

SHRI KHURSHEED ALAM KHAN : Sir, it is done, but it is done in a dignified manner.

Retrenchment of Surplus N.T.C. Workers

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***63. SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA :
SHRI ANANDA PATHAK :**

Will the Minister of **COMMERCE AND SUPPLY** be pleased to state :

(a) whether about 55000 workers of the National Textile Corporation are going to be made surplus and sacked soon;

(b) if so, how Government propose to safeguard interests of these workers; and

(c) whether any directives have been issued in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND SUPPLY (SHRI P.A. SANGMA) :

(a) No, Sir. However, rationalisation of labour is an ongoing process depending upon several factors e. g. implementation of modernisation programmes, change in product-mix, change in capacities and revision of work norms.

(b) and (c). Due compensation would be paid to the affected workers.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : Sir, the textile industry in our country is in a doldrums. It has been admitted by the President and yesterday also by the Prime Minister. Hundreds of textile mills have been closed and have been declared sick. The National Textile Corporation was established for a specific purpose of nourishing sick units back to health, but it has by and large failed in this respect. Losses by the National Textile Corporation are mounting. The Minister has already admitted that out of 125 mills under the National Textile corporation in only 18 mills losses are to the tune of 40 per cent.

He has also admitted in his reply

that due compensation would be paid to the affected workers. That means the textile workers are going to be retrenched or victimised. Therefore, I would like to know the number of the affected workers as a result of the retrenchment or victimisation.

SHRI P.A. SANGMA : When we had taken-over the sick mills—now we call them the National Textile Corporation—excess labour complement had been one of our problem. Therefore, we thought unless the labour is rationalised, the mills are not going to be viable. As such this process was started. This scheme of labour rationalisation was looked into by the Parliamentary Committee on Public Undertakings and they also suggested that we should go in for labour rationalisation.

Therefore, first we have given an opportunity to the workers that if anybody is willing to go on voluntary retirement, they can go on voluntary retirement and others of course have to be retrenched. At the time of take-over we have found that there was 10 per cent excess labour in the taken-over mills. I will not go into the details of that, but I will just state what has been done now and what we are supposed to do in future. But the labour rationalisation is not done unilaterally. When we do it, we always take into confidence the various trade unions and the workers. So far till date the number of posts abolished either voluntarily retired or retrenched is 24,039, out of which the vacant posts which we abolished were 13,744. Therefore, the number of workers affected as a result of this rationalisation amounts to about 10,295. This particular aspect was, on the advice of the Committee on Public Undertakings, given to SITRA (South Indian Textile Research Association) to do this job for the next Seventh Five Year Plan and they have suggested that by the end of the Seventh Five Year Plan there will be about 38,000 extra labour in the NTC and they have suggested that this should be rationalised in a phased manner and according

to their suggestion, by 1985-86 we should be retrenching 7,000 workers, in 1987-88 it will be another 7,500, in 1988-89 it will be 8,500 and in 1989-90 it will be 8,000 workers. That will make a total of 38,000.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : Sir, can you allow him to put the Second Supplementary on my behalf ?

MR. SPEAKER : He should have reserved your energy for this...

(Interruptions)

DR. DATTA SAMANT : Sir, I want to put a Supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Acharia, do you want to give your Supplementary to him ?

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : Yes.

MR. SPEAKER : All right, Mr. Acharia, let him ask.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : For the second Supplementary he has given his place to Mr. Datta Samant.

[Translation]

DR. DATTA SAMANT : Thirteen textile mills of Bombay had been nationalised by the Government in the year 1983 and brought under National Textile Corporation. Twenty-two thousand workers of these mills have not so far been taken back on work. I want to know the action proposed to be taken by the Government to take back the workers.

Secondly, the Hon. Minister has stated that the affected workers will either be given the benefit of voluntary retirement or they will be paid adequate compensation but compensation is not paid to those workers of these

nationalised mills who retire or want to get compensation. The number of such workers is between Seven to eight thousands. Because the Government had guaranteed payment of Rs. 70 crores to the mill-owners at the time of nationalisation, no thought was given to payment of compensation etc. to the workers. Therefore, I want to put two supplementaries—firstly whether Government will issue a directive to take back soon the 22 thousand workers affected by the nationalisation of the mills, and secondly, whether instructions will also be issued to pay compensation and gratuity to those retiring workers also who are not getting gratuity and compensation ?

[English]

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : Sir, with regard to these 13 mills, when they were taken over, the total number of workers was 34,000. Till date we have taken 17,000 workers. *(Interruption.)* 17,000 is the number which we have taken back. So, I do agree that there is a vast number of workers who are still left behind.

As far as the compensation is concerned, I have made categorical statement that whoever is retrenched will certainly be given compensation. There is no dispute on that.

DR. DATTA SAMANT : I got a letter that it will not be given because it is nationalised.

[Translation]

The retiring worker is also not getting retirement benefit. Government had given compensation to the mill-owners but gratuity is not being paid to the workers of those mills which have been nationalised. It is a very serious problem.

[English]

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : Sir, the procedure is, whenever a mill is taken

over and nationalised we appoint a Commissioner of Payments.

It is the Commissioner of payments who goes into all these aspects. And the House may remember that the then Commerce Minister, Shri Vishwanath Pratap Singh said, in reply to a debate in this very House, that the interest of the workers would certainly be given the highest priority and we stand by that.

DR. DATTA SAMANT : Are you going to act ?

MR. SPEAKER : This is what he has said.

SHRI ANANDA PATHAK : Sir, from the answer given by the Minister, I find that the main stress has been laid on modernisation.

By modernising the nationalised textile mills, if retrenchment of a large number of workers takes place there is no use to drain Crores of rupees are spent from the public exchequer for modernisation programme but at the same time, no importance has been given to the employment guarantee programme which has to be generated. A lot of manpower is lying idle. I am coming to the question. Our opinion is to strengthen the employment-oriented programme and make it more intensive. But we find so many workers are being retrenched.

I would like to know from the Minister whether the Government is prepared to consider to provide alternative employment to those retrenched workers because mere payment of compensation would not solve the problem of unemployment which is mounting like anything. That is my pointed question.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : Sir, I have already answered in reply to the earlier question. However, I may add for the information of the Hon. Member that we are going to do it in

a phased manner. According to our study, the amount of money that will be involved for payment of compensation to the workers, if we have to do whatever which has been mentioned, is about Rs. 78 crores. So, all the aspects have been taken into consideration.

SHRI HAROOBHAI MEHTA : Will the Hon. Minister consider that this payment of compensation is not a substitute for job and if at all any rationalisation is necessary, it can be without tears. Will the Hon. Minister consider that when the whole textile policy is under consideration, why should there not be an embargo on any retrenchment of textile workers until the entire revision of textile policy is taken up ? Let there be a clear assurance that the Government would place an embargo on any retrenchment of NTC workers until the policy is revised. Will the Government consider the point that instead of straightway going in for retrenchment, some provision for alternative employment, for making provision for powerlooms and other facilities for alternative job should be done first before retrenchment decision is resorted to due to circumstances which may make it indispensable ?

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : I have noted down your suggestion.

SHRI UTTAM RATHOD : I have an important question, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER : It might be Sir. How can I know that yours is more important and his question is not important. His question is also as important as yours. I don't distinguish from one important Member and the other.

SHRI LALIT MAKEN : Mr. Speaker, whether the Government is contemplating to take over the Birla Mills which is in a very bad shape and specially keeping in view the Delhi Metropolitan Council had passed a

resolution last year recommending to the Government for its nationalisation.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : Sir, we have received a lot of representations. The hon. Member has met me a number of times on this issue. And no decision has been taken so far.

Solution to Ethnic Violence in Sri Lanka

***64. SHRI UTTAM RATHOD:
SHRI KAMAL NATH :**

Will the Minister of **EXTERNAL AFFAIRS** be pleased to state

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to recent incidents of outbreak of violence in some areas of Sri Lanka endangering the security of minorities of Indian origin there;

(b) if so, whether any new steps have been taken by Government to help the Government of Sri Lanka to solve the problem of ethnic violence in that country; and

(c) if so, the reaction of Sri Lanka Government thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI KHURSHED ALAM KHAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). Government continue to firmly believe that the longstanding ethnic problem in Sri Lanka can be resolved only politically, and not militarily. Government are in touch with the Sri Lankan Government.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[*English*]

Export of Jute Products

***65. SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN :** Will the Minister of **COMMERCE AND SUPPLY** be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to export more jute products this year than the previous years ;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the quantity to be exported ; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND SUPPLY (SRI P.A. SANGMA) : (a) to (c). The export of jute goods during April-September 1984 was worth Rs. 141.01 crores as compared to Rs. 90.77 crores during the same period of 1983. It is expected that export of jute goods during financial year 1984-85 is likely to be around 275.00 tonnes valued at over Rs. 300 crores compared to the level of 233.500 tonnes valued at Rs. 163.71 crores achieved during 1983-84. However, as a result of high prices of raw jute, the cost of production of jute goods have also risen sharply making it difficult for exporters to compete in overseas markets by offering competitive prices. Besides, there is severe competition from the synthetics and other producing countries in the international market.

Reduction in Upper Age Limit for Recruitment to Civil Services

***66. SHRI BHOLA RAUT :** Will the **PRIME MINISTER** be pleased to state :

(a) whether the upper age limit for Civil Services recruitment by U.P.S.C. has been reduced from 28 years to 26 years ;

(b) whether the age limit was enhanced from 26 years to 28 years by U.P.S.C. in 1979 ; and

(c) if so what action Government propose to take to safeguard the interests of candidates eligible within the age ceiling of years ?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI RAJIV GANDHI) : (a) to (c). In 1979 while introducing the new scheme for Civil Services Examination, Government raised the upper age limit from 26 years, to 28 years though the Kothari Committee as well as the Union Public Service