

ption which is required in the country is also met?

SHRI BRAHM DUTT: We have advised the STC to keep a close watch in the domestic rubber price and regulate import of rubber and its releases suitably so as to achieve price objective which is to maintain price of RMA IV grade rubber round-about Rs. 16500 per tonne which is prevailing. On the basis of review made in June 1986, another advice was about demand and supply gap of rubber which during 1986-87 is estimated at around 40,000 tonnes. We also maintain a buffer stock by import of 2500 tonnes of rubber additionally. STC has so far contracted only for 40,000 tonnes as I have indicated previously, and we are keeping a close watch on the price in the Kottayam market.

We shall not allow the price to go down, below the level of Rs. 16,000...

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKER: Rs. 16,500.

SHRI BRAHM DUTT: Between Rs. 16,000 and Rs. 16,500 per tonnes. As I said, they are keeping a close watch.

श्री जगदम्बी प्रताप यादव : श्रीमान, देश में रबड़ की खपत और अधिक से अधिक बढ़ेगी और देश में रबड़ का उत्पादन भी बढ़ने वाला है। अन्डमन और निकोबार टापू में रबड़ की खेती प्रारम्भ हुई है, लेकिन विस्तार नहीं हो पा रहा है। एक बात मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि देश में रबड़ की जितनी खपत होगी उस तरह से देश में रबड़ का उत्पादन हो इसलिए किसान को इन्सटिट्यूट देने के प्रयास के रूप में और उत्पादन के ढंग के रूप में आपकी सरकार ने क्या व्यवस्था की है? किसान को दाम कम न मिलें, एक्शोर्ड प्राइस मिले, जैसे अन्य चीजों की कीमतें उपज के पहले घोषित की जाती हैं उस तरह की कोई नीति बनाइये जिससे किसान उपको अधिक उठाएँ और मकट में अधिक भाव पर बेच सकें जिसके परिणामस्वरूप उत्पादन बढ़े।

श्री ब्रह्म दत्त : मन्वर, किसान के लिए सबसे महत्वपूर्ण बात यह है कि उसकी उपज का क्या दाम उसको मिलता है। हमने हमेशा यह देखा है कि किसान की जा लगत है उस से ज्यादा दाम रबड़ का उसको मिलता रहे। रबड़ ऐसी वस्तु है जिसके बारे में यह बात सही है कि जितना लगत का अंदाजा रहता है। उससे ज्यादा कीमत मिलती रहती है। उत्पादन बढ़ाने के लिए जो चीजें करने की आवश्यकता है वह रबड़ बोर्ड और गवर्नमेंट देख रही है।

Appalling working conditions in lock factories and hardware units in Aligarh

*163. **SHRI VIRENDRA VERMA:**
SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the press report which appeared in the 'Indian Express' of the 29th June, 1986 regarding appalling conditions under which the child labour is required to work in lock factories, brass-ware and hardware units, etc. in Aligarh (U.P.) and

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The State Government of Uttar Pradesh which is the appropriate Government has been asked to take necessary action.

श्री वीरेन्द्र वर्मा : श्रीमान, मन्नीय मंत्री जी को जानकारी है कि भारत के संविधान की धारा 24 में यह वर्णित है कि 14 वर्ष से कम के बच्चों को इस तरह से नौकरी में न लगाया जाये। यह होते भी क्या

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Virendra Verma.

उनको जानकारी है कि पिछले पन्द्रह साल में 1 करोड़ 7 लाख से बच्चा-लेबर की संख्या बढ़ कर 2 करोड़ हो गई है। यदि यह सही है और समलगाडु में जितना लेबर फोर्स है वहां का उसका 6 परसेंट बच्चों का है जो कि दस वर्ष से कम के हैं, तो कंस्टिट्यूशन में प्रविष्टि होते हुए भी किस कारण से यह बढ़ता जा रहा है और उस को रोकने के लिये सरकार ने क्या कार्रवाही की है और यदि नहीं का है तो क्यों ?

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: Sir, the hon. Member is right that the Constitution of India bans the employment of child labour below the age of 14. But it is not a blanket ban. What the Constitution bans is, children below the age of 14 should not be employed in factories, mines and hazardous occupations. These are the three categories where the employment of children below the age of 14 is banned. But the fact remains that even in these areas, a number of children are being employed. This cannot be denied at all. It is a hard fact.

According to the Planning Commission, as on 31st March, 1985, we have 17.70 million child labour in the country. I suppose, these children are working purely because of economic necessity. Sir, this is a very very big problem. What we are now trying to do is, we have planned to come before Parliament with a comprehensive Bill on child labour. As far as the three sectors are concerned, factories, mines and hazardous occupations, we will ensure, try to ensure, that children are not employed. As far as the other sectors are concerned, instead of saying that children should not be employed, because they are being employed, because they take up work due to economic necessity, instead of banning it, we want to regulate it for a period of ten years with an intention ultimately seeing to it that after ten years there should be no child labour in the country. It is a very ambitious

thing. I will not be able to say whether we will be able to solve the problem, but we are trying our best.

श्री वीरेन्द्र वर्मा : क्या माननीय मंत्री जी को जानकारी है कि पूर्व प्रधान मंत्री श्री मती इन्दिरा गांधी जी ने लेबर मिनिस्टर्स कांफ्रेंस के सम्मुख और वर्तमान प्रधान मंत्री जी ने यह भी स्वीकार किया है कि बच्चों के लेबर को इस प्रकार की नौकरियों में जाने से नहीं रोका जा सकता। यह प्रैक्टिकल नहीं है। यह सही है और मंत्री जी भी मान रहे हैं तो क्या ऐसे बच्चे जिनको वह रोक नहीं सकते और यह प्रैक्टिकेबल नहीं है शोसियो इकोनोमिक कंडीशंस के कारण, तो क्या ऐसे बच्चों के लिए खाने पीने का, उन की शिक्षा का, उनके स्वास्थ्य का कोई प्रबन्ध इस बिल में जिस पर वे विचार कर रहे हैं, करने का विचार रखते हैं जिससे ऐसे छोटे बच्चे जो मजबूरी में अपनी आर्थिक अवस्था के कारण पढ़ नहीं सकते उनकी पढ़ाई का उनके स्वास्थ्य का और उनके खाने पीने की समुचित व्यवस्था हो सके ?

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: Yes, Sir. We have evolved a scheme which we call the National Child Labour Programme, where all the points which have been raised by the hon. Member are being taken care of, in regard to regulation of working hours, working conditions, education, health and even the provision of alternative employment to the mother or the sister of the child who are adults. We are going to launch this scheme to start within areas where there is concentration of child labour. Where the child labour is spread out, there are just one or two in an establishment, it is very difficult to regulate and take up welfare measures. Therefore, we have deliberately chosen those areas where child labour is concentrated and we know in what areas the child labour is concentrated. For example, in Tamil Nadu in a place like Sivakasi, in 3 match industry we have as many as 45,000 children working.

SHRI VIRENDRA VERMA: Below ten years.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: It must be between six and fourteen.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Below fourteen, that is the definition.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: Below fourteen. Yes, that is the definition.

SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE: In fact below five years also.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: We have launched a project as suggested by the hon. Member and the cost of the project will be Rs. 14 crores. We are contemplating to have another project of similar kind in Badohi, Mirzapur, U.P. where there is concentration of child labour in the carpet weaving industry and there we are contemplating to have a project costing Rs. 28 crores.

श्री सत्य प्रकाश मालवीय : श्रीमन्. माननीय मंत्री जी ने यह जवाब देकर यह मामला राज्य सरकारों के ऊपर डालने की कोशिश की है, लेकिन केन्द्रीय सरकार अपनी जिम्मेदारी से नहीं बच सकती क्योंकि चिल्ड्रन लेबर ऐक्ट और वेल्फेयर ऐक्ट जो कानून आज बने हुए हैं, वे भी ठीक से काम नहीं कर रहे हैं, जिनको प्रभावी करने की जिम्मेदारी केन्द्र सरकार की है।

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is why I am allowing all the supplementaries. Otherwise, I would have stopped there itself.

श्री सत्य प्रकाश मालवीय : मान्यवर, अलीगढ़ में जो ताला फैक्टरीज और पीतल के बर्तन बनाने वाले कारखाने हैं, उनमें 5 से लेकर 11 वर्ष तक के जो बच्चे काम करते हैं उनकी संख्या 30 प्रतिशत से 60 प्रतिशत तक है, तो यदि उत्तर प्रदेश की सरकार अपनी जिम्मेदारी नहीं निभाती है और जो वर्तमान कानून हैं उनको ही लागू नहीं करवा सकी है तो आप जो कांफ्रिडेंसिव

बिल ला रहे हैं उसको कैसे लागू करा सकेंगे ? आप इसके लिए क्या करने जा रहे हैं ?

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: Sir, according to the newspaper reports on the basis of which this question has been asked, in the report itself it is stated that there are 200 units and not one thousand as stated by the hon. Member.

SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA: I am giving you the information that the number is one thousand. (Interruptions).

MR. CHAIRMAN: Both are right. Both are Members of Parliament and I cannot say who is right and who is wrong. Therefore, both are right. Now you proceed with the answer.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: What does the Minister say? He has enough access to the information.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: This particular aspect, as I have stated in my main answer, falls under the purview of the State Governments, we can only assist them. Even with regard to the Sivakasi project and the Mirzapur project, I have stated that these projects are being contemplated through the State Governments only. Therefore, it is very difficult for the Central Government because the enforcement of law is to be done by the State Governments. We can only advise them and we can only ask them which we have already done.

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: Sir, is there any ban that a child below 14 years cannot....

SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE: Can there be a child Minister?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is a very difficult question. It is for the Prime Minister to answer. (Interruptions). Anyway, Mr. Sangma is

not below 14 although he looks like that. He is not below 14.

SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE:
He is exactly on 14.

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: Sir, the Minister has said that the total number of child labour in our country is 17.7 million. Is it correct? By this he probably means that this is the total number of child labour in the factories. But, Sir, there are so many children who do not work in factories, they work in some other places like in tea shops, pan shops, etc. That is called the unorganised sector. I would like to know whether he has got any estimate of the total number of child labour in the organised as well as in the unorganised sections. I want to know the total number in both the sectors, and what is his Department doing to enforce the prescribed minimum age, that is 14 years? i.e. 14 in regard to employment of child labour in industries—in the organised sector as well as in the unorganised sector. In the Act there is a provision about medical certificate and so many things. I would like to know whether you are sticking to it, whether Labour Inspectors are inspecting the factories and other sectors to find out whether children or babies are actually being employed.

There is another provision...

MR. CHAIRMAN: How many questions will you put?

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: This is part (c) of my question. About imparting education to them, I think there is a provision in the Act that they should be provided some education informally in the night or in the available time. I would like to know whether Government is enforcing that part also—about imparting education to these unfortunate children.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: As far as the question about appointing a Minister below 14 is concerned, I think the Constitution is very clear.

Now, about the total number of child labour in the country, the figure that I have given is precise 17.58—and not 17.7 million. It includes all the sectors—the agricultural sector, both organised and unorganised sector. But it is an estimate. The word I have used is "estimate". We have no precise number. It is estimated that there will be about 17.58 million.

SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE:
Which is what is called guesstimate.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: I am telling you the truth. As far as inspecting is concerned, while under the Act Inspectors will have to go on inspecting, I may share with the House that the fact remains that there are not enough Inspectors. I was trying to go through the figures of each State as to how many Inspectors they have, how many units they are supposed to inspect and whether they are adhering to it. I find it quite unsatisfactory, to be very frank, and there is need to strengthen the inspection machinery which we are already taking up with the State Governments.

As far as education part is concerned, under the Bill I am coming up with, that also is contemplated.

SHRIMATI PRATIBHA SINGH:
The hon. Minister has just stated that about 45,000 children are working in the match factories in Tamil Nadu. The Minister must be aware that working in a match factory for a child is dangerous and in most of the advanced countries working of children in a match factory is banned. The Minister has very kindly

stated, and we congratulate him for that, that Rs. 14 crores have been allocated for the welfare of the children. But where the health and life of children are in jeopardy, would it not be proper to ban employment of child labour in such factories and, because for economic conditions the children have to work, to provide for their employment in some safe industries where their life and health are secure or a little better looked after and where there is no danger to life? Is there any scheme with the Government to give that security and safety to the life of children and not to allow them to work in such factories where their life and health are in danger?

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: Sir, according to the Factories Act, match factory has been defined as hazardous. It is a fact. But the wording used in the Constitution in Art. 24 is that they shall not be employed in "hazardous employment". The word used is "employment". Now under the Factories Act a particular type of industry has been declared as hazardous. Now what we are trying to do is to distinguish between a 'hazardous industry' and 'hazardous employment'. In a particular industry there may be certain activities which may not be hazardous. This is what we are trying to distinguish. For example in the match factory, labelling of what you call the match boxes, putting paper on the boxes, cannot be treated as hazardous. Under the new law—we are coming with a Bill—we are trying to distinguish this. From a hazardous industry, we are trying to distinguish hazardous employment. The Constitution has used the word "employment". Therefore, in the same industry some occupations may be hazardous, some may not be, which we are trying to distinguish.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY: Sir, the Committee on Working Children of which I was the Chairman, submitted the report at the

end of 1979. It has made several recommendations. I think the Minister is aware of these recommendations which my Committee has made. One of the things that has been suggested in that report was to make a list of all dangerous and hazardous occupations in the country. Till now it has not been made. Sir, we have suggested also that a comprehensive legislation is necessary. He has already said that he would be bringing a comprehensive Bill before the House. The Committee has suggested that 15 years should be accepted as the year for employment of children. I do not know whether the Government has accepted this age limit of 15 years for that. One of the most important recommendation this Committee has made is that there should be a separate administrative apparatus, arrangement at the State level, national level and regional level to look into the various aspects of child labour. I am afraid, the figure that he has given about child labour is rather an underestimate. Our Committee went into this question and found out that the official figure is rather low. I think the child labour is in the neighbourhood of 30 million in India. This is the worst. India is the worst country in which the child labour is exploited. (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Everybody will get a chance. I do not propose to the next question at all.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: Sir, the Committee, in all, made 23 recommendations, and out of the 23 recommendations, Government have accepted 21 recommendations including some of the things which the hon. Member has pointed out, except the recommendation on the age-limit of 15 years. I am coming to Parliament. We shall see how the debate goes. Our proposal will be that we go by the Constitution. The Constitution lays 14 years. So, we think that we should go by article 24 of the Constitution.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY: Fourteen years for education, not for this.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: Article 24 says, "No child below the age of 14." So, we propose to keep that as 14. In fact, through other Acts we regulate child labour in plantations and others, which already exist, more than half a dozen. In some it is 15 years, and in some others it may be 14. I think it may be wise on our part to go by article 24 of the Constitution.

I differ with the hon. Member that the position of child labour in India is the worst. It is not.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY: It is the worst.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: It is not. I have gone through the figures of child labour all over. If you talk about the number of child labour. I will explain...

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY: The Committee has made a study that it is an under-estimate.

MR. CHAIRMAN: As I have stated earlier, both are right. Please proceed.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: I have the ILO figures with me. The position is, if you go by the sheer number of child labour, yes, it is the highest. India is the highest because the population is very high. But if you go by the percentage of child labour to the working force or the percentage of child labour to the population of the country, India is certainly not the highest. India, in fact, is one of the lowest, if you go by that standard.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY: There is no child labour in China.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He will circulate the ILO report on that.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: My question to the Minister is also in relation to the application of the Factories Act. Article 24 of the Constitution prohibits specifically

employment of children under 14 in factories. Apart from the much larger question of regulation of child labour in the agricultural sector, unfortunately the Factories Act applies only to the factories which employ over 20 people and, in the case of factories which use power, only to those who employ over 10 people. Therefore, if a factory employs 19 people, child labour can be used in that factory. Therefore, my specific question is: Are there any safeguards the Government is thinking of to cover factories where, say, 19 people are working and can get away from obeying the statutory provisions in the Factories Act, which is in direct violation of the constitutional provision? Otherwise, would you think of including something in the new Bill which is sought to be introduced now?

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: Sir, I think the honourable Member is very right—our people are quite expert in manipulating things—and I do not know how to answer this question. The only thing is that the Government machinery is there and they are trying to see that these are not misused. But I must admit that there are areas where we are not able to help ourselves.

DR. G. VIJAYA MOHAN REDDY: Sir, children are the most precious wealth of the nation. May I ask the Minister whether there will be a kind of definite survey through which we can know definitely the intensity of the problem? Also, about health hazards, fumes and so many other things are health hazards. We simply cannot say that if they do just packing, there cannot be a health hazard.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Film industry also!

DR. G. VIJAYA MOHAN REDDY: Therefore, we have to prohibit child labour in factories, mines, in industries like match, tobacco and many others. Is the Government thinking of acting in the definite interest of the children, to protect their health, to

provide means for their education, to improve the economic standard of the families to which they belong and also see that such families whose children are forced to become labourers are brought into mainstream and are in a position to participate in the national life and enjoy all the benefits as citizens of this nation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: How can the Labour Minister answer all these questions? You must ask him something relating to the employment of child labour. All right, Mr. Sangma, if you have any answer, give it.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: Sir, as far as the figure is concerned, a survey has been made by the National Sample Survey and the figure which I have placed before the House is from their report. I think honourable Members earlier said that this figure is not correct and it must be 30 million-odd. There are other social organizations, voluntary organizations, who have on their own conducted a survey. Well, the figures certainly do not tally—I must admit—but we have to go by the figures of the Planning Commission. As far as the families of child labour are concerned, we have the Sivakasi project, a Rs. 14 crore project. We have also thought that because of economic necessity, maybe, the children are forced to work. In order to prevent it we have started a printing press worth about Rs. 56 lakhs at the moment where we want to give employment to the mother of the family so that she doesn't send her children to other factories to work. This is to give an alternative means of livelihood for the family. This has been contemplated. But I am told, Sir—I have not gone after launching the project to verify—that even if the mother gets a job here, the child still continues to go. I do not know how to prevent it. It is a question of family and I cannot go and ask every family. But we are trying to provide an alternative job for the family.

SHRI ALADI ARUNA alias V. ARUNACHALAM: Mr. Virendra Verma in his question casually mentioned that there is a six per cent child labour in Tamil Nadu. The hon. Minister in his reply has mentioned that 45,000 of child labour is there in Sivakasi. According to me these information are incorrect. The hon. Minister has stated that there are 45,000 child labourers in Sivakasi, but I may point out that the total population of its municipal area itself is less than 50,000. It is a second grade municipality. Considering...

AN HON. MEMBER: It may include children from neighbouring areas.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What you say does not disprove the Minister's answer.

SHRI ALADI ARUNA alias V. ARUNACHALAM: No, Sir. My point is that this type of propaganda has been engineered by rival industries in order to defeat the industrial development for Sivakasi.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is disallowed. Next question.

Modification of the Public Provident Fund Scheme

*164. SHRI D.B. CHANDRA GOWDA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has recently modified the Public Provident Fund Scheme;

(b) if so, what are the details of the modifications made; and

(c) to what extent the subscribers will be benefited by these modifications?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) A copy of the Notification modifying the Scheme has al-