

that retail outlets can be established in this area ?

SHRI BRAHMA DUTT : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I will get a special survey conducted in the district of Bastar and whatever requirement will come to the notice, that will be included in this year's marketing plan.

[English]

Pending Cases of Settlement of Terminal Benefits in Public Sector Companies

*387. SHRI MAHENDRA SINGH : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) the number of cases pending with the public sector companies, of gratuity, provident fund, etc. of in-service employees and former employees;

(b) the time prescribed for the settlement of these cases;

(c) the number of cases where such claims have not been settled and employees have died; and

(d) the action taken to expedite such claims ?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI J. VENGAL RAO) : (a) to (d). Settlement of provident fund and gratuity dues is the normal and routine function of the Public Sector Enterprises. Government has no information on pending cases. Gratuity payments are to be made within one month of their becoming due. As per executive instructions provident fund claims are to be settled within 20 days of their receipt provided they are complete in all respect.

SHRI MAHENDRA SINGH : The Minister says that the Government has no information about pending cases. This is a very strange reply. I do not know how the Government is going to monitor whether executive instructions regarding provident fund and gratuity are being carried out or not.

SHRI J. VENGAL RAO : This is a mandatory function of the public undertakings. They have to pay it. Otherwise, the Commissioner of Provident Fund will prosecute them. There are 22 lakh workers

and 225 public undertakings. How can Government monitor all these things ?

SHRI MAHENDRA SINGH : Are you aware that these executive instructions are not being followed. If they are not being followed, what are you going to do about?

SHRI J. VENGAL RAO : Till today not even a single complaint was received by the Government regarding this.

DR. DATTA SAMANT : Bombay is a big city of these public sector undertakings. And about 30 mills Government has taken over. I can give you the names of the public sector mills where the provident fund has not been paid. One is India United Mill. They have not paid provident fund for the last one or two years. I have given about hundreds of notes. How is the reply given here ? I am, therefore, putting the question. Will the Minister look into it ? The provident fund and gratuity are the terminal benefits which the workers should get, forget about the sick units. Will the Government look into the working of these mills ?

SHRI J. VENGAL RAO : I request the hon. Member to send us the names of such defaulting mills. Then I will look into it.

Drugs Prices

*389. SHRI ANANDA PATHAK† :

SHRI BAJU BAN RIYAN :

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the attention of Government has been drawn to the news item captioned "Drug Price Revision a Non-Starter" appearing in the 'Economic Times' of 21 January, 1988;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that Government are yet to notify the amendment on trade margin based on the agreement reached between the drug industry and trade in December last; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor and when the Government propose to notify the amendment ?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI J. VENGAL RAO) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). It has been decided to allow a trade margin of 16% to the Retailers on the sale of indigenously manufactured price

controlled formulations. We are issuing the notification today itself.

SHRI ANANDA PATHAK : Sir, although the agreement was reached between the industry and the trade, three months back, but the Government has taken such a long time of three months from December to March. Even after taking the decision, they have not notified and published it in the Gazette. Without notification it cannot be implemented. Therefore, I want to say that in the mean time the prices of drugs have gone up in the market. Even the prices of controlled drugs have gone up from 50 to 100 per cent and that of the decontrolled drugs by as much as 700 per cent. I would like to know whether the Government would review the position and revise the prices in the interest of the ailing poor in the country.

SHRI J. VENGAL RAO : Sir, we sent this notification for Hindi translation, and that is why it has been delayed. We are issuing it today. If there is really any rise in the prices, the Government has the right under the new DPCO to control the prices even today.

SHRI ANANDA PATHAK : Sir, the prices are going up, as I have already stated. In the Budget also, the Government has increased the excise levy on different drugs, both of formulations as well as of common drugs. They have already withdrawn the exemptions from many of the drugs. Therefore, the prices are going up. I would like to know whether the Government would consider this during the period when the budget is being discussed. While replying to the budget debate, will the Government make an announcement for bringing down the prices of the life saving medicines ?

SHRI J. VENGAL RAO : Sir, pending the decision of the Government in this regard, the existing provisions of DPCO, 1987, vide para 21 of Annexure-B, were operated. The prices of about 650 formulations have so far been notified. We will control the prices of these 650 formulations... (*Interruptions*).

SHRI BAJU BAN RIYAN : Sir, the Government has come out with a new Drug Policy and the people can expect that they will get the life savings drugs at a cheaper rate. But the fact is otherwise. Government has replaced the new policy, changing the

old policy which was framed in 1978. But now the prices are always going up and the notification is still pending. I want to know whether the Government will withdraw the levy that has been imposed in the current Budget.

SHRI J. VENGAL RAO : Sir, it is for the Finance Minister to do that. How can I withdraw the levy ?

MR. SPEAKER : He does not want to trespass.

SHRI BHADRESWAR TANTI : Sir, in our country, 35 per cent of the people are living below poverty line. We are aware that ours is a welfare country. The 35 per cent people who are living below poverty line, cannot afford to purchase medicines. In a welfare country like ours, the Government is duty-bound to provide free medicines. If you go to the remote places, particularly in the North-Eastern region, you will find that there are dispensaries and hospitals, but there are no medicines. A poor man..... (*Interruptions*).

MR. SPEAKER : This question relates to the Ministry of Industry.

SHRI BHADRESWAR TANTI : But these are facts, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER : No question of facts. I want you to put a question which pertains to his Ministry.

SHRI BHADRESWAR TANTI : I am coming to that, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER : Please come straight, not in a round about way.

SHRI BHADRESWAR TANTI : I would like to know what action is being taken by the Government to provide free medicines to those people who are living below the poverty line.

MR. SPEAKER : He has nothing to do with that. It is the Health Ministry which has to do that... (*Interruptions*).

SHRI BHADRESWAR TANTI : But this is connected with the question. A letter has been submitted. Sir, They have written a letter. Sir, the Minister can answer this question. The people are dying there, They cannot get medicines. (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER : But you can ask another question for that. I can allow that. If you give me the question, I will get it answered.

SHRI BHADRESWAR TANTI : Sir, what is the use of putting question ?

MR. SPEAKER : There is no scope for that question and that is to be curtailed to that. So simple it is. You must understand that logic.

(Interruptions)

SHRI V. SOBHANADREESWARA RAO : Sir, considerable quantity of spurious drugs are being sold in the market causing great loss to the consumers, sometimes endangering the life of the people themselves. At present, my information is that only the retailers are taken to task for selling spurious drugs. To discourage production of such spurious drugs, will the Government make the manufacturer also responsible and bring forward an amendment to the Drug Control Act to that effect ?

SHRI J. VENGAL RAO : Sir, it is the duty of the State Government to look into this problem. The Drug Control authority is under the State Government and they must take action. *(Interruptions)*

Take over of Gwalior Rayons Factory at Mavoor in Kerala

*390. PROF. K.V. THOMAS† :
SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMA-
CHANDRAN :

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the approval of Union Government is needed for the take over of sick private factories and industries by the State Government;

(b) whether Kerala Government has requested Union Government to take over the management of the Gwalior Rayons Factory at Mavoor in Kerala; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the action taken/proposed to be taken keeping in view the interest of the workers of the company ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE
DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL
DEVELOPMENT IN THE MINISTRY OF

INDUSTRY (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) :
(a) According to the provisions of the Industries (Development and Regulation) Act, 1951, the power to assume the management or control of an industrial undertaking in certain cases vests in the Central Government.

(b) and (c). A request has been received from the Government of Kerala for the take over of the management of the Gwalior Rayons Factory at Mavoor in District Kozhikode, under Section 18 AA(1) (b) of the Industries (Development and Regulation) Act, 1951. The Central Government do not intend to take over the management of the unit.

PROF. K.V. THOMAS : Sir, the Gwalior Rayons Factory at Mavoor in Calicut is one of the major private enterprises in Kerala, which has been closed down for a very long time. Thousands of workers are under starvation. During the last election to the Kerala Assembly, the opening of this Factory was one of the election campaigns of the LDF which said that if LDF Government came to power, before anyone of the MLAs draw his salary, this company will be opened. But this company has not yet been opened. Sir, my question to the hon. Minister is whether any request has been received from the Government of Kerala for assistance in order to open this Gwalior Rayon Factory at Mavoor in Kerala.

SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM : Sir, we have received a letter from the Chief Minister of Kerala on 16th February 1988, for taking over this factory by the Government of India. But now we understand that the Industries Minister of the State Government had stated in the Kerala Assembly on 17th March 1988 that the State Government's policy was to try for a negotiated settlement on the problem which has led to the closure of the Gwalior Rayon Factory, rather than make efforts to take over the factory which has remained closed for over 32 months now. As far as the request from the State Government is concerned, we have received a letter from the State Chief Minister. More than that, we have not received any proposal or anything like that.

PROF. K.V. THOMAS : Sir, in order to open this company, the Chief Minister and the Industries Minister of Kerala State