, the State Governments have been advised to integrate the Centrally Sponsored Scheme with similar other Schemes viz, IRDP, NREP, Special Component Plan for Scheduled Castes and Tribal Sub-Plan and other on-going schemes of the State Governments. Other instructions given to the State Governments inter-alia are to :—

- (i) give due cognizance to the newspaper reports highlighting the existence and problems of bonded labourers and complaints received should be enquired into promptly and appropriate

action taken on the findings of the enquiry;

- (ii) give due weightage to the complaints made by the voluntary agencies and social action groups and provide relief to the aggrieved labourers in accordance with the provisions of the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976; and
- (iii) view the public interest litigations in the correct perspective and implement the directions of the Courts in time and in right earnest.

MR. SPEAKER : No further supplementary ? Finished ?

Disparity in Minimum Wages

*542 SHRI K. MOHAN DAS : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

- (a) whether there is a wide disparity in minimum wages in different States;
- (b) whether Government are also aware of the fact that industries are shifted to the States where minimum wages are comparatively low from the States where the same is higher; and
- (c) if so, what steps are being taken to bring about parity or near parity in the minimum wages in different States ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI T. ANJIAH) : (a) to (c). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

Complaints have been made from time to time that due to a wide disparity in the minimum rates of wages in certain employments in the neighbouring States in the Southern Region, there is a tendency for the industries to shift to States where minimum wages are comparatively low. This question has been discussed at a number of meetings which recommended revision of minimum wages wherever such revision was due.

The general question of the need for uniformity in minimum wages was discussed at the 31st Session of the Labour Ministers' Conference held in July, 1980. It was agreed at the Conference that while absolute uniformity is not possible, should not be too wide a disparity in wages prescribed by neighbouring States as it might lead to flight of industry and business from one State to another. Accordingly, it was emphasised at the aforesaid Conference that while fixing/revising wages under the Minimum Wages Act, due regard may be given to the impact that the prescribed wages might have on the industry in other States especially the neighbouring States. The recommendation was brought to the notice of all the State Governments/ Union Territories Administrations for necessary action. The question was again discussed with particular reference to the bidi industry at the meeting of some Labour Ministers in September, 1981 and a number of recommendations were made in order to reduce disparities in wages.

At the suggestion of the Government of Kerala an item regarding disparity in wages has been included in the agenda of the 19th meeting of the Southern Zonal Council scheduled to be held at Bangalore on April 20, 1985.

SHRI K. MOHAN DAS : The Minister has stated in this Statement that the recommendations of the Labour Ministers' Conference were brought to the notice of the State Government. I would like to know whether this step has brought about any improvement in the situation? If not, what further effective steps are going to be taken to see that the wide disparity in minimum wages is removed?

SHRI T. ANJALIAH : For the minimum wages the appropriate deciding authority are the State Governments. There is, of course disparity between the States. Therefore, we are calling the Labour Ministers and Trade Union Conference because we want to see that national minimum wages are fixed so that the factories do not get shifted from one place to another.

SHRI K. MOHAN DAS : I would like to know whether the Hon. Minister is aware of the fact that cashew industry in Kerala are being shifted to Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and other areas because the minimum

wages in these States are lower than what it is in Kerala. If so, what specific steps are being taken in this regard? Will he convene a special meeting of the Ministers of these Southern States in order to bring about a solution to the problem?

SHRI T. ANJALIAH : Yes, we are having a Labour Ministers' Conference on 11th of May 'so that we can bring about minimum wages for cashewnut, Bidi and other workers.

SHRI D. N. REDDY : I would like to know whether it is not necessary to have a common law to enact common minimum wages throughout the country?

SHRI T. ANJALIAH : That is also under our consideration.

Scarcity of drinking water in Delhi

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*543. **SHRI CHINTAMANI JENA :**
SHRI HARISH RAWAT :

Will the Minister of **WORKS AND HOUSING** be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that there is a great scarcity of drinking water in Delhi and New Delhi areas;

(b) if so, the particulars of localities which are facing great crisis; and

(c) the reasons for this scarcity and steps being taken to regulate the supply of drinking water?

THE MINISTER OF WORKS AND HOUSING (SHRI ABDUL GHAFOOR):

(a) At present the water supply position is reported to be reasonably satisfactory. However, shortage of drinking water develops during summer season. Towards the end of February 1985, there was a scarcity of water for a few days due to lack of adequate water in the pumping station. This was corrected by additional release of water.

(b) During summer general complaints of low water pressure are received from areas situated at higher elevations or at the tail end of the distribution system e.g. various colonies in South Delhi. In case of fall of raw water supply from Haryana at Hyderpur plant, water supply to West Delhi, North West Delhi and parts of Civil Lines Zone