

17 hrs.

DISCUSSION RE. INTERIM RELIEF
TO CENTRAL GOVERNMENT
EMPLOYEES

MR. CHAIRMAN : The House will now take up the discussion under rule 193 regarding interim relief to Government employees. As the time allotted is one hour, I request hon. Members to be brief.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE (Kanpur) : When the Business Advisory Committee discussed it, they could not give it more than one hour but I am sure that with you in the chair, the time will be increased because many members want to take part.

I move that this House take note of the growing discontent among the Central Government employees throughout the country because of abnormal delay in payment of interim relief.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You are simply to raise a discussion, there is no question of moving a formal motion.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: I am not saying that this should be taken into consideration. I am doing this under rule 193. There is no right of reply and I am not trying to establish one.

After the heroic strike of 19 September, 1968 which showed the growing discontent among the Central Government employees and in which nearly 7.5 lakhs of Central Government employees took part, Government was forced to appoint a Pay Commission. That was also one of the recommendations of the National Commission on Labour. The hon. Prime Minister who was also the Finance Minister then announced it in the House and my hon. friends Shri Nath Pai, Shri Nambiar, Shri S. M. Joshi and last, but not the least, Shri M. L. Sonधि at that time raised the question of interim relief because we were aware that once the Commission started functioning, it would take at least 2-3 years. So we were more concerned with the payment of interim relief. We

were assured in the House that this question will be referred to the Commission, though there was no need of referring it to them and the Government could have straightaway declared interim relief and the Commission could have been asked to submit its report on interim relief as early as possible. Even today when we are discussing this issue, thousands of Central Government employees in Delhi and outside also—nearly 22 lakhs—are demonstrating that interim relief should be paid. At least here 20—30,000 demonstrated under the banner of All India Railwaymen's Federation. They wanted to come to Parliament House but Parliament was adjourned. Even today thousands of Central Government employees are demonstrating before the Chairman of the Pay Commission demanding immediate payment of interim relief. I request the hon. Minister Shri Shukla to declare here and now that Government is prepared to pay interim relief immediately or to ask the Commission to expedite payment or submission of their report on interim relief in this month itself. We have all submitted memoranda before them. That the prices of all essential commodities have shown an upward trend is not contested by the Government; in fact the Finance Minister Shri Y. B. Chavan said on the 5th August 1970 in reply to a call attention notice of my hon. friend Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee that "certain essential commodities have shown a tendency of rising prices; there is no question of not looking into the realities. Hon. Members mentioned certain figures; I have got the same list. I have never denied that increase in the case of rice is there; increase in the case of food items, vegetables, edible oil and milk is there; in raw cotton there is increase". When another pertinent question was asked by my hon. friend Shri Vajpayee he also said that this increase had affected mostly salaried person. Who are the salaried employees, Sir? The Central Government employees who have to pay income-tax and other taxes. They cannot evade tax because it is deducted from their salaries. Naturally, Mr. Chavan, the Finance Minister of the Union Government, has agreed, and has accepted that the prices have gone up and there is no question of not paying interim relief.

SHRI LOBO PRABHU (Udipi) : Six per cent.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE : It may be more I would request you to kindly allow me to read certain figures. What is the minimum salary today for the Central Government employee, and what is the minimum pay in our industries? In the Life Insurance Corporation, the minimum is Rs. 202; in the Central Government, it is Rs. 141. The minimum in the State Trade Corporation, with allowances, of course, is Rs. 185; Central Government, Rs. 141. Reserve Bank of India, Rs. 208; Central Government, Rs. 241. IOC, Rs. 195; Central Government, Rs. 141. In the field of petroleum, Burmah-Shell and ESSO pay Rs. 271; Central Government, Rs. 141. Caltax, Rs. 239; Central Government, Rs. 141. Heavy Engineering Corporation, Ranchi, Rs. 200; Central Government, Rs. 141. Then, Telco, Jamshedpur, Rs. 200; HAL, Bangalore, Rs. 185; Central Government, Rs. 141. Textile Industry, Ahmedabad and Bombay, Rs. 231 and Rs. 214; here, it is Rs. 141. Then, in the Pharmaceutical and Drug Industries, it is abnormal. In Glaxo Laboratories, the minimum is Rs. 328; Pfizer, Rs. 305. The difference is Rs. 164. There is an absolute gap. What is the gap? The gap ranges like this: Rs. 61, Rs. 44, Rs. 67, Rs. 54, Rs. 131 and so on. In certain cases, it is Rs. 164, Rs. 160 and Rs. 187.

Now, it is generally propagated against the Central Government employees that they are getting more and they are better off. Who is better off today? A Central Government employee is getting a basic salary, plus a dearness allowance, of Rs. 141. In the industries which the same Government is controlling, like the HEC, HAL, BEL and in the other public sector corporations, the employees are better off. They get paid according to the award of the Engineering Wage Board. But here, the Central Government employees' case, not a single pie has been paid to the employees and that is why a demand has been made that interim relief should be paid soon.

We have demanded, all the federations including the Confederation of Central Government employees, have demanded this. What is the demand? "In common

with all the Central Government employees,"—this is from the All-India Defence Employees' Association—this is a general demand—"we demand an interim relief of Rs. 70 for all the employees, permanent, regular, temporary, casual worker and work-charged establishment, up to the limit of Rs. 350 per month and 20 per cent of pay for others, and this should be payable from 1st February, 1969."

The question may be asked: after all, the Commission is there, and it is for the Commission to decide what should be the quantum of interim relief to be given. That may be correct, but the Government has come to the conclusion that the prices have increased. This Government which is talking of socialism here and outside has miserably failed to hold the price-line. It has not been able to hold the price-line in any industry in respect of any product. Even in regard to drugs, even after the notification, what is the price of a common drug in the open market? People have to pay through their nose, and the time has come when they should realise that 22 lakhs of Government employees are agitated. They supported Mrs. Indira Gandhi's Government; they supported her at the time of bank nationalisation; they condemned the vested interests in the country. They fought against the reactionary elements and they stood by the side of Mrs. Indira Gandhi at the time of nationalisation. They support the progressive decision of any Government. They are prepared to support them. But what is the condition of the Central Government employees? They get Rs. 141 which is the minimum salary. I say that you should really consider this aspect.

When the third Pay Commission was appointed, Members from all parties in Parliament demanded an immediate payment of interim relief; we demanded it, the moment the Commission was appointed. The Second Pay Commission could not do justice. Why do we want a minimum need based wage? It was the recommendation, the unanimous recommendation, of the 15th Indian Labour Conference held in Delhi in 1957. Mr. G. L. Nanda, then Labour Minister, was presiding over it. Everybody from the Government's side as well as the

workers' side, the representatives of INTUC, AITUC, HMS and ITUC and the employers, representative, Mr Naval Tata, all of them unanimously agreed that there should be a need-based minimum wage, which was Rs. 125 at that time and which is now Rs. 287 after counting various increases in the cost of living index. Therefore, if we demand Rs. 70 as interim relief, it is not anything abnormal which the Government cannot meet. At that time this unanimous recommendation of the Indian Labour Conference was not considered by the Second Pay Commission. Mr. Morarji Desai was the Finance Minister and he thought that this unanimous recommendations was not mandatory and Government may or may not accept it. Wisdom has dawned on Mr. Morarji Desai only after coming to this side and he has started supporting everything. But at that time he stood like a rock and a letter was sent by an Under Secretary to the Pay Commission saying that this was not mandatory and the Second Pay Commission never considered it.

Sir, I am happy that at least after the heroic struggle and sacrifice of the Central Government employees—12 employees sacrificed their lives and become martyrs in the 19th September strike; let us not forget what happened at Indraprastha Bhavan, at Pathankot, Bikaner, Shahdole and Gauhati; after the arrest of 55,000 employees and the termination of Service of 48,000 employees, after that heroic struggle of the Central Government employees, this Government realised its importance an need-based minimum wage is one of the terms of reference now. Interim relief is also one of the terms of reference, but I am told that it is not going to be paid immediately. We request that the interim relief should be paid in this month. I am not trying to threaten this Government, but in all fairness, I would warn the Government of the dire consequences if this is not paid this month. It is my earnest desire and request to the Minister through you that interim relief should be paid. We do not want any vague assurance that the Pay Commission will be asked to do it. We are demonstrating before the Pay Commission, knowing fully well that this Government has to procure the money for that. If this Government say that they have no money, nobody is going to believe it when there is drain to the tune of crores

and there are income-tax arrears to the tune of Rs. 533 crores. Due to the rise in the cost of living, there has been erosion into the real wages of the Central Government employees and the wages now stand at the 1947 level. Through you I would request the Minister, Mr. V. C. Shukla, to give this assurance that if the Government is unable to declare an interim relief immediately, at least they will ask the Pay Commission to see that this recommendation about interim relief is sent to the Government immediately without any further agitation. Let them not wait for another countrywide agitation. I am sure they will realise it. If they do not, naturally we cannot ask the workers to wait indefinitely. After all, starving workers will be agitated. When everybody in the various corporations has got a wage increase, why should not the Central Government employee get it? With these words, I would request the hon. Minister to make a statement.

While initiating this discussion, I must salute those martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the sake of the Central Government employees. I am sorry to say that the dependents of those government employees have not been paid any compensation though they were brutally murdered by this Government. I would request you, Sir, to convey our feelings to the family members of those martyrs who were shot down because they wanted interim relief and a need-based minimum wage. Today it is becoming a reality, thanks to those martyrs.

SHRIMATI TARKESHWARI SINHA (Barh) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am very grateful you for given me this opportunity to join with the hon. Member who preceded me in demanding that the Central Government employees should be given immediately interim compensation. As we look at the recommendations of the Gajendragadkar Commission, though they fixed the dearness allowance at a lower rate which caused a lot a discontent at that time, the Commission were conscious of the fact that this arrangement would not last, it is going to be a very temporary affair. I would like to repeat the words of their recommendation which make it very clear that they wanted this to be a temporary affair.

"Even if prices do not rise, the question of the revision of the pay structure

[Shrimati Tarkeshwari Sinha]

of this class of employees will have to be examined at the end of two years".

Because there are so many anomalies and justice has not been done to them and as the entire arrangement of the salaries and allowances of class 3 and class 4 Central Government employees is a kind of patchwork, the Commission was very clear in its mind that there should be a revision even if the prices have not risen. It further says that :

"...government should sanction some suitable interim compensation to all the employees whose salaries would be revised, by the appointment of the Pay Commission or otherwise."

The very basis of the demand for interim compensation, apart from the point of view which has been made by the hon. Member, is that there has been a rise in prices. That is an additional reason why they should be given this interim compensation. But even if there had not been any rise in prices, their demand would have been just, and that was the reason why the Government was forced—it never accepted their demand with pleasure—to accept that demand by announcing the appointment of the Pay Commission. That makes it very clear that there is need for the revision of the pay scales. If there is need for revision of the scales, there is all the more reason why there should be interim compensation even if the prices have not risen. Now that the prices have actually risen, there is all the more necessity for giving them immediate relief.

The Gajendragadkar Commission had further recommended that over a twelve month period if the index had gone beyond 245 then the entire range of the salaries of the employees should be revised. But the Government of India simply gave them a lollipop. Here I would like to repeat what Shri Abdul Gani Dar has stated, because it is applicable here :

तमन्नाभों में उलझाया गया है,
खिलौने दे के बहलाया गया है ।

The very basis of the announcement of the Pay Commission has been to provide the Central Government employees with a lollipop, because both the two conditions have been fulfilled and the demand is very relevant.

One of the demands of the employees has been about their representative in the Pay Commission. When we look at the history of the Pay Commissions, both the first and second Pay Commission did not consider the entire pay structure of the Central Government employees but did some kind of patch work and, therefore, from the point of view of the due consideration of the problem it was very necessary that the representative of the employees should be there in the Commission. But, so far as I know, that demand has not been conceded. When the associations of the Central Government employees, in spite of all their differences, have jointly opted for one person to be taken as the representative of the Government employees in the Pay Commission, I do not know why the Central Government should view that with suspicion. But so far nothing has been done. That makes everybody feel very suspicious about the *bona-fides* of Government.

Secondly, why did Government not accept it as an award. If the employees' representative had been there on the Commission, there was no harm in accepting it as an award. Actually, it would have attached greater sanctity to the entire recommendations; otherwise, who believes this Government? The Government gives statements everyday that this will be done and that will be done. All this is announced without any follow-up. We have seen the fate of bank nationalisation and the same fate is going to overtake this.

I know, the announcement of the Pay Commission's recommendations will come at the time of elections just to give a lollipop to the Central Government employees. After that the Government will come out with the very patent theory, which has become out-of-date and worn out, that they have no capacity to pay. They have capacity to spend on other things but not for rationalisation of pay scales! I do not ask

you to give them fabulous salaries but there must be some rationalisation of the entire pay structure of the Central Government employees.

What is the minimum demand? The minimum demand is a living wage. A living wage has been accepted by the Government itself. The Government accepted it in their own joint machinery. In the 15th Indian Labour Conference the workers passed a resolution about a need-based minimum wage and, I think, the Government accepted this as a principle. Even after accepting this principle, the Government has not come out with a categorical assurance that a need-based wage will be given. This is the minimum demand that can be made of any civilised Government. The very basis of a civilised government's existence is that its own employees at least would be paid a living wage, not a comfortable wage but a living wage. The Government should have acted as a model employer. If the Government cannot satisfy own their criteria, the Government has no justification to stay as the government and say that it is the biggest employer in the country.

The hon. Member who preceded me has pointed out that there has been erosion of wages. I would like to quote some figures. They are figures not coined by me but they are from the record. The erosion has been from 5 to 22 per cent in the case of Class IV employees and from 16 to 84 per cent in the case of Class III employees, which is not such a comfortable class or range; they all live from hand to mouth. This is the extent of erosion of their wages.

Then, I would like to quote some figures about the comparable wages (pay and DA) as per the recommendations of the First Pay Commission at COL index 80 and the Second Pay Commission at COL index 115. The corresponding wages at COL index 215 with full neutralisation with reference to the recommendations of the First Pay Commission and of the Second Pay Commission should be 148 and 151; 161 and 160; 175 and 169; 188 and 179 and so on respectively. The wages actually granted at COL index 215 with reference to the recommendations of the First Pay Commission and the Second Pay Commission are 141, 146, 151,

156, 166, and so on and so forth. Therefore, the erosion is quite obvious. The extent of wage erosion being suffered at COL index 215 absolute value with reference to the recommendations of the First Pay Commission and the Second Pay Commission respectively are 7 and 10; 15 and 14; 24 and 18 and so on. That has been the erosion of wages. I do not know what kind of calculations the Government enters into that it does not enter the Government's mind.

Therefore, there is every reason to give them interim compensation, not only because of the rise in prices but because the Government is committed, the moment Government announces the appointment of the Pay Commission itself, to the principal of granting them a revision of salaries to give them at least sustenance in their life. Therefore the very basis of the announcement of the Pay Commission included the announcement of an interim compensation. The price rise is an additional factor that it should be paid.

But I have a grievance against all the Members of the Opposition parties who have come to this Parliament as the Opposition. There was a chance when Mrs. Indira Gandhi was the Prime Minister of a party which was united—this party has now separated and Mrs. Indira Gandhi has gone out of this party. But that time she could have done something. I would like to submit that whatever may have happened, the situation today is that there is a majority of the Opposition groups in Parliament. The Government, in spite of hundred per cent attendance, will have only 218 or 220 Members and the rest of the Members belong to Opposition groups. Each Opposition group, including our party, has committed itself to the grant of an interim relief to the Central Government employees. I would like to say let the Opposition groups prove their *bona fides* not in words but in action. If anybody asks Government, what about your promises?", it can apply to Opposition groups also. They can ask Opposition parties, "You made promises that you will deliver the goods. What about your promises?"

Here are the Opposition groups having a majority who vouchsafe for the workers so much and so loudly. The hon. Member who preceded me is one of the very strong spokesman not only of the Government employees but of the Communist party. What has happened to the Opposition groups

[Shrimati Tarkeshwari Sinha]

in Parliament? Why can't they compel the Government to grant an interim relief to Central Government employees? Why be at the mercy of the Government. If all the Opposition parties were united, we would have seen that the Government comes down on this reasonable demand of the Central Government employees. This has nothing to do with the political views of different parties. It has to do with the stomach, the belly of the Central Government employees.

I have a grievance. Let us all Opposition groups unite on this issue. We are all sitting in the Opposition. Why not all the Opposition groups take advantage of the position, swell the numbers, make a majority, and compel the Government to grant an interim relief to the Central Government employees through our strength and not through the mercy of the ruling party. Let us combine our strength together and let us tell the workers that we are sincere to them. It applies to the Government because they have also made promises. And it applies to the Opposition parties also because they too have made promises. The basic demand of the Central Government employees is:

बुलन्दवादों की हस्तियों पर हम जी कर क्या करेंगे हमें जमीन दे दो, हम आजमा लेंगे।

But the blame will be shared by the Opposition parties more because they are not coming up to their own responsibility and obligations and they are not fulfilling the promises which they had given to deliver the goods. Because of their own affiliations with the ruling party, they are shy of compelling the ruling party. Let us all join together and compel the Government to grant an interim relief to the Central Government employees.

SHRI SHASHI BHUSHAN: On a point of order Sir.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: On a point of clarification, Sir.

SHRI BAL RAJ MADHOK: May I submit, let not these two allies quarrel bet-

ween themselves and harm the cause of the Central Government servants. Let the cause of the Central Government employees not suffer by their quarrel. If they are sincere enough, let them support it openly.

श्री शशि भूषण: माननीय सदस्या जरूरत से ज्यादा क्रान्ति की काल दे गई हैं। गवर्नमेंट रिलिफ देने वाली है।

श्रीमती तारकेश्वरी सिन्हा: आपके मुंह में घी शककर। एनाउंस करवा दीजिये, जरूर घी शककर खिलाऊंगी।

श्री बलराज मधोक: वे मिच खाने के घादी हैं, घी शककर नहीं।

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: May I just refresh the memory of my hon. friend, Shrimati Tarkeshwari Sinha? In this House, on the substitute motion of Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee on the President's Address, we all had voted for the interim relief to the Central Government employees. Perhaps, she has forgotten that conveniently.

SHRIMATI TARKESHWARI SINHA: I have not forgotten that. We were short of the numbers. We have the strength. But we did not put in all our strength. That is my complaint.

श्री प्रेम चन्द वर्मा (हमीरपुर): सभापति जी, सब से पहले मैं आपको घन्यवाद देता हूँ मुझे अवसर देने के लिए; वहाँ भगवान का भी मैं शुक करता हूँ कि उसने भूले हुए लोगों को रास्ते पर ला दिया है: श्रीमती तारकेश्वरी सिन्हा किसी समय फाइनेंस मिनिस्ट्री में डिप्टी मिनिस्टर थीं।

श्री शिव नारायण (बस्ती): जब घी तब थी, अब तो नहीं हैं।

श्रीमती तारकेश्वरी सिन्हा: डिप्टी मिनिस्टर की जो हालत होती है, उनसे पूछ लीजिए। मिनिस्टर्स तक की क्या हालत होती है, उनसे पूछ लीजिए, उसके बाद बात कीजिए।

समापति महोदय, मैं कह रहा था कि जब भूले हुए लोग रास्ते पर आ जायें, तो मैं सभ्रता है कि भगवान हमारे साथ है और इसमें कोई शक नहीं रह जाता है कि सरकारी कर्मचारियों को इन्टेरिम रिलीफ मिलेगा। जो लोग इसके विरोधी थे, जिन्होंने इस सरकार में रहकर उन सरकारी कर्मचारियों के लिए कुछ नहीं किया, आज वे कहते हैं कि हमने सरकारी कर्मचारियों के लिए बहुत कुछ किया है और आज वे इस सदन में टसुप बहा रहे हैं। यह बात शोभा नहीं देती है।

इस मंत्रालय में इस वक्त जो मंत्री हैं, उस समय उनमें से किसी का भी ताल्लुक फिनांस या लेबर मंत्रालयों के साथ नहीं था। इसलिए जो लोग दूसरों के बारे में नुकता चीनी करते हैं पहले उन्हें अपने गिरेबान में मुँह डालकर देख लेना चाहिए।

केन्द्रीय सरकार के कर्मचारियों के बारे में इस प्रस्ताव को यहां पर लाने के लिए मैं भी बनर्जी को मुबारकबाद देता हूँ; उन्होंने इस प्रस्ताव को पेश करके इस सदन, सरकार और देश का ध्यान सरकारी कर्मचारियों की समस्याओं की ओर दिलाया है। इस बात से इंकार नहीं किया जा सकता है कि इस हाउस में सभी सदस्य इस विचार के हैं कि सरकारी कर्मचारियों को इन्टेरिम रिलीफ दिया जाना चाहिए। जैसा कि अभी बताया गया है, जब पहले एक बार इस बारे में सोटिंग हुई थी तो सब सदस्यों ने उसके हक में वोट दिया था। मैं नहीं समझता कि आज भी किसी भी दल का कोई सदस्य इस बात का विरोधी होगा। लेकिन यह कहना बिल्कुल गलत है कि सरकारी कर्मचारियों का दंड केवल अपोजीशन के ही दिल में है या केवल लोग सरकारी कर्मचारियों की नुमायदगी करके हैं। ऐसा

कहना अन्याय होगा जहां विरोधी दल के सदस्य सरकारी कर्मचारियों का केवल पक्ष ही पेश करते हैं, वहां हम लोग, और यह सरकार केवल उन का पक्ष ही पेश नहीं करते हैं, बल्कि उन के लिए कुछ करते भी हैं।

इस सरकार ने सरकारी कर्मचारियों और दूसरे वर्जज के लिए अब तक क्या किया है, यह जानने के लिए माननीय सदस्य 1947 के लेबर कानूनों को देखें और आज 1970 के लेबर कानूनों को भी देखें। 1947 में इस देश के मजदूर अपनी मांगों के बारे में बोल भी नहीं करते थे, जग कि आज वे अपने अधिकारों के लिए आन्दोलन करते हैं, कई तरीकों से अपनी आवाज गवर्नमेंट तक पहुंचाते हैं और गवर्नमेंट को हिला देने तक की कोशिश करते हैं। आज मजदूरों को इतनी आजादी मिली हुई है कि वे सरकारी दफतरो और मिलों को बन्द कर सकते हैं। यह काम इस सरकार ने ही किया है। मैं कांग्रेस पार्टी की तरफ से यह कहने के लिए तैयार हूँ कि उस के सभी सदस्य इस बात के हक में हैं कि सरकारी कर्मचारियों को इन्टेरिम रिलीफ दिया जाना चाहिए।

हिमाचल प्रदेश के सबा लक्ष एन० जी० ओड० ने अपनी मांगों के सिलसिले में पैंतीस रोज तक हड़ताल कर के हिन्दुस्तान में एक रिकार्ड कायम कर दिया। भारत सरकार ने उनकी बात मान ली और इस के लिए मैं प्रधान मंत्री जी, श्री चव्हाण और श्री ~~...~~ को धन्यवाद और बधाई देना चाहता हूँ।

हिमाचल प्रदेश के कर्मचारियों को 83 फीसदी तक सी० सी० ए० मिलता है, जब कि वहां पर काम करने वाले केन्द्रीय सरकार के कर्मचारियों को केवल 6-1/4 फीसदी सी० सी० ए० मिलता है। मैं निवेदन करना चाहता हूँ कि हिमाचल प्रदेश में काम करने वाले केन्द्रीय कर्मचारियों को भी स्टेट कर्मचारियों

[श्री प्रेमचन्द बर्मा]

के बराबर सी० सी० ए० दिया जाना चाहिए ।

सरकार को यह कहना नहीं चाहिए कि वे कमीशन ही इन्टरिम रिलीफ के बारे में फंसला करेगा। आज सारे हिन्दुस्तान के सरकारी कर्मचारी अपना हक हासिल करने के लिए तुल गये हैं। मैं नहीं समझता कि सरकार इस बात की भ्रोर ध्यान नहीं देगी। मुझे पूर्ण विश्वास है कि सरकार अपने कर्मचारियों को इन्टरिम रिलीफ देने के बारे में फोरन निर्णय करेगी और जो लोग सरकारी कर्मचारियों के असंतोष से नाजायज फायदा उठाना चाहते हैं, उन को शरारत करने का मौका नहीं देगी।

मैं सभी सरकारी कर्मचारियों से भी यह अपील करना चाहता हूँ कि वे ऐसे लोगों से गुमराह न हों, जो उन के जज्बात और उन की माँगों का उन के संगठन की शक्ति का राजनैतिक तौर पर नाजायज फायदा उठाना चाहते हैं, जो बोट लेने के लिए उन का इस्तेमाल करना चाहते हैं। मैं आपोजीशन के उन लोगों को भी यह बार्निग देना चाहता हूँ कि वे सरकारी कर्मचारियों के जज्बात से न खेले और उन का नाम ले कर अपना पोलिटिकल कैपिटल न बनायें। अगर कोई व्यक्ति ट्रेड यूनियन के नाते कुछ कहता है, चाहे वह कम्मुनिस्ट पार्टी का सदस्य हो और चाहे किसी और पार्टी का, तो हम उस को बलकम करते हैं। लेकिन मैं यह भी कहना चाहता हूँ कि कांग्रेस पार्टी का कोई मेम्बर उन से पीछे नहीं है।

मैं सरकार से निवेदन करना चाहता हूँ कि वह सरकारी कर्मचारियों को इन्टरिम रिलीफ देने की बात को मान ले, ताकि इस महंगाई में उनकी थोड़ी बहुत सहायता हो जाये।

SHRI LOBO PRABHU (Udipi) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, as an ex-Government servant, I think I have more sympathy for the Government servants than any one here. And this is the reason why I want this relief to be real and not illusory.

We should not make the mistake that by merely offering them an interim relief we are satisfying them. We must make sure that there is real relief. I want to say this because, I see, the movent you give relief, there will be a corresponding rise in price. You must realise the economics of dearness allowance. If you give dearness allowance to one party and if production does not rise, it simply means a shift of income. It means that some people whose income does not rise have to give to those whose income rises. I am going to put that question squarely to our friends here. Is it their intention to shift income? So, Sir, the basic cause of this must be sought elsewhere.

Now, has there been a rise in prices? The Hon. Minister, I am sure, will point out that the rise in prices has been 7 per cent and 10 per cent as required for the relief to be due under the old basis. He will give the figure. They can argue that the rise is not 10 per cent. We can argue that the method of calculating price-index is not right we can argue that 10 per cent fixed is wrong. I leave it to my good friends to do that. But here, I am concerned with the bigger cause : What is it that you are going to do, to make this interim relief or salary to be real, to see that the Government servant takes home a packet which feeds him and his children and keeps him going?

The greatest villain of the piece is the Government itself; the next villain of the piece are my good friends, the socialists, because, the Government has been creating an anarchy in the Government, due to its policy. By playing politics; by obliging groups, it has superseded economics. They have destroyed investment climate in the country. Production therefore will not rise. They have kept on increasing taxes; that is well known; I think it will not be delighting my friends that immediately after the Budget there has been a very steep price rise.

Now, therefore, the Government has to think in terms of something fundamental. It has got to think in terms of putting a freeze. The first freeze must be on taxes. If there is not going to be a freeze on taxes, you will pay more in dearness allowance alone than you take by way of increases in your budget. As far as the calculation goes, you will be paying more in dearness allowance to your own staff than the amount of Rs. 70 odd crores which was budgeted for, due to additional taxes. That must stop. And all of us must be united in seeing that there must be a halt on taxes, a complete freeze.

My next point is freeze on prices. Freeze on prices will probably follow to some extent from the freeze on taxes, because the taxes are added to the prices. But even more than that, the Government has to see that it does not play with prices as it has been doing, for instance, with drug prices. They know nothing of the subject of prices. They know no economics, and they interfere. I would like to tell my hon. friends that these controls of which they are thinking so much are the cause of the price rise. They must stop these controls. They must let the natural mechanism work. So, let us have a price freeze for the time being till the natural mechanism is restored. Let Government stop playing with the economy through these controls.

My third point is about wage freeze. We have to make up our minds very seriously whether we want a real wage or we want a wage which is immediately cancelled by a price rise. If my hon. friends are going to make up their minds that corresponding with the price freeze, there has to be a wage freeze, they are going to do themselves a much greater service, and they are going to do the worker a much greater service than by merely inflating wages which are meaningless because they will be caught up by the prices. So, let us make up our minds very seriously on this matter. Let not my hon. friends play the Government's game by putting up prices by insisting on a wage rise. Let us have a price freeze; let us have a tax freeze, and let us have a freeze, lastly, on this playing politics...instead of economics, and let us have more sense in this matter.

SHRI S. KUNDU (Balasore) : He may ask the Government to stabilise the prices.

SHRI LOBO PRABHU : I am glad that Shri Vidya Charan Shukla, the Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance, is an M. A. in Economics; he will realise how unreal our finances have been so far. Let Government take counsel of those who know some economics. There are some economists here in our country who are not politicians, and who know the subject and who have the interests of the country at heart. Let Government consult them. Let them stop playing politics. Let them not go and which-hunt capital, because it is capital that creates employment. If they are going to hound everyone as a monopolist, then they are going to get no investment and no employment.

Let us have a freeze on these controls. Government know nothing about prices. They just jump into the fray and fix prices and then again they re-fix them, and this process goes on, and this process is a very costly one for the people.

These are my few observations, and I have made them because we have to think very carefully before we play in this game of raising the wages on one side and of raising the prices on the other. This kind of see-saw should not have as its victims the poor workers and the Government servants.

We want some economics: we want some thinking on the subject of wages and prices. If this discussion can make the Government do some thinking about what is necessary to hold the economy and to reduce the anarchy that has come in, we shall have served a great cause, and we shall have reason to thank Shri S. M. Banerjee that he had brought up this subject before us.

I am wholly for the Government servants getting a fair deal, but I am not sure that he gets a fair deal when his salary is raised and immediately it is cancelled by a price rise due to a tax rise.

SHRI M. L. SONDHI (New Delhi) : This debate not only calls for the expression of sympathy for those who are suffering but it requires from all of us to bring a modern

[Shri M. L. Sondhi]

approach to a subject which is of crucial importance.

The Government, after all, makes its policies on the basis of facts. But what are these facts? As you know, Mr. Chairman somebody said, there are lies, greater lies and statistics. Today, nothing expose the wickedness of those in authority more than the ambiguity of our Government's statistics. There is an effort on their part to mislead public opinion and to mislead Parliament. When we ask them what steps have been taken to provide full neutralisation, so that Government employees' representatives may be able to understand what is in store for them in the future, when the Economic Survey presented by Government itself gives us a very gloomy price front, the answer we get from them is a very strange one. In an answer to a question put by me, Government have stated :—

“The question of Government discussing any steps with Government employees does not arise”.

Mark these words. They do not even want to discuss the steps which Government employees may like them to take. In other words, this Government sets itself up against a dialogue with its own employees.

What is the position? In January this year, the index was 215. Today it is 225, a rise of 10 points. And this Government has the check to come here and present before us a purely glacial outlook, an outlook which is deeply frozen. I find that today when we talk of the twelve-monthly average, they say the DA was allowed at 215. But today the twelve-monthly average has already risen to where we want to ask them whether this 10 point rise is reflected in the statistics they use.

What are the questions uppermost in the minds of hundreds of thousands of Government employees, people whom you want to be nation-builders, whom you want to take this country forward because you are dedicated to the view that it is right for the public sector advance. The question are not whether you will give interim relief are not. The Government employees will see to it that they get interim relief. But

there are three question : first, whether you will ante-date it, and if so, to what period? Second, why this delay? Why are you causing so much confusion and suspicion all round? What is it that the mask on your face tries to hide? Third, will you give substantial help or only tinker with the problem?

This morning, the wives of some government employees went to see the Prime Minister was too busy to see them. But they left her a memorandum. I would crave your indulgence to read a small paragraph from it, though the whole of it is worth reading. These ladies, these women, who are the wives of government employees serving in New Delhi, say :—

“We as the Grihalakshmis as you have addressed us in your Independence Day speech have the painful responsibility of feeding, clothing and caring for all the human and social needs of the menfolk who run the huge machinery of our Government. Besides the menfolk the children and the old and infirm parents or in-laws are also to be looked after. As a woman, you can well imagine the plight and suffering of we who belong to your own class”.

Then they detail the factors responsible for their plight.

This Parliament have the obligation to protest the rights of workers, of employees who with their skill and toil bring it about that our country and our nation is able to function as a civilised society. May I remind my hon. fellow parliamentarians on the other side of the word of Gandhiji in 1943 when he said :—

“Has a freezing man ever been warmed by the promise of the warmth of of sunshine coming at some future date?”

These were the words of Gandhiji, that was the metaphor of those days. But today what are the speeches we got from the other side? They reflect a contradiction in the ruling party not being able to live up to the promise it makes. Today there are

dark clouds over our national landscape. There is the miserable plight of the government employees whose homes I have myself visited on more than one occasion. There is a grim problem facing every housewife. They would like a answer to a simple question. I would like the hon. Minister to answer when he tells us about the doleful tale of the Government's financial difficulties : why should the Central Government employees alone be crucified for the economic blunders of the Government ? Why it is, to quote a Biblical expression, that the unscrupulous money changers of the temple of Indian society are able to work this havoc ? Today the Government itself joins these money changers. A confrontation between Government and its employees is inevitable now, as I see it, because mutual confidence was broken in 1968. After that, we, several of us on all sides of the House, thought that something would be done to heal the wounds. Today it seems the history of the last few years has again been forgotten and Government is again appearing to us red in tooth and claw. It is again arming itself with powers and these powers will one day again be used against the Central Government employees. What is wanted is that this Government should recognise the imbalance in the relationship between the Government and its employees. We ask for relief, something which is an emergency measure, something which cannot wait, but Government has been justifying its procrastination by various devices. I would appeal to members on both sides that we should no longer blind ourselves to the plain fact that Government is today demanding a total surrender from Government employees who had dared to raise their heads in 1968. Is this a policy which befits democracy ? Democracy is Government by dialogue, where you do not stand of false prestige, but you welcome exchange of ideas to maintain future economic security. Therefore, I would say that this Government; in terms of its own professed policies, should come forward and suggest a plan by which we integrate security with economic environment.

My learned colleague Shri Banerjee, who has great experience in the trade union movement, has quoted statistics and told

us how in other avenues of Government employment and in private companies a high level of pay is ensured for certain categories. What is the lesson ? I seem that this Government is keen on maintaining the structure that they have inherited from the East India Company, and that they will not even modernise the structure of employment in terms of categorisation of workers and the manner in which wages should be equated to skill and the necessities of living. It should be made clear today in terms of this debate...I recognise that there will be a few quips and a few interesting side-lights...that the consensus of this House is that we want that parliament and Government should do everything to strengthen the employees. We have every right to appeal to every employee to put forth his best effort for nation building, but first we must assure the employee something which keeps his body and soul together. We have the recommendations of the various Labour conferences and the various ways in which minimum need-based wage have been defined. Today I would like that we take the debate above the common level and we emphasise the design, the design which was made clear by Lokamanya Tilak years ago when he said that the tyrannical power of Government should be opposed, the mechanisms of bureaucracy should not be allowed to stand in the way of the economic progress which we want.

The Prime Minister has said that she does not worry about the price rises. I do not quote the example of USA or Britain, I am quoting the example of a country which is a neutral, Finland. In Finland consumer prices have advanced only by 2.7 per cent in the last twelve months at a time when industrial output was expanding by 12 per cent. Let these real and true statistics mean something to those frozen faces on the other side.

Therefore, in conclusion I would say that we find that there are double standards. While India's flag, the symbol of our sacrifice and the sacrifice of many of those who adorn these benches, is desecrated, this Government does not lift a little finger, but when the Central Government employees who serve them with loyalty and dedication raised their voice, particularly this Minister who

[Shri M. L. Sondhi]

is sitting here was responsible for building up a spirit of terror in New Delhi, whether it was the Police agitation or the Indraprastha incident.

SARI SHASHI BHUSAN (Khargone) : This is a personal attack. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI M. L. SONDDHI : This does conduce to respect and affection for him. Respect and affection are private matters. (*Interruption*)

SHRI BALRAJ MADHOK (South Delhi) : He represents New Delhi and Government servants and he has a right to speak for Government employees.

SHRI M. L. SONDDHI : The tradition of democracy is that Members of the Opposition have every right to criticise those in authority. They occupy the Treasury Benches, we do not. It is they who have to be prevented from the arrogance of power because power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Therefore, today is not the occasion for hair-splitting. The obligation of this Parliament is clear. What is Parliament's duty at the time of this crisis? Let our thoughts go back to 1947, to the dawn of freedom. Instead of that, today we seem to be heading for a rendezvous with fear. We have our obligations to pensioners. We have obligations to those who toil; we have obligations to those who are the weaker sections of our society. Interim relief today is a necessity. I conclude on a lighter vein so that I may please them. After all this is a minority Government; interim Government; let them give interim relief.

SHRI G. VISWANATHAN (Wandiwash) : In the discussion on interim relief to the Central Government employees, we have more heat than light. If turns into a political discussion the employees and their problem would be forgotten. Even though all the parties in this House are agreed on the need to give interim relief to the Central Government employees, I do not know why we are playing hide and seek with them? After all their position is known to us; it is, as the *Hindu*

writes :

"On the basis of random sample opinion may be ventured that the average government employee is heavily indebted and derives no benefit. A very substantial part of his earnings are usually earmarked month after month for repayment of loans the interest on which reaches the unbelievable 2300 per cent per annum when required for tiding over the end of the monthly difficulties."

It is enough to show how the Central Government employees are striving to make both their ends meet. The actual value of the rupee has fallen. It has been calculated that between 1962 and 1970 the rupee has shrunk to 58 paise. In this condition nobody can dispute the fact that the price rise has affected us and it should be neutralised. The real wages have gone down and this has not been met by the Government. From the Ruling Congress Mr. Verma pointed out that they have given many things to the employees. I fully agree with him but all of them tended to be promises. On this side the Swatantra Member Mr. Lobo Prabhu gave us some economic policies or theories which belonged to the age of Adam Smith.

SHRI LOBO PRABHU : What is your age? Meet my points...(*Interruptions*.)

SHRI G. VISWANATHAN : I live in the country. After all there is immediate need for giving this interim relief. We know what is the fate of these Pay Commissions. We had a Commission in 1957 and it took two years to submit its recommendations. The Second Pay Commission had to deal with 17 lakh employees. Now the number has gone up to 27 or 28 lakhs and the Third pay Commission has to deal with this number and it may submit its recommendations in 1972 or 1973. That is why all of us demand that interim relief should be given to the employees, pending the final report of the Pay Commission. Very recently 125 MLAs signed a memorandum and gave it to the Prime Minister suggesting that interim relief should be given to them. The All India unions have been unanimously

demanding from the Government that interim relief should be given.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Would you finish in one or two minutes ?

SHRI G. VISWANATHAN : I shall take a few more minutes.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Then you may continue next time.

18 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Wednesday August 19, 1970/Sravana 28, 1892 (Saka)