

LOK SABHA DEBATES

1

2

LOK SABHA

Thursday, May 25, 1972 | Jyaishta 4, 1894 (Saka).

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Samai Guha.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : Sir, I rise to put my question under a protest. Apart from this question, I had four other questions addressed to the Minister of External Affairs. But all these questions have been turned down arbitrarily and information was given to me very late. I do not know whether there is any protection against this. I do not know why these questions relating to Bangla Desh and other subjects have been turned down arbitrarily. I make an appeal to you, Sir, to see that some officers do not whimsically turn down the questions put by members and the questions are not screened that way.

MR. SPEAKER : Put your question.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : Question No. 981.

Strike Notice by Colliery Mazdoor Congress of Asansol Coal Belt

*981. SHRI SAMAR GUHA : Will the Minister of LABOUR AND REHABILITATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Colliery Mazdoor Congress of Asansol Coal belt area has given notice of strike by the coal mine workers to the Minister of Labour ;

(b) if so, the main demands of the coal mine workers and the reaction of Government thereto ; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to

settle the dispute between the workers and the owners of coal mines in the Asansol area ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA) : (a) to (c). On the 21st April, 1972, the Colliery Mazdoor Congress had served a notice of strike on the management of 44 collieries in the Asansol region in pursuance of certain demands ; a copy was also sent to the Labour Minister, among others. The demands included implementation with retrospective effect of the recommendations of the Coal Wage Board in respect of Variable Dearness Allowance, and incremental rate, introduction of gratuity scheme, payment of arrears of annual bonus and quarterly bonus, reopening of closed collieries and the nationalisation of the coal industry. On receipt of the strike notice, the Regional Labour Commissioner (Central), Asansol, has taken up conciliation proceedings the next date for which has been fixed for the 25th May, 1972.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : The patience of every worker has been taxed to the point of exasperation. There have been meetings, negotiations, appeals, memoranda and even relay hunger strikes of 2,000 workers over a month. The general strike, which has now been postponed to 12th of July, is sponsored and supported by HMS, INTUC, AITUC and CITU. They have given notice that unless these very legitimate demands are fully met they will go on strike by the 12th. I want to know whether these demands that have been just now mentioned are based on the recommendations of the Coal Wage Board and whether these recommendations have been approved by the Government. If so, may I know whether these demands are considered by the hon. Minister as legitimate ? If they are considered legitimate, what steps are the government going to take to accept conciliation ? If this conciliation fails, what will happen ?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRI R. K. KHADILKAR) : All these demands are in the conciliation proceeding, and the proceedings are

being conducted in a cool atmosphere. I cannot say at this stage whether the demands are legitimate or not. After the conciliation proceedings are concluded, I will get a report and then I will be in a position to say whether they are reasonable.

The hon. Member wants to know how far the colliery owners have given effect to the Wage Board recommendations. I will point out to him that the number of collieries which have fully implemented the recommendation is 281 and the number of workmen in these collieries is 2,20,159. The number of collieries which have partially implemented the recommendations is 293 and the number of workers involved is 1,83,413. When I say that they have implemented them, it is not really giving the correct and full picture. In some cases the implementation has taken place on the basis of agreements which are not entirely in consonance with the Wage Board recommendations. But I may inform the hon. Member that looking to the nature of these protracted negotiations and avoidance of implementation as far as possible, we are seriously considering invoking the Defence of India Rules, wherever necessary, to see that these recommendations are fully implemented.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : Is it not a fact that a number of coalmines in Asansol area have been closed down? If so, what is the number of labourers involved there? If these coalmines are not reopened without delay, will the government try to take over them? May I know whether the attention of the government has been drawn to a statement yesterday by Shri Tuskar Kanti Ghosh that Rs. 30 crores of royalty is due to the government from the coalmines? Are they going to take any steps to realise this royalty?

SHRI R. K. KHADILKAR : I have seen a press report to the effect that a huge amount of royalty yet remains to be paid. So far as the closure of certain coalmines is concerned, this area is now experiencing lawlessness.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : Not in the Asansol area.

SHRI R. K. KHADILKAR : I have got a report. I have addressed a communication to the Bengal Government and they say that because of this lawlessness and goondaism certain workers have left the colliery sites,

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : For the last three months there is no lawlessness at all.

SHRI R. K. KHADILKAR : This is my information.

श्री राम नारायण शर्मा : माननीय अध्यक्ष महोदय, 44 कोलरीज के सम्बन्ध में प्रश्न किया गया था और माननीय मंत्री महोदय ने 400 कोलरीज के सम्बन्ध में जवाब दिया। मैं जानना चाहता हूँ एक लाख 81 हजार बर्कसे के ऊपर जो वेज बोर्ड एवार्ड का पार्शल इम्प्लीमेंटेशन हुआ है उसके लिए सरकार की तरफ से कोड आफ डिसिप्लिन के अन्दर में कौन-कौन से प्रयत्न हुए हैं और सरकार जो आज डिफेन्स आफ इंडिया रूल्स की बात करती है तो वह कानूनी वेज बोर्ड के एवार्ड को ऐनफोर्सिबिल बनाने के लिये कौन सी कार्यवाही कर रहे हैं ?

SHRI R. K. KHADILKAR : The award was non-statutory. As I have already said, we would like hence-forward to see that the Wage Board awards are made statutory. In order to see that the Wage Board recommendations are fully implemented, we have not succeeded in that by other methods. Therefore, when I say that, I mean it, and we have to and we are very seriously considering how to do and in what manner to invoke the Defence of India Rules. About the other matter of 44 collieries, I am prepared to give information as to how many prosecutions have taken place and I am prepared to give other information also.

MR. SPEAKER : Don't commit yourself.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : Is it not a fact that in terms of the Coal Wage Board award, the variable dearness allowance was entitled to be increased according to the cost of living index figures, several times between the time the award was published and the present time and, if that is so, whether it is not a fact that many of these collieries, in fact most of them, have not given any of these increases which were due so that the real motive behind the strike, at present, as I understand, is that the present rate of dearness allowance which is due to them should be paid and the arrears which are due to them are also paid to them. What is the Government's view on this without waiting for the Conciliation Officer's report as to whether the owners will agree or not? Was it not approved by the Government?

SHRI R. K. KHADILKAR : It is true there are a number of defaulters so far as the payment of variable dearness allowance is concerned. But there is a notice given, first by one union, that is, H. M. S. and then a combined notice by three unions, H. M. S., A I T U C. and I N T U C. Now, I am told, another union has also joined it. Unless, in the beginning, they are sent to the Conciliation Officer to find out what is possible to do in the given situation, I do not think we can take any arbitrary decision.

MR. SPEAKER : If the answer takes a shape of the debate, then that also must be avoided. It takes a lot of time. One Question has taken 15 minutes. So, only four Questions will be done in the whole Question Hour. Next Question.

One thing more, I enquired about it. The other Question was disallowed. For reasons, of course, as you know, some are Starred some are Unstarred and others are rejected. Thousands of Questions come. But I shall again examine it myself as to whether it was rightly done or not.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : I have never raised it before. When we indicate the order of priority in the Questions that we give, we do not find always that that order of priority is being adhered to. The question which may come in the Starred List is not the one which the Member has given top priority.

MR. SPEAKER : Sometimes, that Question may not have been accepted or allowed. That may be the reason.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : About those which are not accepted, we get a communication.

MR. SPEAKER : I am going to examine it.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : I find the one given priority has gone to the Unstarred List and the other Question which is given a lower priority by the Member is put on the Starred List.

MR. SPEAKER : Thousands of them come. Sometimes, they do not come to the knowledge of the Secretary or myself. Anyway I am going to see this process again.

व्यापारियों को इस्पात के आवंटन के बारे में कुरैशी समिति का प्रतिवेदन

*983. श्री मूलचन्द डागा : क्या इस्पात और खान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या कुरैशी समिति ने व्यापारियों को इस्पात के आवंटन के बारे में जुलाई, 1971 में अपना प्रतिवेदन प्रस्तुत किया था ; और

(ख) यदि हां, तो उसकी मुख्य सिफारिशें क्या हैं ?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI S. MOHAN KUMAR-MANGALAM) : (a) and (b). A statement is placed on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The main recommendation of Qureshi report regarding distribution of steel to traders was that the then existing system by which the Steel Priority Committee determines the quantities to be earmarked for release to trade from time to time may continue.

As regards the liquidation of the heavy backlog of trade orders on the books of the producers, they recommended that, to offer an incentive for conversion of these orders to new orders, the quantum allowed for trade may be earmarked separately for new and old orders and facilities may be given to traders to book new orders for reduced quantities, without payment of earnest money, if such orders were in cancellation of the old orders.

श्री मूलचन्द डागा : अध्यक्ष महोदय, गवर्नमेंट के अलावा जो उत्पादक हैं उनको देने का क्या तरीका है ? क्या अपनी खुद की कुछ कंटीनान्स हैं, कुछ फाइटेरिया है, या अपने मन में देते हैं उत्पादक जो गवर्नमेंट के अलावा प्रोड्यूसर्स हैं ? किम प्रकार देते हैं ?

अध्यक्ष महोदय : अब आप बैठेंगे तभी तो यह बतायेंगे ।

SHRI S. MOHAN KUMARAMANGALAM : The hon. Member must be aware that there