

**SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA :** We have received such a demand of the workers and it is under consideration of the Government. We cannot do it all of a sudden.

**SHRI B. V. NAIK :** The hon. Minister has been kind enough to say that the value of the rupee is declining. My submission here is that the value of the rupee is declining at a varying rate. A rupee which can buy a kilogram of rice in Tamil Nadu cannot buy even one-fourth of a kilogram of rice in Bombay. Due to the unevenness of the suffering, what is the economic policy of the Labour Ministry to set to it that at least the misery is equitably distributed?

**SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA :** As I mentioned, the economic policy is determined by the Finance Ministry. Therefore, it is better if the hon. Member directs such questions to the Finance Ministry.

**SHRI S. B. GIRI :** Now, the workers who are having a service of thirty years or so now, have been contributing to the provident fund since 1942-43. Since then, the value of the money has gone down considerably. In the light of that, in order to benefit the workers at the time of their retirement, I would like to know from the hon. Minister, whether they are going to devise some measures to see that the money value of the amount which has been accumulated in the last 30 years is not much affected.

**SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA :** It is very difficult to answer the question put by the hon. Member. *(Interruptions).*

**MR. SPEAKER :** The hon. Member, should not make it easy. The Minister will answer.

**SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA :** The rise in prices is affecting one and all. Therefore, to single out the Employees Provident Fund is not desirable.

**SHRI S. B. GIRI :** It is affecting the interests of the labour. It is a straight

question. What is the Government in the Labour Ministry doing?

The Labour Ministry is to protect the interests of labour; let the Labour Minister not bother about others. I want to know whether they will appoint a Committee of Members of Parliament to go into the matter, to examine how to benefit the workers at the time of their retirement.

**MR. SPEAKER :** Kindly sit down and give chance to others.

**SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA :** There is a Board of Trustees who look after the interest of the workers and therefore to appoint a separate committee is out of the question now. They continue to look after the interests of the workers and they invest the surplus amounts in varying proportions in various categories of investments with a view to get the maximum interest. As per rules we can pay only six per cent, of interest. There are rules of the Income-tax Department and we have requested the Finance Minister to get us exemption so that a little more can be remitted to their accounts

#### Abolition of Contract Labour System in Rourkela Steel Plant

\*228. **SHRI SHYAM SUNDER MOHAPATRA :** Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state .

(a) whether Government assurance to abolish contract labour system has been implemented in Public Sector installations; and

(b) if so, what about its working in Rourkela Steel Plant which has Orissa's largest labour concentration?

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA) :** (a) and (b). The employment of contract labour in any process, operation or other work in any establishment is governed by the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970 and Rules framed thereunder which

provide for the regulation of such employment in certain establishments and for its total abolition in certain circumstances. A Joint Wage Negotiating Committee for the steel industry has concluded an agreement wherein it was agreed in principle that the industry would not employ labour through contractors or engage contractors' labour on jobs of a permanent and perennial nature. The Committee is now seized of the progress of the implementation of this agreement and it has been agreed that there should be plant level discussions on the subject. In the meantime an agreement has also been signed between the Management of the Rourkela Steel Plant and its recognised Union on the 27th July, 1973 for the abolition/regulation of contract labour. A Committee has since been constituted by the Management to implement this agreement.

**SHRI SHYAM SUNDER MOHAPATRA :** I request the hon. Minister Mr. Malaviya to reply to this question since I have asked about the Rourkela Steel Plant as part of the question. In any case I want to know from the Labour Minister this, namely, whether they will fix a target date plantwise so that we can abolish the contract labour because it is difficult to establish which work is of a perennial nature and which is of a temporary nature. The officers and the contractors are, so to say, hand-in-gloves. Therefore will the hon. Minister kindly assure the House that instead of saying that 'it is under consideration' year after year, he will fix a target date plantwise so that we can abolish this menace altogether?

**SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA :** It is very difficult to fix up a date or target date plantwise. We have got a Central Advisory Board for this contract labour who go into the details and we get the advice and whenever they recommend anything, that is taken into consideration and action taken accordingly.

**MR. SPEAKER :** The basic question is abolition of the system of contract labour.

It is not because of certain improvements. This is what he means.

**SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA :** He wants that this contract labour should be abolished in all the plants, in all the public sector undertakings. We got a Central Advisory Board which continues to look after the interest of such workers and they advise us and accordingly we do it.

**THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI K. D. MALAVIYA) :** If you will permit, I will only state that it is a question of policy as to whether we are going to abolish the contract system entirely from the mines and steel mills and other undertakings. So far as I am aware, the Government have not taken any decision to abolish the contract system entirely.

**SHRI SHYAM SUNDER MOHAPATRA :** The hon. Minister is aware that there is a gulf of difference between the minimum salary fixed for labour in the Rourkela plant and the contract labour, a difference between heaven and earth. The minimum for labour is Rs. 240 and the contract labour gets hardly Rs. 120 or Rs. 130. The living condition of contract labour is absolutely deplorable, of sub-human standard. I would make an appeal to the hon. Minister. When he visits the plant, will he take into consideration the conditions of this labour there and while tenders are called will he see that such rates should be fixed that the wage of contract labour will be equal to that of a worker in the steel plant, almost equal, the minimum?

**SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA :** The Central Advisory Board is seized of the matter. They have made certain recommendations in which they have mentioned some of the iron ore mines. An agreement has been reached between the labour and the management in so far as the Rourkela plant is concerned. They have now decided to do away with contract labour on certain jobs. For that purpose, a committee has been appointed. It is going into details.

**SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA :** The Cabinet Minister says that Government have no such policy. But the Deputy Minister in the Labour Ministry says something else.

**MR. SPEAKER :** Every thing is all right. Do not create confusion about this.

**SHRI KRISHNA CHANDRA HALDER :** At present, what is the total number of contract labour in Rourkela and the Durgapur steel plants. He mentioned about minimum wage. He said there is an agreement and that a committee is going into the question of the wage of contract labour and there are some recommendations. What is the nature of the recommendations? When will they be implemented regarding contract labour in the Rourkela and other steel plants?

**SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA :** We have got no figures regarding contract labour working in the Rourkela steel plant.

**MR. SPEAKER :** The exact number is not asked in the question. You can reply to the other part

**PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE :** The Minister wants that we should have vague answers.

**MR. SPEAKER :** No, not all. Why does Prof. Madhu Dandavate make such observations? The question itself is vague. What should the Minister do? He had not asked about the figures. Now he is asking him about the figures.

**SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA :** The Central Advisory Board has made certain recommendations on the question of the abolition of the contract labour system. The question of abolition of contract labour system in the Rajahara group of iron ore mines under the Bhilai steel plant was considered during the first meeting of the Board but no decision could be taken for want of sufficient data. This matter was, therefore, again considered during the second meeting of the Board and the Board has

recommended that progress be made in the abolition of contract system in the Rajahara group of mines in time-bound stages with the mechanisation of the mines.

The second recommendation was this. The question of abolition of contract system in Bailadila iron ore project under National Mineral Development Corporation was considered at both the meetings of the Board and the Board has recommended that contract labour system properly regulated may continue upto 1976-77 in the project. The contractors should provide some concrete benefits to contract labour for the present. (*Interruptions*). First I am giving the recommendations; then I will come to the decisions.

The Board has also considered the question of abolition of contracts system in some categories of work in non-coal mines.

It has not made any recommendation in this regard. It was, however, agreed to concentrate on the limestone and dolomite mines.

And then, the question of abolition of the contract system in certain specified categories of jobs in the coal-mining industry, as recommended by the second Court of Inquiry, under the chairmanship of Shri B. N. Banerji was considered.

The question of the abolition of the contract labour in the construction industry was also considered. After that,—

**MR. SPEAKER :** He is asking a question and the information is so long.

**SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA :** An agreement was reached between labour and management that the contract labour should be abolished in the Rourkela steel plant on certain jobs. In fact, a Joint Wage Negotiating Committee was appointed to go into the details and a plant level committee has been formed. They will discuss the matter with the management and they will do it according to their convenience.

MR. SPEAKER : Next question. No more questions. We have not been able to cover many questions. Almost 50 minutes are over now.

SHRI S. B. GIRI : Sir, I want to put very simple question.

MR. SPEAKER : Kindly sit down. I am not allowing any more question. The questions are always very simple; not complicated.

I am not allowing any more questions. This is not the way to get the permission of the Chair. Please sit down. We have not been able to do more than four to five questions during the last 50 minutes. You want to grab the question and you do not leave it. After all, there are other Members who want to put questions.

I have been entreating him to sit down. He says it will be an interesting question.

Now, Mr. P. M. Mehta.

**Changes suggested by Supreme Court in Drugs and Cosmetics Act**

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\*229. SHRI P. M. MEHTA :

SHRI P. A. SAMINATHAN :

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING be pleased to state :

(a) whether Supreme Court has drawn attention to lacunae in the Drugs and Cosmetics Act;

(b) if so, whether they have suggested certain changes to be undertaken; and

(c) if so, the reaction of Government thereon ?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING (DR. KARAN SINGH) : (a) and (b). In a recent judgement, the Supreme Court has observed that the law relating to licensing of mobile vans and temporary distribution

depots outside the place of business of a dealer is somewhat defective.

(c) Necessary action will be taken in the matter in consultation with the Ministry of Law, Justice and Company Affairs.

SHRI P. M. MEHTA : I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Supreme Court has suggested to provide for specific licensing covering life-saving drugs in transit with adequate facilities for cold storage and air-conditioning and, if so, what measures have been taken for creating these facilities in the country ?

DR. KARAN SINGH : The Judgment of the Supreme Court, to which the hon. Member refers, simply pointed out that there seemed to be a lacuna in this question of godowns and vans outside the registered place of storage. We are looking into it. It may be necessary to amend the rules or it may even be necessary to amend the Act. We are studying this in the light of the judgment and whatever is necessary to be done will be done.

SHRI P. M. MEHTA : I want to know whether the Supreme Court has suggested specifically the licensing for storage of the life-saving drugs with adequate cold storage facilities and air-conditioning and, if so, what measures have been taken to provide these facilities.

DR. KARAN SINGH : The judgment is with me, but I do not think they have gone into the details of that nature, whether that type of storage is required. They only covered a broad point about the transit. What happened here was a drug was kept in transit from the manufacturing place to the godowns. That night it was raided, and the place where it was kept that night was not properly registered. So, the Supreme Court said that even vans and other places in transit should be properly licensed.

SHRI P. M. MEHTA : Would the Government consider referring this question to the high-power committee which is