

defray the charges that will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1958, in respect of the following head of demand entered in the second column thereof:—

Demand No. 4".

*The motion was adopted.*

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

**DEMAND No. 1—MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY**

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 50,51,000 including the sums already voted on account for the relevant services be granted to the President to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1958, in respect of 'Ministry of Commerce and Industry'."

**DEMAND No. 2—INDUSTRIES**

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 24,63,36,000 including the sums already voted on account for the relevant services be granted to the President to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1958, in respect of 'Industries'."

**DEMAND No 3—SALT**

"That a sum not exceeding Rs 1,49,17,000 including the sums already voted on account for the relevant services be granted to the President to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1958, in respect of 'Salt'".

**DEMAND No 4—COMMERCIAL INTELLIGENCE AND STATISTICS**

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 48,31,000 be granted to the President to complete the sum necessary to defray the charges which will come in course of pay-

ment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1958, in respect of 'Commercial Intelligence and Statistics'".

**DEMAND No. 5—MISCELLANEOUS DEPARTMENTS AND EXPENDITURE UNDER THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY**

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,43,68,000 including the sums already voted on account for the relevant services be granted to the President to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1958, in respect of 'Miscellaneous Departments and Expenditure under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry'".

**DEMAND No. 104—CAPITAL OUTLAY OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY**

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 14,19,01,000 including the sums already voted on account for the relevant services be granted to the President to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1958, in respect of 'Capital Outlay of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry'".

**MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT**

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The House will now take up discussion of the Demands for Grants Nos. 70, 71, 72 and 124 relating to the Ministry of Labour and Employment. As the House is aware, 6 hours have been allotted for the Demands of this Ministry.

There are a number of cut motions to these Demands. Hon. Members may hand over at the Table within 15 minutes, the numbers of the selected cut motions which they propose to move. I shall treat them as

moved, if the Members in whose names those cut motions stand are present in the House and the motions are otherwise in order.

The time limit for the speeches will, as usual, be 15 minutes for the Members including movers of cut motions, and 20 to 30 minutes if necessary, for Leaders of Groups.

**DEMAND No. 70—MINISTRY OF LABOUR & EMPLOYMENT**

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 16,94,000 including the sums already voted on account for the relevant services be granted to the President to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1958, in respect of 'Ministry of Labour & Employment'".

**DEMAND No. 71—CHIEF INSPECTOR OF MINES**

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 13,91,000 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, 1958, in respect of 'Chief Inspector of Mines'".

**DEMAND No. 72—MISCELLANEOUS DEPARTMENTS AND OTHER EXPENDITURE UNDER THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT**

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 8,66,57,000 including the sums already voted on account for the relevant services be granted to the President to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1958,

in respect of 'Miscellaneous Departments and Other Expenditure under the Ministry of Labour and Employment'".

**DEMAND No. 124—CAPITAL OUTLAY OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT**

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 34,22,000 including the sums already voted on account for the relevant services be granted to the President to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1958, in respect of 'Capital Outlay of the Ministry of Labour and Employment'".

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty (Basirhat): May I know if the hon. Minister is not here?

The Deputy Minister of Labour (Shri Abid Ali): He is coming; I am here.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Is no hon. Member prepared to speak?

Dr. Melkote (Raichur): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir.....

Shri Vajpayee (Balrampur): rose—

Some Hon. Members: rose—

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I thought the hon. Member wanted to speak when the Minister was present.

Shri Vajpayee: I am prepared to speak when the Deputy Minister is there.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Yes, I will call him later.

17 hrs.

Dr. Malkote: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me at the outset congratulate the Ministry of Labour for the trouble they must have taken in inducing the Government to constitute a Pay and Service Commission.

[Dr. Malkote]

It was no small pleasure to see this. The last Pay Commission was constituted ten years back. During this period in an expanding economy, the situation has worsened and the cost of living has risen. People who have been benefited in the country have mostly been the industrialists or merchants or big men and land-lords and some of the agriculturists and, to some extent, the industrial workers. The employees in the Government service in particular have been denied the benefit of this increase in national income which has amounted to the tune of nearly Rs. 2,000 crores during the past five year period.

17.01 hrs.

[MR. SPEAKER *in the chair*]

For the past ten years, there has been no change in the pay structure of the Government employees. It stands to reason, therefor, that the Government employees who have not been benefited should now try to get some benefit. Therefore, I congratulate the Government and the Labour Ministry for the trouble it must have taken to induce the Government to accept this measure.

During the period of the Second Plan, the Labour Ministry has taken the trouble to convene a tripartite labour conference which augurs well for the successful completion of the Second Plan. It was made known in that conference by labour, employer and the Government sitting together, that they would work their way to make the Second Plan a success. Towards that end they discussed various measures to be taken. This step that the Labour Ministry took to convene such a conference has been most welcome and I hope that it would yield good results in the years to come.

Apart from that, earlier, in the month of February, they convened a meeting of the representatives of labour, employer and the Government. They discussed threadbare the question of the education that the worker should receive. The confer-

ence came to certain decisions which, I am sure, the Government must be considering how best and quickly they could be implemented.

Having said this, may I also say that in the First Plan several things were said which would improve the working condition, the standard of living, etc. of the working class in India. Nobody would differ when I say that in India, the worker is still at the lowest level. INTUC, the organisation to which I belong, demanded years ago that the level of wages of an ordinary worker should be Rs. 100 at the minimum. It is still a far cry. We have also said that the disparities of income between the highest and the lowest should be minimised as quickly as possible. Towards this end and also towards introducing a socialistic pattern of society, the Government had instituted a number of measures. The Wealth Tax and the Expenditure Tax sponsored recently by the Finance Minister are meant to achieve this objective. On behalf of the working class of this country, both these measures, I should say, are most welcome. In their implementation, Government should, as far as possible, not contemplate giving any relief to the richer classes but enforce it rigidly and strictly so that the money earned by Government may go for the benefit of the poor.

In the First Plan, the Government thought of creating a machinery which would help the standard of living of the worker. It was said that the Government would amend, if necessary, the various laws pertaining to labour relations and to put forward schemes to ameliorate the conditions of the working class—for instance, housing scheme, health insurance, provident fund, etc. To a large extent, these ideals are still on paper. Many of them have not been implemented. We still do not see when steps would be taken to implement them. To the extent that the Government does not come forward

speedily to assure the workers of a fair and a living wage and better living conditions, it would be difficult to enthuse the worker. As was suggested in the Plan, to enthuse the worker it is necessary to do certain things. The Plan itself has a feature which says that in order that the standard of living of an Indian worker may go up, it is necessary that there should be sufficient material to go round. Production should go up. The workers' health, wages, surroundings, etc have got to be improved. To do this, it is necessary to adopt all the welfare measures and implement them at the shortest possible time. I am sorry the Government is still tardy and has not been able to fulfil the promises that were held out several years back. To the extent that these are not implemented to that extent would production be held up. I mean the increased production.

There is one more side to the picture. There are people who do not know the conditions of the workers and are unable to understand their demands for better wages, living conditions etc. I was happily to hear from of my colleagues on this side of the House that the industries owned by private sector has not merely been able to fulfil the targets that was expected of them in the First Five Year Plan but even within a year and a half of the 2nd plan the private industrialists have gone ahead and have already fulfilled the targets set up before them. Machinery by itself or money by itself i.e. a capitalist by himself cannot fulfil the aims and objectives of a plan. For doing that, it is necessary to have the men to work and men to enthuse the worker. Without this element i.e. the worker coming forward to help the Government and the country, no country can prosper. May I say that, in the first Plan, the targets have been exceeded in many fields. That is what the industrialist and the Government say. If that is a fact the worker has fulfilled, in the main, all that was expected of him. As against

this, the assurances that have been given to him have been denied or remained unfulfilled.

Is this a very good feature for the country, for the Government or for the worker? I ask this in all humility, because on the one side Government ask the workers to eschew strikes, to produce more and to help the country to go forward. Yes, on behalf of the workers I may say that we shall eschew strikes, and we shall reach the targets. We have even exceeded them. But, what do we see on the other side of the picture? We see that assurance have not been fulfilled, promises held out have not been fulfilled. These things go at the root of the present unrest and, as I said, it is all to the good, that the Government and the Labour Department have realised that they should stand by the workers, and thus they have shown by getting to come a second Pay Commission constituted which is a harbinger of good.

Constituting a Pay Commission in itself would not be sufficient. I feel, that the Labour Ministry should be the watch-dog of the workers' interest in this country, including the Government employees. If they have got to do this, they should be the sponsors of all these measures for the Government. One can then exactly understand in which direction Government would like to go. I am sure the present Labour Minister, who has been in the labour field for a long, time and his Deputy Minister have been doing pretty good work in this direction, would help the workers march along the road to progress.

Whilst I am speaking about labour several matters of importance come to the forefront in my mind. I would like to discuss several of these, but the one and the most important factor in the country's progress today, if it has to be achieved, is the question of abjuring strikes. Whilst everyone tells that strikes should be abjured and should be used only as a last resort for purposes of collecting bargaining, and in this INTUC has been follow-

[Dr. Malkote]

by the principles initiated by Gandhiji that strikes should not merely be abjured but conciliation, adjudication and arbitration should be the first things one should think of, and only when these things fail should one resort to strikes and that too through methods, may I say that even in INTUC there has been a certain amount, misapprehension, a certain amount, of worry and anxiety to find that even when they adopt these methods, the measures adopted by Government are none too quick, none too fair and often times the Government machinery moves too slow and hence the worker is getting disillusioned of the good intentions of the Government. In the public sector itself one could see that while strikes are not banned there has been so far no machinery to adjudicate, arbitrate or conciliate for the benefit of the employees. This happens in many other sectors as well. These things come up to the forefront, and when the worker, assailed by poverty, assailed by bad living conditions ask for a fair wage, he is told that his condition is very much better than that of a landless agricultural worker and that he should not ask for higher wages. To compare these sectors is not perfectly correct. The wage of a wage-earner living today, with the cost of living index going up by nearly four or five times, is not what it ought to be. He has got to be encouraged. If you want that every section of workers should eschew strikes altogether—and I am sure that every section would like to eschew strike it is necessary that a technique be evolved by all the organisations sitting together and by the combined wisdom and decisions of the different trade unions in the country as well as the Government and the employers, wherein measures for hearing the grievances, conciliation, arbitration or for adjudication are ensured and decisions are given quickly. Further all litigations in the shape of further appeals to High Courts, Supreme Court should not be permitted as in the case

of the working journalists. We welcome the decision of the Wage Board in the case of the working journalists.

We feel that similar things should take place in the case of other workers as well, including the plantation labour. The plantation labour is the one that is being exploited even today. I would invite the attention of the Labour Minister to the fact that it is imminently necessary to constitute a Wage Board for the plantation workers, so that their conditions are reviewed and their living standards made better.

When I say all these things and say that strikes should be abjured, I have been asking for a technique. What could that technique be? It is rather very difficult to say. But whatever that technique be it should be peaceful, because resorting to violence is none too good or correct. Whilst all trade unions including my own have been saying that it would cooperate with the Government in reaching the targets given in the Second five year plan, instances are not wanting when trade unions have taken measures—which are none too peaceful. Surrounding the management, beating a worker in order to threaten him to join a particular union, using force. To create conditions for other unions not be able to function and such other things are taking place, while at the same time a cry that there should be one union for one factory is also being discussed. These activities are not helpful to a coordination of the efforts of working class to achieve their objectives. In this country, trade union activity is not entirely devoted to raising the standard of living of workers. Trade union activity is also political and where politics come in much of these unhealthy rivalry are resorted to not by the workers but by the leaders of political parties. The people are aware of all these things. If it is in the interest of everyone in this country to help the industries do better, to help the production go up for the betterment of the country, it is necessary that

these trade unions come together and resolve once for all, that whilst strikes would be resorted to only as a last measure, it would still be peaceful, and by the combined efforts of all these things, the worker should be in a position to compel every employer, including a change in technique the workers should be in a position to compel every employer including even the Government for a quicker justice I personally believe that the Government should take an initiative in this and convene a meeting the different labour unions and labour parties here and now in order to arrive at a quick decision in the matter

Apart from these things, there are various other matters about which I would like to speak The question of the housing of the worker is there The number of houses that have been built is rather too small It has got to be modified in a number of instances to suit the life of a worker A worker who is in a hutment is often ejected on account of slum clearance, and meanwhile no provision is made—in order to accommodate him on some other land These are the difficulties which a worker has to face Regarding health insurance, the hospitals are located far away from the centre of work How is a poor worker to go to that place in order to get relief? That is one of the main trouble both with regard to Provident Fund and Health Insurance Scheme, that is being faced by a worker

With regard to the Health Insurance Scheme may I draw the attention of the Health Ministry to the fact that where as a worker is assured of good medicine and good treatment, the members of his family are to be given a second rate treatment I cannot understand what is meant by second rate treatment and second rate medicine There can either be treatment or no treatment and nothing like second rate treatment and in this, the workers should be in a position to choose whichever doctor they want, whether it may be a homoeopathic, *ayurved* or *unani* or allopath.

The Government should not say that only a particular system should be adopted in a particular place. The worker should be enabled to take medicine from any system in which he has faith

Then there is the question of Provident Fund. The employees share is now somewhere about 6½ per cent We desire that it should be raised to 8½ so that the cumulative effect of this at the time he retires could be substantial, and this would, to substantially to help him in his old age

There are a few other points over which I would like to say a few words I do not want to take much time of the House In the case of industrial workers while the production has gone up there has been a certain amount of rationalisation, particularly in the textile industry Whereas production has gone up and money has been made by the industry bonuses and increase in wages are not to be seen On the other hand, workers are retrenched If rationalisation means more production, more money to one class and less money and more retrenchment to the other it would cause heart-burning That is prevalent in many industries and in many States and if this is to go on endlessly, the question of the employment potential which should have reached the target in the first Five Year Plan and which is yet to come up in the second Plan is bound to fail. I therefore, feel that these aspects must be gone into very thoroughly. The workers should be asked to combine and unite in creating conditions where, by taking counsel with the Government, suitable measures could be adopted which would help the workers to the maximum

If some of these measures that I mentioned are taken up, then it would be time for the Government and particularly for the different trade unions to find out whether there should be one union in one industry, one union in one sector or whether there should be many in each industry trade unions This would be the correct time

[Dr. Malkote]

to do it. Not till then. Till then, we have to sit together and thrash out the various questions. In any case the extent we all agree in increasing the production, to that extent, I am sure, this country would go forward.

On behalf of the workers, especially the INTUC, may I assure the Government that we will do our very best—not to resort to strikes but when we are compelled to resort to strikes we will do it in a peaceful way in order that our demands get fulfilled. I hope, the Government on their side, will help the workers in all possible measures so that the workers' ideals may be attained.

May I, therefore, request the Labour Minister to ponder over some of these things that I have suggested and take suitable measures to see that what has not been achieved in the First Five Year Plan is implemented and what has been promised in the Second Five Year Plan is also implemented and the workers are made to feel that they are partners in the nation-building activity directed towards the progress of the country and that their welfare is the welfare of the Government.

I congratulate again the Labour Ministry on what it has done, because they have taken substantial measures to go forward, and I would request the Labour Minister to do all he can in days to come.

Shri S. A. Dange (Bombay City—Central): When I have to discuss the grants of the Labour Ministry and especially when the Ministry is presided over by an old trade unionist like the hon. Minister, I have always to speak, may I say, with two minds, because I cannot ignore the fact that if it were only a question of translating certain fundamental trade union principles into practice, then surely the hon. Minister, as a trade union leader, would not hesitate to translate them into practice. But then, he has a dual capacity—as a trade union leader and as a Minister. As a Minis-

ter, he is part of a Ministry in which sits the Finance Minister or the Home Minister and the Commerce Minister and so on. And so, when the trade union consciousness of the Labour Minister or his Ministry begins to give concrete expression to that consciousness, then other conflicting interests inside the Cabinet come and dash against that consciousness and what results is not a straightforward labour policy. What results is confusion, anarchy and attack on the working class. Why? For the simple reason that the Labour Ministry by itself cannot circumscribe the anti-working class activities of the other Ministries, and the other Ministries, though they have got a socialist goal before their eyes, fall in practice to circumscribe the activities of capital against labour even in the matter of applying laws which have been passed. Therefore, the first question that I want to raise is, has the Labour Ministry a policy at all of labour, which can be called a labour policy, which can be translated into action by giving them the grants that the House is now asked to give? That is the first question.

For example, the Labour Ministry has perhaps a very good desire to adopt a policy of wage increase. The expressions of such a policy either through the statements of the Labour Minister or through the statements of his organisation in the labour field, i.e. the INTUC, have been there on record and yet, how is it that when it comes to translating that thing into practice, there is always a throw-back? Instead of a wage increase policy, there is either a halt to wage increase or sometimes an attempt to freeze and sometimes an attempt even to go back?

A few days back we had the tripartite labour conference. Therein an indication was given that we had not a policy of wage freeze; that was cancelled. We had a policy of looking to the wage interests of workers, because production has grown, profits had grown and so on and we were going

to see better days in the matter of this policy. But when it came to the question of dealing with the wages of Government employees numbering about 2 millions including the railway workers, not only dealing with the question of wages, but dealing with the question of application of laws to the various sectors of the Government employees, what did we find? There was total confusion. There was higgling and haggling about terms of reference. It was after a lot of organisational work, after a lot of pressure by the working class, even to the point of going on strike, that we at least got a statement from the Government of India in concrete terms, "Yes; we will consider the question of wage increase or the question of wage structures in the matter of Government employees". This is one illustration.

There are other illustrations also. For example, the Railway Minister follows his own labour policy amongst the railway workers. There are works committee elected according to the law; the Railway Minister may recognise them or may not recognise them. The Labour Minister had nothing to say about it. He cannot enforce the law upon the Railway Ministry at all. Then, there is a negotiating machinery. We are told and we are given great homilies about patience, about following negotiation methods, changing the mind of the opposite party by persuasion and so on. There are negotiating machineries, which are the best instrument of negotiating things, arriving at a settlement and stopping disputes.

We would ask the Minister to look into the working of the negotiating machinery. We ask hon. Members on the Congress benches to study the history of this negotiating machinery which exists for railways; it is proposed now for Posts and Telegraphs; it exists for defence and for one or two other things. What has been the result? In the defence industry, when the negotiating machinery wants to put forward grievances and ask for

a settlement, some Secretary comes and says, he cannot decide because the Minister is not there. But when the Minister comes and wants to take a decision, the Secretary says, "it cannot be done, because the Minister does not know how it should be done". The result is that negotiations in the Defence Ministry get delayed for months and months, until the defence unions give notice of strike and the whole negotiating machinery begins to collapse. This is the position in defence.

The new Defence Minister, Mr. Krishna Menon, himself attended the other day the meeting of the negotiating machinery and started a very new practice. He called all the commanders and officers and said, "Come on, gentlemen; let us sit down and talk with the union people". They sat down, but what was the conclusion? There was no conclusion. This negotiating machinery are talking committees, which never enter into any agreement, never come to any conclusions, until files roll round and round several secretariats and departments; and until a strike notice comes in, no decision is ever taken. This is the Defence Ministry's negotiating machinery. This is their policy of settling the grievances. What does the Labour Ministry do about defence? Can it do anything? No; the Labour Ministry is incapable of having a labour policy on behalf of the Government as a whole, because the Government in its different Ministries is at logger-heads, except on one thing. They are united in saying to us "if any strike takes place, if any direct action is taken, we shall fire. We shall agree not to fire if there is no direct action." How can direct action be avoided? By negotiation. How is negotiation done? Through the negotiating machinery. What is the result? No result. In the Railway Ministry, hundreds of grievances are lying there, and for three years, there is no settlement. The negotiating machinery cannot come to any consultations because the Railway Minister or the Defence Minister,



[Shri S. A. Dange]

or the Finance Minister, each has his own labour policy. In this way it goes on. In one case, in recent history, one Minister at least showed some dash in taking a decision and that was the Finance Minister. You know, the Finance Minister holds the whole key sometimes. He is also a man who some times takes a quick decision whether somebody likes it or not. When the insurance workers threatened to strike and went on a one day strike, when it was found that insurance would not work and finances from insurance would not be available for the Plan, he took an aeroplane to Bombay, sat down with the committee, arrived at an agreement and next day announced that as his settlement with them whether the other Ministers like it or not. That is the way one Ministry acts. Some of the other Ministries act some other

way. The result is, the Labour Ministry as such cannot put forward a single labour policy for the Government as a whole, because, the Government as a whole does not function on any agreed policy except on an anti-strike policy.

**Mr. Speaker:** How long will the hon. Member take?

**Shri S. A. Dange:** I would like to continue. //

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Member may continue tomorrow. //

17.32 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Thursday, the 22nd August, 1957.*