

in order to see that the radio expands more quickly, and in that way also, have a wider network. I am optimistic in that direction.

Shri Sonavane (Sholapur—Reserved—Sch. Castes): We want to know about the reduction of the licence fee and the cheap radio.

Mr. Speaker: Very well, next year.

Shri Narayanankutty Menon: You mean the reply or the reduction of the licence fee?

Mr. Speaker: God willing.

Some Hon. Members: What about cheap radio sets? What about the other points?

Mr. Speaker: There are many things. Some of the things are, of course, allowed to lie over.

I shall now put the cut motions to vote.

The cut motions were put and negatived.

Mr. Speaker: The question is:

“That the respective sums not exceeding the amounts shown in the fourth column of the Order Paper be granted to the President to complete the sums necessary to defray the charges that will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1959, in respect of the heads of Demands entered in the second column thereof against Demands Nos. 66, 67, 68 and 123 relating to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.”

The motion was adopted.

[The motions for Demands for Grants which were adopted by the Lok Sabha are reproduced below—Ed.]

DEMAND No. 66—MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 12,37,000 be granted to the

President to complete the sum necessary to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1959, in respect of ‘Ministry of Information and Broadcasting’.

DEMAND No. 67—BROADCASTING

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 3,67,58,000 be granted to the President to complete the sum necessary to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1959, in respect of ‘Broadcasting’.

DEMAND No. 68—MISCELLANEOUS DEPARTMENTS AND EXPENDITURE UNDER THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 3,06,27,000 be granted to the President to complete the sum necessary to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1959, in respect of ‘Miscellaneous Departments and Expenditure under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting’.”

DEMAND No. 123—CAPITAL OUTLAY ON BROADCASTING

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,97,62,000 be granted to the President to complete the sum necessary to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1959, in respect of ‘Capital Outlay on Broadcasting’.”

MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Speaker: The House will now take up discussion and voting on Demands Nos. 72, 73, 74 and 126 relating to the Ministry of Labour and Employment for which 6 hours have been allotted.

[Mr. Speaker]

Hon. Members desirous of moving cut motions may hand over at the Table within 15 minutes the numbers of the selected cut motions.

Hon. Members are already aware of the time-limit for speeches.

DEMAND No. 72—MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Speaker: Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 16,01,000 be granted to the President to complete the sum necessary to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1959, in respect of 'Ministry of Labour and Employment'."

DEMAND No. 73—CHIEF INSPECTOR OF MINES

Mr. Speaker: Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 21,12,000 be granted to the President to complete the sum necessary to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1959, in respect of 'Chief Inspector of Mines'."

DEMAND No. 74—MISCELLANEOUS DEPARTMENTS AND OTHER EXPENDITURE UNDER THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Speaker: Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 8,06,82,000 be granted to the President to complete the sum necessary to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1959, in respect of 'Miscellaneous Departments and Other Expenditure under the Ministry of Labour and Employment'."

DEMAND No. 126—CAPITAL OUTLAY OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Speaker: Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 10,59,000 be granted to the President to complete the sum necessary to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1959, in respect of 'Capital Outlay of the Ministry of Labour and Employment'."

Shri Prabhat Kar (Hooghly): Last year, when I heard the speech of the Labour Minister, I found a note of optimism and an assurance for the future and an elucidation of the policy and practice of the Labour Ministry. I was really encouraged at that time, but I am sorry to say that during the past one year, we have not found any change so far as the working of the Labour Ministry is concerned.

I do not want to deal with the policy as such, because, I know, as the Labour Minister said last time, it is a national policy; it is not the policy of a particular party, but it is a policy which has been enunciated both in the First Five Year Plan and in the Second Five Year Plan. But I want to place it before the House and to know from the Minister whether that policy has been properly pursued.

The Labour Ministry is supposed to look after the interests of labour, their interests so far as security of work is concerned, their wages and, in general, their social security. I am sorry to say that although in the Report for 1957-58 of the Ministry, there have been given so many figures and statistics, yet we find that in most of the important matters, it is stated 'the matter is under consideration'. Now, I would point out to the House that so far as the Ministry is concerned, there has been, if I may say so, a lack of initiative to either resolve the disputes or to secure amenities for the workers or even to ensure full implementation of agreements or awards.

It is expected—and it is an accepted canon—in interpreting beneficial pieces of legislation, that the interpretation should be such as to see that the effect of it may be beneficial to the beneficiaries. Naturally, the role of the Labour Ministry should be such all the time that whenever an agreement is reached, whenever an award is made, whenever a statute is enacted, these are implemented in the interest of the worker. I am sorry to say that that is not the experience of the working class in general. I may say that it is easy for the employers to approach the Labour Ministry; it is easy for the representatives of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce to meet the Labour Secretariat; but it is very difficult, if not almost impossible, for the representatives of workers to meet even the Labour Secretariat for a discussion for putting forward their grievances. Naturally, if this be the position, it needs a change. I know that so far as the hon. Labour Minister is concerned, he was a trade unionist, and he knows the difficulties of trade unions; he knows also that today the trade union movement as a whole in this country is not so strong. Naturally, the Secretariat of the Labour Ministry is required to look after the interests of trade unions and see that the workers are not exploited and employers do not get an upper hand.

I say that even the existing laws, as a result of which workers have got some meagre benefits, have been changed to the detriment of workers. Take, for instance, section 33 of the Industrial Disputes Act. The provision in the original Act was changed because the employers were misusing section 33. Subsequently, at the insistence of the employers and the Federation of Chambers of Commerce, section 33 has been changed to the detriment of the employees' interests.

Then take the case of the Payment of Wages Act. Previously, the withholding of increment was debarred. I may refer to the answer to a question

asked of the Railway Ministry, whether the punishment of withholding of increment was still imposed by the General Managers of Railways on their staff. The reply was:

“Yes, except on the Central and Western Railways where the punishment of withholding of increment is not imposed on staff who are subject to the Payment of Wages Act.”

Subsequently, what has been done? Under sub-section 5, withholding of increment or promotion, including stoppage of increment at EB, reduction to a lower post on the time scale or lower stage of the time scale or suspension, will not be considered as barred under the Payment of Wages Act.

Now, at certain times legislators legislate certain Acts with a specific intention. Subsequently, if at the insistence of the employers, these laws are changed to the detriment of the interests of the employees, what is the Labour Ministry for? I would request the hon. Minister to see that so far as the interest of labour is concerned, if it is not possible to grant them further rights, at least the existing rights and privileges are not taken away either by coming out with new legislation or by imposing certain rules.

Now I would like to deal with the work pertaining to the Conciliation Officers and the Regional Labour Commissioners. It is being said, as it was said last time, that we encourage collective bargaining. Most of the time we have seen that if there is a dispute, the employers do not agree to sit with the employees' representatives and conciliation officers have no power to have joint conciliation proceedings with a view to settle disputes. It is quite true that if a bipartite settlement is arrived at, it is good, but you know that the attitude of the employers being what it is, it is necessary for the third party to intervene, and for that there are labour laws.

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But in spite of the existence of this type of legislation, employers do not sit along with workers' representatives for the settlement of disputes.

Now, this particular matter, the power to make the employers sit with employees' representatives for the settlement of disputes, should be provided. Before any action is taken by the workers, before a strike or lock-out takes place, it is necessary in the interest of the community that all efforts should be made for the settlement of disputes, and we are all for that. But if no proper attempts are made by the Labour Ministry for the settlement of disputes, who is at fault? Is it the worker who wants to settle the dispute, which could not be settled because of the adamant attitude of the employer? If there is a strike, I know that the usual point made will be that some third party, some outsiders, have provoked the strike and it is a political strike.

Now I will show how this particular directorate of the Ministry functions. It is being said that a settlement is the accepted solution of a dispute. It is being said that directions have been given to the regional labour commissioners and conciliation officers to settle disputes. I will refer to two cases. I received a letter. It is dated 19th March. It says that 'standing instructions have been issued to conciliation officers that they should deal with cases expeditiously, and if there are any specific cases of delay, they may be brought to the notice of the Regional Labour Commissioner and to the Ministry, if necessary'. It is signed by the Secretary of the Labour Ministry. I shall give you a particular case. These letters have come from the Ministry—many of them have come from the Private Secretary to the Labour Minister himself. It will be surprising to see that starting from June 1957 up till 11th March, 1958, the answer is 'the matter is under consideration'. I can quote the numbers of the letters and the dates from 1st

June, 1957 to 11th March, 1958; and all the letters are signed by the Under Secretary, one or the other and also by the Private Secretary to the hon. Labour Minister. All of them say, 'I am directed to say that the matter is under consideration'.

Now, they say that standing instructions have been given to expedite the solution of the disputes. Yet, from June 1957 to March, 1958, the letters go on in the same stereotyped form, 'the matter is under consideration'. The last letter is dated the 11th March, 1958.

The Minister of Labour and Employment and Planning (Shri Nanda): I thought that the hon. Member was going to give us those two cases. I would like to have the information so that I can look into them.

Shri Prabhat Kar: I can give him the numbers of these letters and the dates—the letters that have been received from the Government of India. As I said, I have got the originals of these letters. The letter dated the 14th January, 1958, says, 'I am directed to say that the matter is still under consideration'.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member may give the numbers of the letters and may send copies later on.

Shri Prabhat Kar: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: What is the subject-matter? The hon. Member said that it is only a single matter.

Shri Prabhat Kar: It is the bonus dispute between the Banks and their employees. The employees' representatives were asked by Minister to meet the Secretary.

The Deputy Minister of Labour (Shri Abid Ali): It is pending in the Supreme Court.

Shri Prabhat Kar: It is not that; it has nothing to do with the Supreme Court. Anyway, nowhere was it said

that the matter is pending in the Supreme Court and so it will not be taken into consideration. In every letter it is said that it is under the consideration of the Government of India. I could have understood it if it had been said that the matter was before the Supreme Court and so it could not be taken up. But, now the hon. Deputy Minister says that the matter is before the Supreme Court. But, I can say, so far as this is concerned, it is not before the Supreme Court.

Next, I am coming to another instance. This is an instance of the dismissal of an employee. It will be surprising to note that from 7th March, 1956 till the 12th March, 1957, letters were written and every time the reply was that the matter was under the active consideration of the Government of India. Subsequently, the particular case was referred to the Tribunal and the Tribunal gave a judgment in favour of the worker. Even after that, the employer has not implemented the award. Nothing has been done so far regarding the implementation of the award inspite of a reference to the Government. This is the way in which the Labour Ministry is functioning. Naturally, if this is the way in which the Ministry is functioning—not the Directorate—then, how do you expect that the workers will have faith in this machinery?

Apart from this I can say further that today we find the delay in the whole affair. An employee has been dismissed in the year 1948; the matter was before the Tribunal and from there it went to the Appellate Tribunal and the case is pending before the Supreme Court. The Labour Minister might say, 'what can we do; the matter has been referred to the Supreme Court?' We are here to look after the interests of the workers. If today we find that certain provisions of the Constitution are going against the interests of the workers, the Labour Ministry should take the initiative to see that this kind of delay does not arise. If necessary, even some change may be

made in the Constitution to take the industrial disputes out of the purview of the Supreme Court, because, in this case, an employee who had been dismissed in 1948 was reinstated by the Tribunal in the year 1949 and the case is still pending.

Mr. Speaker: The responsibility of the Government is restricted to the powers given to them under the Constitution and the obligations imposed. The hon. Member can get the Constitution modified as much as any other Member. I am willing to receive any Bill here in the Notice Office. It is quite clear that a Bill either on behalf of Government or by any non-official Member can be brought in. The hon. Member should not accuse Government.

Shri Prabhat Kar: I am not accusing.

Mr. Speaker: The limits of discussion are laid down. Under the Constitution, the Government is bound to work. To ask the Government to go beyond the Constitution is not proper. Any hon. Member can try to modify the Constitution.

Shri Prabhat Kar: There is also the human aspect of the thing. Here an employee had been dismissed in the year 1948 and it has been found that the dismissal was wrong and he was ordered to be reinstated. The reinstatement is still pending. The case is pending before the Supreme Court. There is something wrong somewhere and it must be remedied by the labour Ministry. It is not the technicalities of the matter that I want to point out. This is a fact and it is that we must move in such a manner that this may not happen.

I would say that this is not a particular case; it is not a single case; there are so many cases pending in the Supreme Court. At least the Labour Ministry should see that these papers are ready and the matter is taken up. This should not be

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treated in the same manner as any other ordinary case. In a labour dispute the time factor is the most important factor because justice delayed is justice denied. Last time it was said that there will be implementation as a whole.

I would give another instance. In the banking industry, an award came into force in 1954 and it is going to be over by 1959. But, today, in the year 1958, it has been brought to the notice of Government that there have been Banks who have not implemented the award. The Conciliation Officer had sent a report; but, nothing has been done up till now for the implementation of the award. By 1959, the award is going to expire and all these four years the Government have not taken any step to see that the award is implemented.

I would only say a word about the attitude of the Labour Department. If there is a strike, the strike is declared illegal. But, if there is a lock-out, it is not so. In how many cases has the Labour Department declared lock-outs as illegal and punished the employers? In how many cases have the employers been punished for not implementing the award? We hear sermons so far as the employees are concerned that they should not go on illegal strikes. But, in how many cases have steps been taken against the employers who have gone on declaring illegal lock-outs. No steps are taken and the employers are at large. They come out in the open and say, after all we have paid a few hundred rupees and the whole matter is over. This should not be the attitude of the Labour Department.

The Labour Department's first and foremost duty is to safeguard the rights of the workers. For that, unless and until the attitude is changed—it is not enough to implement the law in its words—unless and until the human value is taken into consideration, unless and until the

workers are considered to be weak— they are naturally weak when they have got to fight against a very powerful opposition, nothing can be done. The Labour Ministry must come to the help of labour and not say, 'what can we do?' and hold the scales of the balance. We have seen that every time when a matter is referred to the Labour Ministry, it is only the employer's version that is being put forward and not the workers' version, as if that is the only version and it should be taken into consideration.

Sir, I come to the next point about security of service. If we look into this matter, what do we find? There is less security in the working conditions in the mines. In spite of the points raised by the trade unions that the Chief Inspector of Mines derelicted his duties, nothing has been done. From 1st January, 1956 till 28th February, 1958, there have been 6175 mine accidents, involving 672 deaths, and injuries to 5980 persons. Although the number of accidents is 6175, the number of prosecutions launched is 974. We find that 324 mines were without a qualified manager. 170 accidents happened because the mines were without proper repair. There were 424 offences of a minor nature. Apart from increase in wages and security from retrenchment, the workers do not get secure working conditions. They go to work and meet with accidents.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member must conclude now.

I have to call the other gentlemen thereafter. Otherwise, there is a sort of a talk that I have not allowed the hon. Members to speak. He has taken 22 minutes.

Shri Prabhat Kar: I will conclude in two minutes.

Mr. Speaker: I will not allow any other hon. Member on this side to

speak. They must among themselves adjust.

Shri Prabhat Kar: I will finish in two minutes. In spite of all these accidents, the Labour Ministry had not thought about the security of the workers. As a result thereof, we see a repetition and a recurrence of these accidents.

Lastly, I would say this. The Labour Minister was a trade unionist and he knows the difficulties. He should direct the Labour Ministry as to how it should function smoothly. It is not enough if letters are written saying that the matter is under active consideration or interpreting the employers' views. The problem cannot be solved that way.

I would also request him to take this matter into consideration. There should not be any discrimination between one union and another because of politics. He has said that it is not being done. I would only say this. We have got in our possession documents and if necessary, I can show it to the hon. Minister. I am very sorry to say that in these documents there is mention of the name of the hon. Deputy Labour Minister. I would only appeal to him that today, under the planned economy, especially when he is the Planning Minister, it is necessary that we should take the workers into confidence. It can only be done if we do them justice. We should not try to import politics into this particular platform also. If we do so, it will be at the cost of the nation. It is not the question of any single party. It is the Plan. The workers are anxious to fulfil the targets of the Plan and they extend their hands in co-operation. They want that certain minimum rights and privileges should be granted to them. I have sat with the hon. Minister on several occasions. From his last year's speech and from my experience in other meetings, I know he is making a sincere effort to settle these problems amicably. But I do not know why all these things happen in spite of him being in

the head of these affairs. I do not know why delays occur in the Labour Ministry. So far as the implementation part of the policy is concerned, I request him to take these factors into consideration.

Shri S. M. Banerjee (Kanpur): Mr. Speaker, today we are discussing the Demands of the Labour Ministry. To me there is no such problem as labour problem. It is essentially a human problem and we must deal with it as such

Sir, I am extremely happy to note that the Labour Minister is doing his best to see that the Ministry runs efficiently. But, unfortunately, he has to shoulder the burden of the Planning Ministry also, because planning is very much connected with labour. Because of this reason he cannot possibly give much time to the working of this Ministry, and he has to depend on the Deputy Labour Minister or the officials of the Ministry.

I pay the same respect to my hon. friend, the Deputy Labour Minister. But, unfortunately, sometimes he forgets that he is the Deputy Labour Minister of the country and that he has to treat the labourers alike. Sometimes he deals with cases as though he is the Deputy Labour Minister of the Indian National Trade Union Congress. That is the main reason why the Opposition and other people feel so much sore about it; otherwise we have no quarrel.

We feel that the success of the Second Five Year Plan depends on the active co-operation of the labourers. The other day I had been to Bhakra and I saw—that wonderful piece of art, I should say—the Dam constructed by our workers. I know that the working class of this country can do miracles, and they will do it. About 100 to 150 people lost their lives, but they constructed that wonderful piece of art—I should say, that is the pride of our country. Therefore, labour has to be associated

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with the Second Five Year Plan, labour has to play a very vital role as a particular of all industries. If the Labour Ministry and the labourers, and the Labour Ministers and the Trade Union leaders work like two wheels of a train I feel the life of passengers will be safe. I wish that this attitude is taken in the labour policy of the Government.

I am sorry to say that in regard to certain strikes recently, the strikes have been dealt without any intention of solving them. I am sorry to point out that the strike in the Security Printing Press at Nasik was prolonged. Is it the intention of the Labour Ministry or the Labour Minister to prolong a strike, break the morale of the workers, break their solidarity, starve them and smash their union? I definitely feel that that is not the policy of the Labour Minister.

But why does it happen? Why is it that no immediate action is taken to settle disputes? Why should there be any dispute at all? If there are any disputes they should be solved. My submission is that the Labour Ministry should have a policy and they should deal with matters urgently and expeditiously in the larger interest not only of the employees but of the nation as a whole, because the success of the Second Five Year Plan depends on the efficient working of labourers and their active support.

Sir, today I feel happy because the scheme of workers' participation in the management has been implemented in certain factories. I feel that this scheme should be implemented in all the industries, whether in the public sector or in the private sector. But there is some difficulty about the unions. The other day the hon. Minister replied that they were not going to have the scheme implemented in those industries or factories where more than one union exists. I realise this difficulty, but something should be decided to deal with the

unions. If there are two unions in a particular industry, as long as there is more than one union that particular industry will not be able to work efficiently because the workers are divided. They should be united under one banner. By some democratic method it should be decided. I realise that the entire working class of this country is divided into many camps. The All-India Trade Union Congress, the Hind Mazdoor Sabha, the UTUC and the INTUC. As a worker myself I say that the forces of unity are much stronger than the forces of disruption. On the 27th March, 1958, the workers under the fold of the Hind Mazdoor Sabha, the UTUC and the AITUC joined together and observed a Demand Week. That forcibly proved that the forces of unity are definitely growing stronger. So, if the workers could unite, if these organisations could unite on that particular day, if the leaders of those organisations could unite, I can say that unity is much stronger. At the 15th Labour Conference, many issues like rationalisation, wage-board, etc., were discussed. I say that these are all signs of unity in this country, and I wish the Labour Minister also takes this matter seriously into consideration, and see that the working classes of this country are not disrupted by some people. But actually this unity should be forged. The united organisation can be forged if the labour policy of our Government and the Labour Ministry changes a bit. So, I feel that this should be done, because labour today is not merely a commodity. It is a living force, and it is an integral part of the society. I wish that the labour will have to be given due dignity and status in the society. So, my submission is that there are many matters which require immediate attention of our hon. Minister.

There are the Labour Officers, the Conciliation Officers and the Regional Labour Commissioner and the Chief Labour Commissioner. I have been

working in the defence industries and in the ordnance depots. These conciliation Officers are working in the defence industries and in the railways in the public sector. I feel very much about them, because certain Labour Officers or Conciliation Officers are so helpless in the matter. The Defence Ministry or the Railway Ministry or any other Ministry is so strong that it does not listen to the Regional Labour Commissioner or the Conciliation Officer, and the poor Conciliation Officer's position is just like that of a helpless widow in an orthodox Hindu family. He cannot do anything. He simply curses his fate and the fate of others. So, I feel that something should be done to see that the Conciliation Officers also function effectively in the public sector. I specially mention about the defence industries because anything can happen in the Defence Ministry in the name of security and secrecy. So, these Conciliation Officers must function efficiently in the public sector also.

I now refer to the recent amendments, 4A and 4B of the Government Servants' Conduct Rules. I remember I met the hon. Minister along with certain Members of Parliament and placed before him that at a time when there is no legislation to have recognition, when the recognition is not a statutory obligation, how the Government can possibly impose this amendment on the Central Government employees. Amendment 4B says :

"In any union which does not seek recognition within six months of its registration, no worker can become a member of that union".

This is something against the spirit of the Constitution where you have the right to the workers to form their unions and associations. So, my submission is that the hon. Minister should consider the recent amendments to the Government Servants' Conduct Rules and see that they are scrapped, because they are not in conformity with our labour policy.

If our labour policy and whatever the Labour Minister says is correct, this is something against the spirit of the these situation. So, I wish that these amendments are withdrawn. They must be withdrawn.

Then I should also say something about unemployment. From the figure of employment exchanges; about 181 employment exchanges are seen to be functioning. I realise the difficulty of the employment exchanges. The very name is a misnomer. If there is no employment, what is to be exchanged. The poor managers of the employment exchanges—what can they do? I have got the figures I am quoting them, subject to correction, of course. The figure on 1st January 1958 is 9,39,731. That is the number of registered unemployed. There are no statistics of the unregistered unemployed, because all the rickshaw-pullers in the country are unregistered unemployed. The vacancies are 34,000 or 54,000. We were told that in the second Five Year Plan, 8 million new jobs would be provided. I remember that day—12th February, 1956—when this came out as a headline in the newspaper. How happy were those unemployed who were actually visiting the employment exchanges daily to get their cards registered! But what happened after that?

On 12th February, 1956 we came to know that 8 million new jobs would be provided. But on the 15th September, 1956, 6,000 ordnance workers lost their job. Today nearly 25,000 textile workers are on the streets, because 26 mills have been closed. What a sad commentary on our second Five Year Plan! So, I want that this closure must stop. We cannot possibly enthruse the workers to give their best for the second Plan when they are facing closures. When they are facing unemployment and starvation, can we possibly ask them to sacrifice more? It will be bad on our part. Somebody asked me, when we are getting 8 million new jobs, why this retrenchment? I told him

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it may be homoeopathic medicine; it will aggravate the disease and then cure it. I could not say anything more.

So, I would request the hon. Minister to consider this aspect. When the country is in need of 65 lakhs of technical workers under the second Five Year Plan, can we not possibly ban retrenchment? If retrenchment cannot be banned, can we not possibly see that it is minimised or that alternative jobs are provided? This can be done if the textile workers are trained in an alternative trade and if the jute workers are trained in an alternative trade. I can tell you, they can be suitably employed. It is most unfortunate in this country that a man who is a textile worker only knows that job.

Another point which I wish to say is about the working of the Employees' State Insurance Corporation. When it was inaugurated by the hon. Prime Minister at Kanpur, I listened to his speech and I was happy that our workers will be given treatment. But what happened? When I went to the dispensaries, I found that there were bottles of medicine numbered from one to ten. No. 10 medicine was not available. I asked the compounder, "What will you do for it?" He said, "I will give two doses of No. 5." This is actually happening and they are of different colours. I am not telling you a joke; it is a fact. I would request the hon. Minister to visit the dispensary. This has actually begun to be a certificate-giving institution. A man who is not sick gets a certificate that he is sick, because he wants leave. So, I would request the hon. Minister to look into this matter.

About the housing scheme, I am happy that the entire housing scheme has been successfully implemented to a great extent. We have got about 4,000 houses in Kanpur. In U.P. the number to be completed was 6,764, the number completed is 4,636 and the number under construction is

1950. But what about the rent? May I submit respectfully to the hon. Minister that the minimum rent is Rs. 10. I agree Rs. 10 is not much, but what is their income? The Central Government employees get Rs. 7 or Rs. 3 as city allowance and house rent allowance; but the textile worker does not get anything. The result is he has to pay Rs. 10 plus Rs. 3 for electricity and I may assure the hon. Minister that most of the quarters are occupied by the middle-class employees instead of the working classes for whom the quarters were constructed. The cost of one house is Rs. 2,600 or so and I would request the hon. Minister to make a proper assessment. If the rent is reduced, the houses will be occupied by the workers to a greater extent.

17 hrs.

So, lastly I would say that today we wish to co-operate in the working of the Second Plan, in the successful implementation of the Second Plan. We want that the Plan should be successful and those saboteurs who want to sabotage the Second Plan, we want to give them a crushing defeat. That is our intention. I request our hon. Minister to protect the rights of the workers. The workers will protect the Second Plan. If that is not done, I would repeat the immortal slogan given to us by the AITUC, especially by our colleague Mr. Dange: "organise and unite; demonstrate and protest; negotiate and settle; and if that fails, strike peacefully as a last resort". That is the last thing. We are not interested in strike. We do not come from the family of strikers. We are not born strikers.

So, I would request the hon. Minister to consider these points and give some answer to them so that we may also say: we have got a Labour Minister, whose heart bleeds for workers, because he is a trade unionist first and Minister last. That

is my submission. I would request the hon. Minister to reply to these points, if he thinks fit.

Mr. Speaker: I propose sitting for an hour, if possible; at least for half an hour more. I have given enough time to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, as we found that Ministry was interesting. As many hon. Members want to speak, I do not want to cut short the time allotted for the Labour Ministry. Six hours have been allotted for Labour Ministry. We started at 4.30. If we sit, say, up to 5.30, one hour, tomorrow we can finish it in five hours, by 5 o'clock. So, I request hon. Members to sit for half an hour more.

Dr. Melkote (Raichur): The year that has passed, 1957-58, from the economic point of view, has not been a very good year to the country as a whole and so the labour has also suffered with its adverse attacks. There was a rising cost of living and, therefore, the living standards went down and so the workers as a whole have suffered a lot. Apart from this, there were the drought conditions in different parts of the States. From the employment point of view, due to the difficulties in getting the foreign exchange component, the employment potential also went down considerably, thereby affecting labour to a very great extent.

In spite of all these things, I would like to congratulate the Labour Ministry for the various measures that they have ushered in during the course of the year. It should also be said to the credit of the working class as a whole that they have behaved well. Last year the number of strikes were not very many and, generally speaking, peaceful conditions existed in the industries. But due to various other factors, there have been a certain amount of closures, particularly in the textile industry. The Labour Ministry, during the last one year, held a tripartite labour conference. There was also the Productivity

Council, where certain decisions affecting the vital interests of labour were taken. Participation of workers in the management was one such vital factor that was discussed threadbare. Where the management were afraid of consulting the workers previously, today it is not merely a demand for consultation, it is a demand for determination and decision. And the Productivity Council has come out with a scheme wherein the workers could participate in the management of the industries. But even so as an experiment, I am sure that the workers have welcomed it—I am very certain about it—and the managements, for what I know though feeling rather not very happy, have also consented to implement the same. When this has to be implemented a question naturally arises whether the management will implement in the same way they have been dealing with the affairs of the workers so far? One would feel and question whether they are very honest about their intentions. Instead of saying things which are not very good to say at this juncture, when a beginning has not been made, let me only hope that the workers will have a very fair deal at the hands of the management in all those factories where these experiments are going to be made so that the future good of both the industry and the workers could be secured.

Once a person shoulders a responsibility that responsibility weighs him down and instead of asking or making demands which are not tenable, he would look at them in a more sober manner. Take for instance, how the hon. Members of the Opposition, the Communists on the other side, have been speaking recently. They have been saying that they would not resort to any strike and that they would be the last persons to go on strike. It is a very welcome feature. They appear to have changed. It is possibly because they are now shouldering the responsibility of running the Government in Kerala. The future should be extremely good. The recent demands that

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they have made—in the fourteen point charter of demands they have included a 25% increase in their wages and other things—all this is nothing very new to us in the INTUC. They have done this with an amount of fanfare, going to the hon. Prime Minister in processions and to the different chief ministers in the States. But may I bring to the notice of this House that these demands have already been passed by the INTUC several times and for several years and if now the hon. Members of the Opposition feel that those demands were correct, they are only following in our footsteps now. In a way this is all to the good of the workers. That is extremely welcome and in the sentiments expressed by the communists in the matter of wage increase, strikes etc. I join and feel that if they work in this manner in this country, the future of the worker in industry is safeguarded.

I was speaking about the Council for Productivity, wherein the management would give scope for workers to participate in the decisions of the management. But attached to that is a natural corollary—the code of conduct of the workers. I should not merely say 'code of conduct of the workers' It is said 'code of conduct' and one would naturally feel that the code of conduct is to be observed both by the management as well as by the workers. Responsibility, as I said, brings in its wake certain changes in attitude and therefore if a factory has got to work efficiently with the minimum cost and the maximum of productivity, it is necessary for the management to extend their hand of friendship most willingly so that form the workers side they reciprocate the same and bring about a change in the country which would give more production in all spheres of activity, thus ushering or at least helping in ushering in a socialistic pattern of society.

During last year, as I mentioned earlier, there were various other de-

velopments. The food situation was rather very bleak. Living conditions were rather made very difficult for the workers. But the recent trend in food situation though it has slightly improved and the figure given of the index cost of living are welcome since prices show a downward headway but I still feel that these changes in Index if one pursues continuously year after year for the months of December and January one could see that the price structure goes down every year—and I do not know whether this is not a manipulated matter by the leaders and other interested in this trade. During the months of December, January and February the crops are harvested and when the crops come into the market the price structure goes down or is made to go down so that merchants might grab at the produce and purchase it at a lower price to the detriment of the *kisan* and the workers to raise it again in the months of August and September when the produce gets depleted when the traders get all the profit for himself. To improve this situation this is the occasion for referring to the question of establishing warehouses or co-operative societies. What I want to point out is this. This price structure of food going down,—though welcome, should be sustained. Measures towards the price control of these commodities are necessary.

We have accepted last year to constitute a Pay Commission and it is going into the structure of pay scales etc. The duty of the Pay Commission should be to see that there is a redistribution of income. This country has a socialist policy and the goal is a socialistic pattern of society. If a socialistic pattern has got to be ushered in, it is necessary that redistribution of incomes take place at various levels according to the needs of the socialistic pattern. The industrialists, big capitalists and magnates and others always howl against the increase of pay structure, demanded

by the wage-earners, and this is nothing new. But, it has also been found by experience in other countries that increase in the pay structure of the wage-earners conduces to the betterment of the agricultural classes elsewhere. But it is said that what was being done now was not to benefit the poorer sections, the agriculturists who do not get the benefit of the interaction of this rise. It is said that the wage-earners are making impossible demands and higher wages. But, as I said before a rise in the pay or the wage-earners reflects itself in bettering the conditions of the agriculturists as well, later. This aspect should be kept in mind by the Labour Ministry and it should not yield to any threats from vested interests. It should be remembered that the Labour Ministry is the watch dog of the labourers, the working classes. There are two watch dogs in the organisation of the Government, one the medical man in the jail who protects the life of the convicts and the second is the Labour department of the Government who protect the interests of the workers. Whether it is the public sector or the private sector, it is the Labour department which should protect the interests of the workers even if it be against the interests of the Government or the interests of the private managements, for the well-being of the country. The Labour Ministry should keep this in view and tackle this problem properly for the benefit of the working classes.

Last year, apart from constituting the Pay Commission, there were ushered in a number of important fiscal measures which would help in the redistribution of income. Another tax, the Gifts tax, is being introduced which would be welcomed by the working classes, when it would be ushered in. We will support the Government when it introduces that act. In these several measures which have been introduced by the Government, the Labour Ministry must have played a considerable and vital part, and they are all welcome. Therefore, it is our

duty to tender our thanks to the Labour Ministry for having adopted last year so many measures for the betterment of the working class in spite of its being a very difficult year.

There are various grievances relating to the working classes which, it is necessary to voice here. The Labour Ministry has been working ceaselessly for bettering the condition of the working classes. But, in spite of it, there are plenty of lacuna which have got to be rectified. There is, for instance, the housing condition of the workers. I am aware that the Government is not getting sufficient finances for this work. It is said that if the houses are not constructed, it is because the State Governments are not utilising the full amount of money that is made available to them or also because the managements are not coming forward to pay their share of the money. Therefore, it is said the workers are being denied the right to a good habitable houses for themselves. Merely saying this is not sufficient. It does not satisfy the workers. The Labour Ministry here has got to go to the root of the problem and find out why these things are not being utilised, because the sooner it is done, the greater would the comfort accruing to the workers.

There is again the question of the wage board. While mentioning this, I should not forget to mention the question of the wage board set up for the working journalists. The Supreme Court has given a ruling which has affected them very adversely. Just a few minutes back, this matter was discussed when discussing the Demands of the Information and Broadcasting Ministry, but it is the Labour Ministry that took it up when the Government constituted a wage board. The Supreme Court has never given a ruling which works adversely to the interests of the working journalists. If, therefore, they are affected adversely in a way which was never meant by Government, it becomes necessary for us to see to what extent we should

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nullify what has been ruled by the Supreme Court, or to put it the other way, whether it should not be possible to bring another enactment here by the Labour Ministry to see that the enactment would help the working journalists in a manner that would help them justly according to the present cost of living. I should add a remark in this connection that in the wake of this ruling by the Supreme Court, very many of the newspapers have already taken action against many responsible journalists who have devoted their life and given their service to the nation. They have been discharged. It should be the duty of the Labour Ministry to see that this is stopped and that those retrenched are taken back, and something should be done in the meanwhile which would protect their interests. Otherwise, the services of a very intelligent class who have done yeoman service to the country's interests would be lost to us. Not only would the journalists suffer by it, but their services would be lost to the paper magnates themselves and to the country. I am sure the Labour Ministry will keep this question in the forefront and do the needful.

From the INTUC there have been various demands made for the setting up of wage boards. Two or three have already been set up in cement, sugar and textiles. There has been a demand for setting up wage boards for iron and steel, chemicals, engineering and other industries. It is quite right. The time is ripe for setting up these wage boards, and it should be done as early as possible.

The closure of the textile mills is a factor which is affecting the interests of the workers to a very large extent. It is said about 25 or 26 textile mills have closed down due to the heavy excise duties that have been imposed upon them. I do not know to what extent this is correct. My own knowledge is this that many of these textile mills would have in any case closed down because they were being mismanaged, but they have taken this

opportunity to close down and say something against the Government. But quite apart from that, it is also a fact that the recent tax structure has affected them, and though benefit has been given to some mills, textile mills in South which usually bring out cloth of the medium and coarse varieties have been hard hit. One such instance is the case of the Hubli Mills where the management, no doubt, has not been very careful, and judicious, but due to which, 2,000 workers have been discharged from the factory. It is a very big affair which brings out only the question of their livelihood, but also affects the Government in the matter of law and order. I therefore feel that something should be done in order to protect the interests of the workers, and the sooner it is done the better.

With regard to problems like agricultural labour, closer co-operation of labour with management and other subjects like raising contribution to the provident fund from 6 1/2 to 8 1/3 per cent. etc., I am sure other speakers will take them up, but I will only say this much that we on our side who plead for these things realise that when the national income is going up and investments by the private sector in the last two years have already reached the target meant for the whole Second Five Year Plan period, it is up to all of us to see that justice is done to the workers and all factors adversely affecting the workers are eliminated. As my time is up, I do not want to say anything more than this. I thank you for giving me this opportunity.

Shri Keshava (Bangalore City): At the very outset, I would like to congratulate the Minister and the Ministry concerned on the specific forward step that they have been able to achieve so far as participation of labour in management is concerned. Though it is a very difficult task, yet very good progress has been made in that direction. However, there is still a lot of hard work ahead.

If I might bring one instance in the public sector to the notice of this august House, in Ambala, in the workshop connected with the Defence Ministry, there was a challenge thrown to the workers there whether they could participate in the management and be in charge of the workshop. The challenge was accepted by the workers. Schemes were asked to be forwarded by the CWE; they were processed by the workers and forwarded, and they were accepted and approved by the CWE. Subsequently, they were authorised to take charge of the workshop affairs themselves. They did it for about two and a half months. After the successful working of the good workshop—it is very well equipped—the officers opened their eyes and saw that labour could rise to the occasion and participate successfully in the management as well as the others who were managing it till then could. Under these circumstances, I am very much constrained to bring it to the notice of the House that those things were put an end to, and the labour that was engaged in that workshop—about eighty of them—was transferred to the various corners of India. If that is the way in which the progress that we have claimed to have achieved,—namely the participation of labour in management—is to be responded by the authorities concerned in the public sector, I am afraid I do not know where we shall be landed.

There is one other matter which I am constrained to draw your attention to. Of course, my colleague in the Opposition, Shri S. M. Banerjee, was pleased to tender a very hearty encomium on the housing facility afforded to the workers. Thousands of houses have been built in Uttar Pradesh in Kanpur and other places.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: I did not mean the whole of India.

Shri Keshava: But I regret to submit that in the south of India, houses

for the workers and lower income groups have not been coming up to the extent that they should have, and that too, in spite of efforts on the part of the workers concerned by themselves. To cite a specific instance, in the Hindustan Aircraft Ltd. in Bangalore, not even one house has been built for the past several years. They say that they have a scheme for constructing houses for workers, and about 200 houses have got to be built. But not even one of them has come up for about two to three years in the past. I do not know the reasons behind it, and why the enthusiasm and the necessary effort on the part of the management are not there in this particular case. One hon. Member was making a reference to the fact that it was because the States were concerned. Dr. Melkote was pleased to refer to it. Because of that, there is some lethargy in the implementation of the programme and the schemes. But I shall give an instance where it is the Central Government that is concerned, and not any State Government. I refer to the ITI. Only recently, I paid a visit to the colony of the workers of the ITI. It is a beautiful colony. Some very good work has been done there, but unfortunately, in the Hindustan Aircraft Factory in Bangalore, very little attention is paid, even apart from housing, to any other aspect of the welfare activities of workers concerned. The conditions of the workers working in HAL in Bangalore when compared with those of workers in factories in the neighbourhood, are far from being satisfactory—they are not even comparable at all.

Shri Narayanankutty Menon (Mukandapuram): Last month some of the workers were given houses of their own for sometime—in the jails!

Mr. Speaker: That too a provisional one.

Shri Keshava: That was a provisional arrangement afforded by Government in the government guest house.

[Shri Keshava]

Even so far as the other matter—about the strikes being few and far between last year—is concerned, I have also a suggestion to make. I am not satisfied with the active way in which the Labour department is tackling the problem when strikes are likely to come off. If only the Labour department is the first to get into the field immediately there is any possibility of a strike, the situation will be different. But what is happening today in our country is that we do not see the Labour department going into the field where strikes are likely to occur; they go there after the strike has occurred, and for conciliation and settlement of the problems. My respectful submission to this House is that if only we interest ourselves in preventing the evil rather in solving the problem after it is created, I think we will have less number of strikes in our country; perhaps there would not be any strike at all if we tackle it in the proper way in which it should be tackled. The instance connected with the HAL is another instance of this kind. I agree with what Shri S. M. Banerjee was pleased to say, that it is not the labour problem that we are faced with today in our country, but it is a problem of humanitarian relationship. In fact, that is the proper thing that has got to be tackled by us. If only the management of HAL was pleased to tackle it in that humanistic way, if the labour officers of the Labour department had helped them to do so. I am sure even these labour strike and lock-out could have been avoided. It is a very important concern where crucial matters are involved and every care and caution ought to have been taken by Government in preventing the lock-out.

One other suggestion I would like to place before the House is this. We are now deprived of appeals against the tribunal's decision. Matters are taken to the supreme Court. As my hon. colleague in the Opposition was pleased to mention, the agents of

employers have more easy access to the Secretariat than the agents of the trade unions. In this instance, I find that in the Supreme Court the cost of litigation is enormously heavy and labour unions of the ordinary type cannot at all cope with the cost involved in trying to seek redress through the Supreme Court. I would like to urge and suggest to the Labour Minister if it is possible to evolve a way out of this difficulty for the labour unions, that is, find out if we can negotiate and have a reduction in the court fees prescribed for taking cases to the Supreme Court so far as trade unions are concerned.

Shri Narayanankutty Menon: Expense is not in court fees, but in lawyers.

Shri Keshava: There are inexpensive lawyers, but that by itself is not so much the matter for consideration.

One other matter I would like to bring to the notice of this House is so far as the application of the Payment of Wages Act is concerned in respect of several industries, particularly those connected with the public sector. It is a matter of concern for all of us and the hon. Labour Minister has assured us on the floor of this House more than once that the several laws that we have been pleased to pass in this House for labour welfare will certainly be made applicable to the public sector. But, what is it that we see? As a matter of fact, the inspecting officer goes for inspection and finds that the concern is emphatically on the wrong side. But, he simply reports it to the Chief Labour Commissioner without whose permission or sanction no prosecution can be launched. Naturally, as one sister department is going to be put up against another sister department—perhaps, that is the manner in which they treat the matter—the Chief Labour Commissioner is unwilling to authorise any steps being taken or any prosecution being launched against the industry that is complained of by

the Inspector of Labour. I am sure this is not a matter which is insurmountable. If only the Labour Minister is pleased to take it into his head, I would like to throw a suggestion to him that we can evolve a sort of machinery by creating at the very high level a labour official who must necessarily take notice of cases of this kind—interdependent on the several departments of Government in the public sector.

If that is taken into consideration, I am sure, he should immediately take notice of this matter and try to interfere in the industry concerned and see that something is done in the matter complained of against that concern. This could easily be brought about by the hon. Minister concerned, if he is only pleased to agree with me. In that manner, we can set at rest the criticism against the Government that in the public sector we have not been able to implement the several reliefs that are legitimately due to the employees in several concerns.

I think it is more than 5·35; I would like to continue tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker: No, no. I am not going to allow that. The hon. Member may continue his speech now and finish it. I will start with another Member tomorrow.

Was he not prepared to speak? He may coach up another hon. Member.

Shr Keshava: So far as discrimination of one union from another, a point which was made much of by my hon. friend opposite, who just preceded me, I think, it depends upon the way in which the unions conduct themselves. In fact it is the human nature, the method of approach that brings about that responsive treatment in a different manner. If the unions behaved in a particular manner satisfactory to the entire national interests, I am sure there will not be any room for any such complaints of discrimination. It entirely depends upon the way in which the unions conduct themselves. There lies the key for the troubles. If the unions conduct themselves in the proper way, there will not be any difference at all so far as the Government is concerned. Even now, as matters stand, I do not think my hon. friend, except making a vague general statement of that kind, has been able to put his finger on any particular type of discrimination that he could call into question. There is nothing of the kind. I do not think that I have got any more points.

Mr. Speaker: We have taken one hour for this Ministry. Six hours are allotted for this Ministry. We will close this debate at 5 o'clock tomorrow.

17·37 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Tuesday, the 8th April, 1958.