

[Mr. Speaker]

wanted that the House should know the Government's view. The hon. Member who has tabled the motion has no objection, but another hon. Member wants to come back on my paraphrase.

**Shri Vijayram Raju:** I asked you to read it out; when you refused, I accepted it.

#### FOOD SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY

**Mr. Speaker:** There is another adjournment motion relating to the alarming food situation in the country and the prevailing famine conditions in many parts as revealed by press reports, etc. I have already said that the hon. Minister will take this matter also into consideration when he makes the statement tomorrow. As he himself has said, if his statement does not cover all the points raised here either by way of adjournment motions, questions or calling attention, those matters may be referred to in the debate. Even then if hon. Members are not satisfied, we shall consider it later.

**Shrimati Renu Chakravartty (Basirhat):** In addition to the famine conditions and scarcity, the very sharp rise in the price of rice has also to be dealt with in the statement by the hon. Minister, because that is also important.

**Mr. Speaker:** That is the subject-matter of a series of questions, which I have admitted; I am sending them on to the hon. Minister. The hon. Minister will kindly take note of that also.

There is another adjournment motion by Shri Ramji Verma again on the food situation. Then, there is an adjournment motion by Shri S. C. C. Anthony Pillai.

#### STRIKE BY BURMAH-SHELL EMPLOYEES

**Shri S. C. C. Anthony Pillai (Madras North):** I have given notice

of an adjournment motion and I should like it to be read out.

**Mr. Speaker:** I am reading it.

"The grave and imminent threat of a general strike in the oil-distributing industry which will paralyse the economic life of the country consequent on notices being served on the striking employees of Burmah-Shell that if they fail to resume work by tomorrow, they will all be dismissed."

What is the suggestion of the hon. Member? Does he suggest that they may go on striking and the employers should go on keeping quiet? What is the adjournment motion? How is this Government responsible for this?

**Shri S. C. C. Anthony Pillai:** Under the Industrial Disputes Act, the Government of India can appoint a national tribunal to settle this dispute.

**Mr. Speaker:** Has that been the demand?

**Shri S. C. C. Anthony Pillai:** The point is this. Certainly, no one has declared this particular strike as illegal. It is true that the workers have a right to strike; but, as to whether the strike is justified or not, no one has declared anything. The workers have felt that they are being dealt with arbitrarily. All that the workers have requested is that this particular question should be referred to a tribunal or a labour court for settlement. In April, 1956,...

**Mr. Speaker:** Let us not have a general survey of this matter. What is the failure of the Government. They were asked to refer this matter to a tribunal and they failed to do it. Is that the failure of the Government?

**Shri S. C. C. Anthony Pillai:** They have been told on the 11th of this month that the interpretation of a Settlement that was reached under the Industrial

Disputes Act should be referred to a tribunal under section 36A...

**Mr. Speaker:** They failed to do so; that is the point.

**The Minister of Labour and Employment and Planning (Shri Nanda):** Just a few minutes before I came to the House, I received intimation of this motion. It happened that about that time I received a factual report from the Delhi Administration. This matter is being dealt with at the level of the Delhi Administration and I am not able to say immediately what the merits of the case are. But I understand that it assumes some urgency from the fact that if the employment of that number of workers who are on strike is terminated from tomorrow morning, there may be complications. Therefore, I am quite willing to intervene in the dispute myself. In the course of the day, we shall see if any way can be found for dealing with it, I may, for the benefit of the persons concerned, convey this to the hon. Member, the mover of this motion, that I would like to ask, if my intervention can be helpful at this stage, why was it not invoked at an earlier stage, before the strike? I could have been more helpful then than I may be now. Still, I will go into the various aspects of the matter...

**Shri S. L. Saksena (Maharajganj):** The Secretary of the Petroleum Workers' Union told me that they had written a letter to the hon. Minister, and had sought an interview with him, and had personally met Mr. Abid Ali; Deputy Minister but nothing has been done. So, it is not true that they have not approached the authorities before the position became worse. They approached the authorities early enough, but unfortunately notice is taken by you only when the situation becomes grave.

**Shri Nanda:** I received a letter and I have replied to that letter. Some representatives of the workers met the Deputy Minister for Labour also and they were given some advice,

which they were considering. As I have pointed out, the matter is being dealt with at the level of the Delhi Administration. We cannot go on poking our nose at every stage.

**Shri T. C. N. Menon (Mukundapuram):** The hon. Deputy Minister advised the representatives of the workers to go to the State of Kerala. That was the advice given and so far nothing has been done.

**Mr. Speaker:** We have heard enough about this. We have heard the explanation of the hon. Minister. He says he will try to do his best and intervene in this matter. He only says that before the strike was launched, when they were not satisfied with the advice given by the Deputy Minister they might have gone to the Minister himself. The hon. Minister is willing to intercede and intervene. I do not see any reason why this adjournment motion should be allowed.

**Shri S. C. C. Anthony Pillai:** Can we have an assurance from the hon. Minister that if there has been a breach of settlement that was reached under the Industrial Disputes Act before the Conciliation Officer, he will discharge his duty and refer the dispute to the Industrial Tribunal, as required by law?

**Mr. Speaker:** Every hon. Member has taken an oath that he will discharge his duty properly!

#### PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

##### AMENDMENT TO EMPLOYEES' PROVIDENT FUNDS SCHEME

**The Minister of Labour and Employment and Planning (Shri Nanda):** Sir, I beg to lay on the Table, under sub-section (2) of Section 7 of the Employees' Provident Funds Act, 1952, a copy of the Notification, making certain further amendment to the Employees' Provident Funds Scheme, 1952. [Placed in Library. See No S-2/57].