

Minister give us an assurance to keep his mind open, because mind like the parachute works best, when it is open? Will he give his attention to the Bill that will be introduced on the 23rd, discuss it threadbare and if necessary, refer it to the Select Committee, because in the past some Private Members' Bills were also referred to the Select Committees, and arrive at a conclusion different from whatever may have been the Government point of view so far?

SHRI V.N. GADGIL : If the Bill comes, certainly according to the procedure it will be discussed and I will give my additional arguments at that time.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : I am happy that at least his mind is open on that day.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : I would like to know whether the hon. Minister is aware of the Parthasarathy Committee which was appointed by his Party's Government in eighties, which recommended autonomous corporations for both All India Radio and Television. Secondly I want to know whether the Minister is also aware of the new argument—I am not referring to old arguments—advanced by the Prime Minister at his recently televised Press Conference to the effect that since the Press in India was irresponsible, autonomy to All India Radio and Television should be denied so that the Government also by implication could be equally responsible.

SHRI V.N. GADGIL : It will not be proper on my part to interpret what the Prime Minister stated. But as regards his other question, in my debate—he was present at that time—we have replied to it umpteen times and it is no use wasting the time of the House by repeating the same argument.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : To say 'wasting the time of the House' is highly objectionable.

SHRI E. AYYAPU REDDY : Do you have any proposal for providing an

opportunity to the leaders of the various political parties in the House to project their views regarding what they have done and what their party's stand is, at the end of every session of Parliament?

PROF. N.G. RANGA : A very good suggestion!

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : We do not mind even during the Session also!

SHRI V.N. GADGIL : You would like it every day, I am sure and particularly your appearing.

MR. SPEAKER : And he is not going to oblige.

SHRI V.N. GADGIL : We have a programme, 'Issues before Parliament' in which all parties are presented. Last time also, several Opposition members took part in it.

DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI : We give greatest respect to the Constituent Assembly and to the views of Pandit Nehru. I want to know from the hon. Minister whether it is a fact or not that the geomorphological conditions of the country have changed since the time of the Constituent Assembly, since the time of Panditji and since the time of the reports of so many Committees. There are the secessionist movements, terrorist movements in the country and other dangers around our country. I would like to know from the Minister, basing on this view, whether he will yield to the pressure of the unnecessary argument advanced by Prof. Madhu Dandavate and succumb to that.

MR. SPEAKER : Doctor, he has already replied to that.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : I might be detained for terrorist activities!

**Employment to Jobless Workers of
Union Carbide Plant, Bhopal**

*189. **SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD :** Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that thousands of workers employed in Union Carbide Pesticide Plant, Bhopal now have become jobless due to shut down of the plant;

(b) if so, the action taken by the Central Government in this regard;

(c) whether Central Government propose to ask the State Government to provide jobs to retrenched employees of Union Carbide on compassionate grounds; in other organisations; and

(d) if so, when and if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI T. ANJIAH) : (a) to (d). A statement is given below.

Statement

According to information received from the Government of Madhya Pradesh, 632 workers have been affected due to the closure of the Pesticide Plant at Bhopal. The State Government have taken all possible steps to provide alternative employment to the affected workmen. These include special steps to register the workmen in the Employment Exchange at Bhopal, preparation of a trade-wise list of workmen and circulation of the same to all the District Employment Exchanges in the State and also to major Public and Private Sector Industrial Undertakings in Madhya Pradesh, direction to the District Collectors to take initiative in securing employment to these workmen in local industries in their districts and special efforts to motivate the workmen to take advantage of self-employment scheme under which a loan to the tune of Rs. 50,000 is advanced as margin money to set up any trade, small-scale industry or occupation. Besides, the Government of India in the Ministry of Finance (Bureau of Public Enterprises) has also issued instructions to all Central Public Sector Undertakings in Madhya Pradesh to give priority in employment to the retrenched workmen by relaxing age limit, if necessary. The

State Bureau of Public Undertakings has also issued similar instructions to State Government Undertakings. The State Labour Commissioner and the Industries Commissioner have been asked to use their good offices in procuring employment for all workmen. Further, the State Government have set up a Special Bureau headed by the Special Secretary (Labour) under the guidance of a Committee of Secretaries of the Finance, Industry, Power & Labour Deptts, to expedite the process of providing alternative employment to the workmen. So far, letters of appointment have been issued to 203 retrenched workmen offering them employment in various State Public Sector Undertakings and Departments and 618 workmen have been registered in the Employment Exchange at Bhopal. Steps have taken to expedite action to provide employment to the remaining workers as well. The progress of action taken is being reviewed by the State Labour Secretary every fortnight.

SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD : The hon. Minister has stated in his statement that 632 workers have been affected due to the closure of the Pesticide Plant in Bhopal. Besides, about 250 have also been rendered jobless and also a large number of casual labourers and daily wage workers have been retrenched by the Union Carbide. And actually they are roaming on the roads. In view of the fact, what steps have the Government taken to provide jobs for these casual labourers and daily wage workers ?

[Translation]

SHRI T. ANJIAH ; This factory was not closed down due to retrenchment. Hon. Members know how this factory was closed down. So far the State Government has offered employment to 325 persons out of a total of 600. A meeting was held with the State Chief Minister and Labour Minister on 3rd of this month a view to providing employment to the rest of the affected workers and they have given assurance in this regard.

SHRI K. N. PRADHAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, registration of all these

people has been done, Government have also written to the Public Undertakings and other Government Departments, but keeping in view the present employment position in the country, it is not likely that all of them will be absorbed there and there is a danger of their remaining unemployed for a long time. Under these circumstances, I want to know from the hon. Minister, through you, whether they cannot force other units of the Union Carbide to provide employment to all these people? Secondly, whether the cases prepared for compensations also include their cases of compensation? In brief, I want to know from the hon. Minister :

- (a) Can't you force the Union Carbide to give them employment in their other units?
- (b) Whether their cases for compensation are also being prepared or not?

SHRI T. ANJIAH : The workers do not want to go out from there. The workers have not yet accepted the offer of employment made to 325 of them, but efforts are being made to accommodate them in the same type of factory in Poona as also in other factories elsewhere. These efforts are being made by the Central as well as the State Government.

So far as the question of compensation is concerned, apart from Provident Fund, salary due to them as three months' notice for closing down and other things have been arranged by the Government. As regards your proposal to accommodate them in other Units, we have not discussed it with the State Government. However, we can discuss it, but they are not in a mood to leave the State and go to other State as yet. If they are prepared, we can consider it.

SHRI K.N. PRADHAN : These employees are not being paid their total emoluments. Secondly, I would like to know whether the cases which you are filing in American Courts for Compensation also include their individual cases?

SHRI T. ANJIAH : The workers will face a lot of difficulty in getting Compensation in America. Here, they can claim compensation as per the Compensation Act of the land. (*Interruptions*).

[*English*]

SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM : Mr. Speaker, Sir, firstly, I would like to point out that in the statement laid on the Table of the House the terminology used is "retrenched workmen" not "closure". I suppose it is an error which it is relevant to point out to the Minister because he himself clarified the closure, not retrenchment.

Secondly, I would like to ask the Minister one thing. The statement says that 610 workmen have been registered in the Employment Exchanges at Bhopal. I think the whole House as well as the Minister knows that if you register yourself in Employment Exchange, your chance comes near about the retirement age... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER : The Minister has already explained that.

SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM : Will they be given the first priority?

SHRI T. ANJIAH : Already they have offered employment to 325 people.

MR. SPEAKER : That is what he has said.

SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM : He has said that 325 people have been given appointment by the State Government and other sectors. The balance has been registered with the Employment Exchanges.

MR. SPEAKER : No. He has already said that he has talked with the Chief Minister and within a month or so, they will be accommodated. That is what he has said on the floor of the House.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : May I point out that there is a discrepancy in the statement? At least in the statement, which has been provided to us, laid on the Table, it begins by saying that 632 workers have been affected due to the closure of the pesticide plant at Bhopal. It is quite clear, "Have been affected" means, I presume in this context, that they have been rendered unemployed. Then, later in the statement it says that letters of appointment have been issued to 203 retrenched workmen, offering them employment in various State Public sector undertakings and departments; and 610 workmen have been registered in the employment exchange. So, 203 workmen who have been offered employment....

MR. SPEAKER : He said, 325.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : I do not know; but here it says, 210. He should tell us then that this is an error, and that it is being corrected.

[Translation]

SHRI T. ANJIAH : I have said 325 and this is the latest position.

[English]

I have talked to the Chief Minister and Labour Minister. (Interruptions)

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : Three hundred-and-twentyfive is the latest figure of those who have been given appointment orders. How many have been registered.

SHRI T. ANJIAH : All the workers have been registered.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : What I want to know is this : under the existing law—unfortunately this comes under the Industrial Disputes Act—there was no coverage under the Industrial Disputes Act because the factory had to be closed down in very unusual circumstances, as everybody knows. Are these workers entitled to get the usual retrenchment compensation which is available in cases of closure of factories, or

as the Minister said a little while earlier, is it not a case of retrenchment, but is a case of closure? If it is treated as a case of closure, and not as a case of retrenchment, then these workers will be deprived of retrenchment compensation. So, I want to know what is the position on this. Don't leave it to the Government of Madhya Pradesh. This is a national disaster which has taken place, with international repercussions. Therefore, the Government here in the Centre must tell us clearly how they are advising the Madhya Pradesh Government to treat this case. Will they get retrenchment compensation, or not? Is it true that many workers do not want to leave Bhopal? It is a fact that their family members and other people have been affected actually by gas poisoning; the after-effects of that gas leakage have affected the families of these workers also, and they do not know where to go with them. In Bhopal, they are hoping that some arrangements will be made—relief, treatment and all that. Is that the main reason why they do not want to leave Bhopal? Otherwise, why should not they go if given alternative employment?

[Translation]

SHRI T. ANJIAH : So far as the question of giving employment to the rest of the workers is concerned, the State Government have given an assurance that all of them would be given employment. We on our part are also trying to give them employment in the Poona Fertilizer Factory which is being set up in the public sector. The Chief Minister and the Labour Minister have given us the assurance to absorb them.

So far as the compensation is concerned, the Management is prepared to give compensation. The workers have, however, refused to accept it. Their claim is that out of 30 years service, they have already put in 10 years service and, as such, they should be paid at the rate of 75 per cent per month. The Management wants to pay closure compensation on usual rates.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : What is closure compensation? There is nothing of this sort in the law.

SHRI T. ANJIAH : Either three months' notice or three months' salary is required to be given. They are prepared to pay three months' salary and gratuity, but the workers are not satisfied with that, they want more compensation. Negotiations are underway in this regard.

Then, you have asked about the other people affected. So far, an amount of Rs. 40 crores has been spent and a sum of Rs. 2 crores is being spent every month. Milk and sugar is being distributed among the affected families and those who suffered loss. They have been rehabilitated. Affected families have been paid Rs. 10,000 each. All this is being done by the State Government with the help of the Central Government.

[*English*]

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : I did not ask what arrangements were being made for the public—Indians living in Bhopal. My specific question was this; workers, whose families, and may be themselves also, i.e. some of them have been affected by this gas poisoning—some medical fall-out is happening after that and I cannot go into it now—are they thinking that by remaining in Bhopal, at least whatever special measures of relief, medical treatment and milk for children and so on would be, are made available; may be inadequate. But whatever is made available will not be available if they shift somewhere else, and that may be the reason why they are unwilling to leave Bhopal; and in that case, they will not be able to take up an opportunity of job elsewhere. Will this be treated as a special case and government must make special arrangement to see not only that they are compensated financially but they must be provided with alternative means of livelihood.

[*Translation*]

SHRI T. ANJIAH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have already said that the number

of the affected families of the workers is negligible and the number of people affected is not much. Everybody is being given the same treatment whether it is worker's family or the family of the common citizen.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : Is it for this reason that they do not want to leave Bhopal?

SHRI T. ANJIAH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it means that, as you all say, Union Carbide may be asked to open the factory. They are prepared to open it, but Government of Madhya Pradesh have already taken a decision in this regard. There is strong apprehension among the common people on the question of opening this factory. It is for us to decide whether this factory should be run by the State Government or the Central Government or else they may be asked to manufacture a by-product.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : We do not want open. You close down all the factories of the Union Carbide. We have never asked you to open them.

[*English*]

SHRI V. SOBHANADREESWARA RAO : Is it a fact that Union Carbide has proposed to set up one battery dry cell manufacturing plant in Bhopal with an idea to provide alternative employment to the retrenched employees; if so, does the government have any objection in giving permission for them to start that battery factory?

[*Translation*]

SHRI T. ANJIAH : I have heard about this. Discussion has taken place with Chief Minister that they want to open another factory of a by-product. But it has become a haunted place now. The people in Madhya Pradesh are scared at the name of the Union Carbide with the apprehension that this factory will again start functioning in the same name.

[English]

SHRI V. SOBHANADREESWARA RAO : You are doing injustice to the retrenched workers when they are coming up with alternative proposal to start some other product which is not dangerous to the peoples' life. Why should the government have any objection ?

[Trans'ation]

SHRI T. ANJIAH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, you know what is the situation there. The people are scared there. The Government of Madhya Pradesh have taken this decision. The local people have apprehension about this factory that something might happen again. Well, When you have raised this question, we shall take it up with the Government of Madhya Pradesh.

[English]

Loans for Housing Schemes by Central Financing Institutions and Banks

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193. **SHRI MURLI DEORA :**
SHRI ANANTA PRASAD SETHI :

Will the Minister of WORKS AND HOUSING be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to involve the central financing institutions and banks more actively in lending funds for housing schemes ;

(b) whether Government propose to utilise the Provident Fund accumulations of employees for housing schemes either under a Central apex body or through specially created State agencies under the State Housing Departments ;

(c) whether the Central financing institutions will provide easy loans to people for repairs/rebuilding of old houses ; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF WORKS AND HOUSING (SHRI ABDUL GHAFOOR):

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Central Board of Trustees, Employees Provident Fund which administers the Employees Provident Fund Scheme is considering a proposal to finance the construction of houses for subscribers to the Employees Provident Fund Scheme, from out of their provident fund contribution. The details are yet to be finalised.

(c) and (d). The HUDCO propose to make a specific provision for repair and reconstruction schemes in the 7th Five Year Plan which is under finalisation.

SHRI MURLI DEORA : Since housing is not in the priority sector, enough funds are not provided. According to the recent survey of the National Building Organization, nearly 24 million units shortage in the housing sector is expected. Will he move the government so that housing is taken in the priority sector and enough funds are provided ? The Minister has replied that the Commissioner of Provident Fund is considering to allocate or to finance purchase of houses by the employees.

Sir, you know at the time of retirement all employees—whether they are working in the Government or in private sector—they are left with no house and I would therefore ask the hon. Minister when this plan of the Provident Fund Commissioner will be finalised.

SHRI ABDUL GHAFOOR : There are two things for the information of the hon. Member which are engaging the serious attention of Government. One is, a central housing scheme on a national level ; and the second is group housing insurance for employees and also the provident fund scheme. We want to find out whether these funds can be utilised for the construction of houses. The Government has become so liberal that if any employee who has contributed towards provident fund, wants to withdraw, he can withdraw not only 50 or 60 or 70 per cent, but even cent per cent of the amount for the construction of a house. That whole