

Minimum wages for Labour

*466. SHRI CHITTA MAHATA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to fix minimum wages for labour in view of the continuous increase in the prices of essential commodities as well as other expenses;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRIMATI RAM DULARI SINHA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Labour Ministers' Conference held in July, 1980 recommended that the minimum wages should be reviewed once at least every 2 years against 5 years provided in the Act, or on the rise of 50 points in the Consumer Price Index whichever is earlier. The Labour Ministers' Conference held in August, 1981 recommended that a mechanism should be evolved for linking the minimum wages to the Consumer Price Index numbers so that they may be revised when necessary without delay. These recommendations have been forwarded to the Governments of States and Union Territories for necessary action.

There are at present 34 employments in the schedule to the Act for which the Central Government is the appropriate Government. Minimum Wages have been fixed in respect of all employments included in the schedule except those in wolfram mines, proposals for which have been notified. Some Minimum wages in respect of 25 mining employments were revised between 1st and 8th December, 1981. Proposals for revision of minimum wages in respect of employment in agriculture have been notified. Proposals for further revision of minimum wages in respect of all

employments for which the Central Government is the appropriate Government due to the rise in the consumer price index upto October, 1981 are under consideration.

(c) Does not arise.

SHRI CHITTA MAHATA: Sir, though there is a recommendation saying that Minimum Wages should be reviewed every two years at least, it is not being done. In our country, nearly 80 per cent of the total population is engaged in Agriculture and Agricultural operations. The Hon. Minister has said that there is a proposal for implementation of enforcement of Minimum Wages in this respect. But it is a vague reply. Sir, though there is this Minimum Wages Act for Agricultural Labourers, it is not implemented in the country, particularly in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and also Uttar Pradesh.

Now, Sir, I would like to know what are the particular steps which have been taken regarding the Minimum Wages Act for Agricultural Labourers and for taking action on revising the Minimum Wages according to the Consumers Price Index.

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND LABOUR (SHRI NARAYAN DATT TIWARI): The Labour Ministers' Conference held in July, 1980 had made certain recommendations pertaining to the implementation of the Minimum Wages Act for the agricultural sector. These recommendations were, mainly, establishment of a proper implementation machinery, particularly at the district and taluk levels taking the assistance of the revenue Panchayat and other departments depending on the conditions in individual States. The institutional arrangements set up by the Government of Bihar were recommended as a suitable model. It was also recommended that Tripartite Committees should be formed at different levels within the States

to oversee the implementation of minimum wages in agriculture workers' education programme should be intensified in rural areas; steps should be taken to promote the organisation of labour in rural areas which would facilitate the proper implementation of the Minimum Wages Act. So this being Primarily a State subject the recommendations of this Conference have been circulated to all the State Governments. We hope that these are being and will be implemented.

SHRI CHITTA MAHATA: May I know from the Hon. Minister whether the Government will consult the Opposition leaders and the trade unions of the country before taking any further action on minimum wages.

SHRI NARAYAN DATT TIWARI: We had the privilege of taking advice from the Opposition leaders who are on the Central Trade Unions. There we do not consider them as Opposition leaders, but we consider them as leaders of responsible Central Trade Unions and we do have the benefit of their advice from time to time.

SHRI BIJU PATNAIK: The Hon. Minister just now said, if I heard him correctly, that the question of agricultural labour is a State subject and the appropriate authorities are State Governments for enforcing this. And since it is a State matter, there is no central legislation for this purpose. What I would like to know from the Minister is if for three per cent of population engaged as industrial labour, there is a Central legislation, why is not there a Central legislation existing today for the 30 per cent of population engaged as agricultural landless labour? I would also like to know from the Hon. Minister whether he will consider bringing forth a comprehensive Central legislation for this purpose?

SHRI NARAYAN DATT TIWARI: The Hon. Member knows that the Minimum Wages Act covers

all the categories, including the agricultural workers' category. But the question of having a separate legislation for agricultural workers is under our consideration and the State Governments are being consulted.

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI: While congratulating the Union Minister for at least recommending in the Labour Ministers' Conference measures for enforcing minimum wages legislation and giving instructions to the State Governments, I would like to know whether he is aware that after the agreements by all the State, Labour Ministers at the conference, out of 22 States, even nine to ten States have not implemented the minimum wages for agricultural workers even after the year 1975, in spite of the fact that cost of living index in all the States has risen more than 50 points. Why this implementation of the decision at the Labour Ministers' Conference has not been implemented so far by any of the States.

I would also like to know from the Minister whether they promised in this House and in the Standing Labour Committee that there will be the Agricultural Workers' Bill and All India Model Bill for all the agricultural workers in the country? Why is that Bill which was drafted being delayed? Can we expect it in the coming Budget Session to be placed before the House?

SHRI NARAYAN DATT TIWARI: Sir, it has been one of the recommendations of the Labour Ministers' Conference that the variable dearness allowance should be linked with the price index. And as far as the Central sector is concerned, it has been suggested that this variable dearness allowance linked to the minimum wages should be revised in April and in October every year. The State Governments are also being advised that they should also consider this aspect.

As far as the proposed Bill is concerned, I have already stated in my earlier reply that the matter is under our consideration but we have to take the opinion of the State Governments in this matter.

AN HON. MEMBER: Mr. Minister, no revision has come up in the month of October.

श्री राजेन्द्र प्रसाद यादव : अध्यक्ष जी, मुख्य प्रश्न के जवाब में मंत्री महोदय ने बतलाया है कि महंगाई को देखते हुए 5 वर्ष के बजाय 2 वर्ष में मिनिमम वेज कारिब्यू होगा। मैं जानना चाहता हूँ—क्या मंत्री जी को इस बात की जानकारी है कि एक साल में ही बहुत बाय महंगाई बढ़ती है? यदि बढ़ती है तो उस सन्दर्भ में क्या वह देखेंगे कि बजाय 2 साल के साल-के-साल रिब्यू हो ?

दूसरी बात—जो इन की नेशनल वेज पालिसी है—बहुत दिनों से ऐसी चर्चा चली आ रही है कि सरकारी उस दिशा में भी कुछ करने जा रही है—मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि इस सम्बन्ध में सरकार की क्या नीति है ?

श्री नारायण दत्त तिवारी : जी, हां, दो साल के पहिले ही रिब्यू के प्रश्न पर भी सुझाव विचाराधीन है। जेनरल मिनिमम वेज के सम्बन्ध में हम विचार कर रहे हैं, जिस के लिए लेबर मिनिस्टर्स कान्फ्रेंस ने भी संस्तुति की है। जेनरल मिनिमम वेज पावर्टी लाइन से नीचे न हो, यह संस्तुति भी अम सम्मेलन ने की है।

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Pay Committee for E.P.F. Staff

*457. SHRI D.M. PUTTE GOWDA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is true that the Labour Ministry had appointed a pay committee to go into the demands of the staff of the Employees Provident Fund Organisation as requested by Employees' Federation, New Delhi;

(b) if so, the names and designations of the committee members;

(c) the time taken to finalise the demands;

(d) the amount spent on this committee's work; and

(e) what are the recommendations of the committee and why they have not been accepted so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRIMATI RAM DULARI SINHA): (a) The Central Board of Trustees of Employees' Provident Fund and not the Ministry of Labour, constituted a committee in February, 1979 to go into the structure of the organisation and conditions of service of its employees and to make suitable recommendations to the Board, in response to certain demands of the All India Employees' Provident Fund Staff Federation.

(b) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

(c) The committee submitted its interim report in October, 1979 and its final report on 1st April, 1980.

(d) Expenditure on the committee was incurred mainly in the form of T.A. and D.A. It has not been booked separately.

(e) A statement containing the recommendations of the committee was laid on the Table of the House on 1st April, 1981. Decisions on many of the recommendations have already been taken and others are under consideration.