

# LOK SABHA DEBATES

## LOK SABHA

Thursday, August 3, 1972/Sravana 12,  
1894 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the  
Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

### ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

#### Contract Labour System

+  
\*61. SHRI DINEN BHATTA-  
CHARYYA:

SHRI C. T. DHANDAPANI:

Will the Minister of LABOUR AND  
REHABILITATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have noted  
the alarming increase in the contract  
system of labour all over the country;

(b) whether Government propose to  
stop the widespread use of this system  
in the public sector enterprises in view  
of the worsening conditions of contract  
labour; and

(c) whether Government are aware  
that the Contract Labour (Regulation  
and Abolition) Act, 1970 has so far proved  
inadequate in checking this harmful  
system?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE  
MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND RE-  
HABILITATION (SHRI BALGOVIND  
VERMA): (a) Full information as to  
whether the Contract Labour is on the  
increase is not readily available. How-  
ever, no specific instance of increase in  
contract labour system has come to the  
notice of Government.

(b) The question of prohibition of em-  
ployment of contract labour in specific  
establishments falling in the central  
sphere, including those of public sector  
undertakings can be considered by the  
Central Government, wherever necessary,  
in consultation with the Central Ad-  
visory Contract Labour Board constituted  
under Section 3 of the Contract Labour  
(Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970.

(c) The Contract Labour (Regulation  
and Abolition) Act, 1970 and the Central  
Rules framed thereunder came into force  
recently. Some of the States are yet to  
frame rules under the Act and bring  
them into force. Besides, a large number  
of petitions challenging the vires of the  
Act have been filed in various High  
Courts and the Supreme Court of India.  
Consequently, the enforcement of the  
Act and the Rules has, to a great extent,  
been hampered. However, this is a nor-  
mal feature of any new law. The peti-  
tions are being contested by the Central  
and State Governments. A true assess-  
ment of the impact of the Act can be  
made only after judgments are delivered  
in the petitions filed in Courts and the  
field officers start the enforcement of  
the provisions of the Act and Rules.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA:  
May I know at the present moment what  
is the total strength of contract labour  
in the establishments which are directly  
under the Central Government and in  
the public sector undertakings under the  
Central Government?

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA: Those  
figures are not readily available with us.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA:  
At least about public sector undertakings  
he must be in a position to answer.

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA: Even  
those figures are not available.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA:  
After the passing of this Act, may I  
know whether the Labour Ministry has  
taken a single step in public undertakings  
to stop recruitment under the contract  
system anywhere?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND  
REHABILITATION (SHRI R. K.  
KHADILKAR): As stated in the main  
reply, just now we have started regulat-  
ing contract labour under this Act. It is  
not feasible in the given condition of  
our economy to stop them altogether.  
Even to enumerate how many workers  
are working under contract labour in the  
public undertakings is a very difficult  
thing.

**SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA:** Under this Act, has the labour Ministry taken any step to stop further recruitment under the contract system in the public sector?

**SHRI R. K. KHADILKAR:** We have just begun regulating it. Prohibition of contract labour will come in due course. Just now that is not contemplated.

**SHRI S. M. BANERJEE:** Apart from this Act, a decision was taken at the Indian Labour Conference that contract system will be abolished. Is it a fact that even the Railway Ministry and Defence Ministry have not implemented the various provisions of this Act? Has any step been taken to abolish contract labour at least in railways and other public undertakings under the Central Government?

**SHRI R. K. KHADILKAR:** At the present stage it is not possible to think of absolute abolition of contract labour in railways, defence or any other public sector undertakings. The first stage is regulation. We are proceeding to see that employment is properly regulated and the workers are not deprived of their legitimate dues.

**SHRI A. P. SHARMA:** The hon. Deputy Labour Minister said that the figures are not available and he will furnish them to the House. But the Minister of Labour says that it is not possible to maintain such figures. When the question of permanent absorption comes, normally contract labour are given preference. If it is not possible to maintain the figures, how is it possible to decide who is a contract labour or casual worker at the time of absorption?

**SHRI R. K. KHADILKAR:** What my colleague meant by trying to collect the figures is that we will make an effort to see how far casual labour or contract labour is employed so that they can be permanently absorbed.

#### Grievances of Dandakaranya Project Employees

\*62. **SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE:** Will the Minister of LABOUR AND REHABILITATION be pleased to state.

(a) whether Government are aware of the long-standing grievances of the Dandakaranya Project employees regarding their pay scales and other facilities; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government to settle these demands?

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA):** (a) No long-standing grievances of the Project employees, regarding pay scales etc., are pending with the Government for decision.

(b) Efforts are always made by the Project Administration to remove the genuine difficulties of the employees, as and when they are brought to the notice of the Project authorities.

**SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE:** Is the Minister aware that the employees have served notice for starting a hunger strike on the refusal of the Ministry to meet their delegation and consider fulfilling their demands? Sir, do you know what are their demands for which they are going to resort to hunger strike? You will be surprised to know that one of their demands is grant of time scale of pay to ploughmen and others who are still paid a consolidated salary of Rs. 75 per month. This is a long-standing grievance even though the Minister is saying in his reply that there is no long-standing grievance. The second issue is the retrenchment of work-charged employees. It is a serious problem because you are going to retrench a large number of employees. Is it a fact that the Minister has refused to discuss this with the representatives of the employees?

**SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA:** We have received the notice of hunger strike on these two points. Regrading these four ploughmen who are being paid Rs. 75, they are neither on the regular staff of Dandakaranya project nor on the work-charged staff. They are casual workers employed out of the contingencies. Therefore, the question of increasing their pay does not arise. So far as work charged employees are concerned, the Dandakaranya project is a field organisation. Whenever some work is finished somewhere, then the work charged employees have got to be retrenched. Because some projects have been completed, these 257 employees have to be retrenched. I do not know how far government can agree to their regular appointment

**SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE:** Will the Minister try to provide alternative jobs for them?