

bound to give that information. I have done nothing which is wrong. If the hon. member asks for information which is not classified and not secret, I will not be justified in withholding that information from him. (*Interruptions*).

MR. SPEAKER: May I request all of you to sit down? She was only protesting that information was being given to the hon. member to put a supplementary.

SHRI V. KRISHNAMOORTHY: She can protest to the Prime Minister. How can she protest in the Lok Sabha? (*Interruptions*).

MR. SPEAKER: That is their business. They will take care of themselves. She was only protesting against the way somebody was provoking somebody to put a question by giving information. Now, Short Notice Question, Shri R. Barua.

SHRI K. SURYANARAYANA: On a point of order, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: In Question Hour, there is no point of order. Please do not make matters worse.

SHORT NOTICE QUESTION

STRIKE THREAT BY PORT AND DOCK WORKERS

+

SNQ 3. SHRI N. K. SANGHI:
SHRI R. BARUA:

Will the Minister of TRANSPORT AND SHIPPING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the reported statement of the President of the All India Port and Dock Workers Federation saying that port and dock workers in eight major ports of the country will go on an indefinite strike in August, 1968 in case the Wage Board does not evolve a satisfactory fair wage structure;

(b) if so, the main demands of the port and dock workers and whether Government have made efforts to reach an amicable solution to avoid the threatened strike by the workers; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND SHIPPING (DR. V. K. R. V. RAO):

(a) to (c). The Wage Board for Port and Dock Workers is at present engaged in

having its final discussion before formulating their proposals for a satisfactory wage structure. The President of the All India Port & Dock Workers' Federation, Shri S. R. Kulkarni, is himself a member of the Board, as also Shri Makhan Chatterjee, General Secretary of the Federation.

The Working Committee of the Federation passed a resolution in June 1968 complaining that the Wage Board had already taken 3½ years and alleging "lack of earnestness on the part of the employers of port and dock workers in finalising the work of the Board". I received a copy of the resolution from the Federation on 3rd July. In reply, the Federation was informed while Government was confident that the port authorities were quite earnest about ensuring that the work of the Wage Board was completed at an early date, Government had sent a fresh instruction to the Major Port Authorities that all efforts should be made to ensure that the work of the Board was not held up for lack of any effort on their part.

Since then, the Federation have held a special Convention in Calcutta on the 24th & 25th July and passed a resolution calling upon its affiliates to organise a whirl-wind agitation for achieving a revised structure of wages, based on fair wage principles, as per the terms of reference of the Wage Board and alleged that this was being thwarted by vested interests.

The Convention authorised the Working Committee of the Federation to organise a strike at all the major ports on or from any day after the 20th August, 1968, after due notice, if in its considered opinion achievement of a reasonable revised wage structure is not feasible of early fulfilment through the Wage Board, because there is inadequate or tardy response to the advice given by the Transport Ministry, as stated in its letter dated 10-7-68, to the Federation viz. "Government has already informed the Major Port Authorities that all efforts should be made to ensure that the work of the Board is not held up for lack of any efforts on the part of Port Authorities".

A copy of the resolution has been sent to my Ministry.

I do not understand this attitude. As I have stated already, the Wage Board is in the final stages of its work. Its last

meeting was held on the 4th August, 1968 and its next meeting is scheduled for 24th August, 1968. I understand from my colleague, the Labour Minister, that the Chairman of the Wage Board has been requested to submit the final Report to Government by the end of November this year positively.

To anticipate the conclusions of the Board at this stage, publicly attack one of the parties composing the Board, and then threaten a strike if the conclusions of the Board do not conform to the thinking of the Federation is not the proper way to deal with this matter. The report of the Wage Board is still to be received by Government and a decision has then to be taken by them on the report. I would suggest to the Federation that they should wait at least till the report is finalised and submitted to Government. On my part, I can assure them that their views will be taken into account before a decision is taken by Government on the report of the Wage Board.

SHRI N. K. SANGHI : There has been an increase in strikes in services like Air-India, Indian Airlines, railways and ports. What is the reason for that? May I know whether any complaint has been received from the Federation that the time taken by the Wage Board for finalising the report, which is about four years, is too long? Then I would like to know the reason for the cancellation of the meeting of the Wage Board scheduled to be held on the 4th of August. Was the government responsible for it?

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : Regarding the first question, while I myself do not like the long period taken by the Wage Board, I think there are a number of cases where longer periods have been taken by wage boards. I can quote three cases. In the case of tea, rubber and coal-mines more than four years have been taken by the Wage Board. In the case of Iron ore and limestone nearly four years have been taken.

SHRI RANGA : Are you justifying it?

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : I am not justifying it.

SHRI RANGA : Then why quote all those absurd things?

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : I was asked a question and I was answering it.

Regarding the second question as to whether the meeting was cancelled on 4th August at Government's instance, I have no knowledge why it was cancelled; certainly, it was not in pursuance of any directive given by the Ministry.

SHRI N. K. SANGHI : May I know from the Minister if he has worked out the implications of the Wage Board's award to increase DA and wages on port charges and whether Government will give an assurance that they are going to implement the award given by the Wage Board with regard to payment of increased wages and DA?

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : The first question is hypothetical. All that I can say is that among the terms of reference, *inter alia* the capacity of the employers has also to be taken into consideration. Regarding the other question whether we will implement the recommendation of the Wage Board, Government will have to await the receipt of the report of the Wage Board.

SHRI RANGA : May I know whether any interim relief had been given during these four years in regard to the demands made by these workers so long ago and over which this wonderful Wage Board has been sleeping or labouring or meditating—God only knows what it is doing? Has any interim relief been given at all in order to ward off the sense of exasperation on the part of workers? One would have thought that they were trying to blackmail but here I can say that it is the Government which is at fault in having kept this Wage Board in gestation for four long years and on top of it the Minister comes here and says that this is not the worst offender; there are some other offenders also.

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : I do not know why I have incurred the wrath of my hon. senior colleague in this House. I should like to inform the House that two interim relief payments had been recommended by the Wage Board—one with effect from the 1st February 1965 and the other with effect from 1st August 1966. Both these interim reliefs have been sanctioned to the port employees. In addition, following the grant of a minimum bonus payment of 4 per cent to industrial workers in 1965, Government authorised the sanction of a similar payment to the port employees in 1966 even though they were not covered by the

Payment of Bonus Act. The 4 per cent payment granted was, therefore, an *ex gratia* payment. The grant of children's education allowance and re-imbursement of tuition fees to employees of major port trusts on the lines admissible to Central Government employees were also sanctioned. Increases in rates of dearness allowance sanctioned by Government, I think, five or six times in the last three years have all been extended to the port and dock workers. In addition, following the discussions held in Delhi with the representatives of the All India Port and Dock Workers' Federation under the auspices of my colleague, the Labour Minister, and myself in August 1967, Government agreed to make the following major concessions to the port and dock workers, namely, inclusion of dearness allowance, city compensatory allowance, interim relief and piece-rate earnings wherever applicable in the definition of the term "pay" for calculation of the contributory provident fund benefits for Class III and Class IV employees and for *ex gratia* payment.

SHRI K. N. PANDEY : In view of my experience that there are circumstances which force the Wage Boards to slow down their work, for example, the work of the Wage Board for the sugar industry was slowed down because the condition in the industry was too bad, similarly this Wage Board must have taken a longer period but in almost all the cases the recommendations of the Wage Boards have been accepted by Government. Because your representative is also there, can it not be possible for you to give a categorical answer whether you are going to implement the recommendations of the Wage Board or not?

MR. SPEAKER : The Wage Board has not yet recommended anything.

SHRI K. N. PANDEY : They must take into consideration that.

MR. SPEAKER : He has answered it by saying that they have not yet submitted a report. So, how can he assure now? The child must be born before you can name it.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : While the Wage Board was appointed by the Ministry of Labour and while it is doing its work, the Ministry of Transport has simultaneously appointed another committee headed by Shri Venkataraman to go into the working

of the major ports. One of the terms of reference of the Venkataraman Committee is to judge the financial capacity of the ports to give higher emoluments to the workers. I want to know from the Minister whether this is not an anomalous fact that because of this Venkataraman Committee's terms of reference about the financial capacity to pay higher wages the work of this Wage Board is being prejudiced, and that representatives of the employers in the wage board are continuously referring to the Venkataraman Committee saying that they will judge the financial capacity and, therefore, they cannot do anything. What does he propose to do about that?

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : Regarding the first part of the question, the House may know that, last year, when we had the threat of an all-India strike by the Port and Dock Workers Federation, among the various demands made by them, one was that the *ex gratia* payment of 4 per cent which was given should be raised to 20 per cent. It was not possible for me to accept that because I was afraid that the ports would not be in a position to pay 20 per cent *ex gratia* payment. The representatives of the Federation said that, in their opinion, the ports did have the capacity to pay. So, I suggested to them that this matter may be kept pending till it was decided by a Commission which was proposed to refer to this matter. This was agreed to by the Port and Dock Workers Federation. That was the reason for including it in the terms of reference of the Venkataraman Committee.

Regarding the second point, to the best of my knowledge, I do not think the Port Trust representatives on the Wage Board are referring to the Venkataraman Committee Report and its terms of reference for putting off the question as to what, in their opinion, is the capacity to pay.

SHRI NATH PAI : While endorsing the indictment by Prof. Ranga about the lackadaisical manner in which the Government functions with regard to a body of most patriotic and disciplined trade union workers—I mean the Federation of Port and Dock Workers of India—I, none the less, venture to welcome what he said that before proceeding to implement the recommendations, when they come, he will take into consideration and give due weight to the views of the Federation. But in view of

the fact that the port and dock workers are feeling very much concerned and exercised about the delay and other handicaps that they are suffering, may I know why does not he initiate in calling the leaders who are very responsible and very responsive and give the assurance which he has given at the tail-end of the reply that the Government will take into consideration their views before implementing the recommendations and prevent the boiling situation which is developing in all the ports in the country?

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : I do not want to go into the subject. I should like my distinguished colleague on the other side to read the press reports of the speeches which have been made in the last two months by the leaders of the very disciplined and orderly organisation of the port and dock workers including the speech which was made in Calcutta at the time of their convention. But I have no desire to comment upon the speeches....

SHRI NATH PAI : Those speeches are like your convocation addresses. Don't take them seriously.

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : I have delivered many convocation addresses....

SHRIMATI TARKESHWARI SINHA : They have been following your speeches with great attention.

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : My convocation addresses, unfortunately or fortunately, have had no power to stimulate any unrest in the country.

Coming back to the question, the assurance that I gave is a normal part of the Government's functioning. Even without giving an assurance as soon as the Report of the Wage Board comes, naturally, if the public opinions expressed by the various parties to the Wage Board are different, not only the workers but anybody else, from the opinion of the Wage Board, and we have also to get the views of the user Ministries, like, Commerce and Food and Agriculture, all the views will be taken into account before recommendations can be accepted.

DR. MAITREYEE BASU : I would like to remind the hon. Minister that when the Venkataraman Commission was set up, there was only one labour leader who was included in it and he, very cautiously, avoided having any more. Being a member

of the Wage Board, I cannot divulge here whether the Venkataraman Commission has been mentioned in the Wage Board by the employers representatives or not.

MR. SPEAKER : Come to the question now.

DR. MAITREYEE BASU : Is it a fact that someone in the Ministry has tipped off these labour leaders who have served the strike notice that only a pittance will be allowed to the workers and that they should go on strike so that they are glorified more?

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : Is it being suggested that somebody in the Ministry is instigating them to go on strike?

DR. MAITREYEE BASU : That was the question that I asked.

MR. SPEAKER : Has anybody from the Ministry instigated?

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : Not to my knowledge.

श्री शिवचण्डिका प्रसाद : क्या मंत्री महोदय वतलावेंगे कि जो इंटरिम रिलीफ दिया गया है वह वेज बोर्ड की सिफारिश से कम है या ज्यादा है?

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : The interim relief recommended was Rs. 7.80 per month from 1-2-1965 and the other was Rs. 4 per month with effect from 1-8-1966, making a total of Rs. 11.80 and it has been given in full.

MR. SPEAKER : But the point was whether the interim relief recommended was more or less.

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : The interim relief recommended by the Wage Board is given in full.

SHRI SHIV CHANDIKA PRASAD : No, Sir. My question was

MR. SPEAKER : No second question please. Mr. Tenneti Viswanatham.

SHRI TENNETI VISWANATHAM : The Minister was good enough to say that he would take the affected parties into confidence before he decides upon the recommendations of the Wage Board. This is with reference to dock workers. May I know whether it applies also to the workers and staff of the Hindustan Shipyard, Visakhapatnam?

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : The question does not really arise out of this. But I will say, certainly.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE : From various reports it appears that the recommendations of this Wage Board are not going to be unanimous but will be by majority. I would like to know this. Since Government has also started modifying the recommendations of Wage Boards as they have done in the case of Electricity Board workers for which the Labour Minister was asked to resign—I do not know whether he has actually resigned or not—, there is a lurking fear in the minds of port and dock workers that if the recommendations of the Wage Board are unanimous, the Government might modify those and if the report is by majority, then it may not be implemented. I want to know from the hon. Minister whether, in the event of there not being unanimity in the Wage Board members, he will see that the report is implemented, i.e., whether the majority report will be implemented.

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : It is an entirely hypothetical question.

SHRI NATH PAI : No, Sir. What is hypothetical in this? Is it hypothesis? You must define it, Sir. (Interruption)

MR. SPEAKER : I do not know whether he is in a position to say anything now. (Interruption)

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : Majority reports are not being implemented.

MR. SPEAKER : If he can answer, I will be very happy.

SHRI NATH PAI : He is going to receive the report. Is it hypothetical? Is it hypothetical to suggest that the report will be received one day? How is he insinuating that it is a hypothetical question? The report will be received, and when, in due course, the report is received, what will they do with regard to the majority recommendations? We should know that. It is not at all hypothetical.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE : My question was whether, in the event of a majority report being received, it will be implemented. Let him answer that. An assurance should be given that the majority report will be implemented.

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : I am surprised why such a distinguished student of English

language as my hon. friend, Mr. Nath Pai, should not have quite followed why I said that it was a hypothetical question....

SHRI NATH PAI : I never followed my professors.

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : I was not your professor. It would have been much better if I had been....

SHRI NATH PAI : One cannot forget one's nature.

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : The question was whether I would be prepared to accept the report if it was a majority report. Till I know whether it is a majority report or not, it will be very difficult for me to come to a judgment. So, is it not a hypothetical question?

SHRI S. S. KOTHARI : Would the Minister kindly inform as to what are the guidelines indicated by the Government to the Wage Board with regard to evolution of wage structure and whether it will be need-based or linked to price level, whether minimum wage will be provided and so on?

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : I think, that comes under 'terms of reference'.

MR. SPEAKER : You can place a copy of that on the Table of the House.

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : Yes, Sir.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

NEW DELHI MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE

*391. SHRI RAM SWARUP VIDYARTHI :

SHRI CHENGALRAYA NAIDU :

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Metropolitan Council and the Delhi Municipal Corporation through a unanimous decision had urged the Central Government to make New Delhi Municipal Committee an elected body and whether this was also endorsed by the Lt. Governor of Delhi, and

(b) if so, the reasons for bypassing the unanimous view of the elected representatives of the Metropolitan Council and the Delhi Municipal Corporation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA) : (a) The Metropolitan Council did pass such a reso-