

Employees' Provident Funds
(Amendment) Scheme, 1985.

Ui) G.S.R. No. 363, dated the 6th April, 1985, publishing the Employees' Provident Funds (Second Amendment) Scheme, 1985. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-904/85 for (i) and (ii)].

II. A copy each (in English and Hindi) of the following Notifications of the Ministry of Labour and Rehabilitation, under subsection (5) of section 37 of the Apprentices Act, 1961:—

(i) G.S.R. No. 220, dated the 23rd February, 1985, publishing the Apprenticeship (Amendment) Rules, 1985.

(ii) G.S.R. No. 221, dated the 23rd February, 1985, specifying certain trades as designated trades for the purpose of the Act.

(iii) S.O. No. 753, dated the 23rd February, 1985, regarding determination of the ratio of trade apprentices to workers under the Act.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT-852/85 for (i) to (iii)].

REFERENCE TO ARREST OF PTI CORRESPONDENT IN SRI LANKA

SHRI VISHWA BANDHU GUPTA (Delhi): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have again to bring to your kind notice and to the notice of the House through you the very serious situation that is arising by the arrest of the PTI correspondent, Mr. Krishan Anand, by Sri Lankan Government. He was summarily taken away, arrested and he has been put in a jail where earlier people have been tortured and killed. Now I think the matter is serious enough. His life may be in danger, he may be tortured and his life may come to harm. The question, therefore, is that apart from this, the Sri Lankan Government has decided to boycott the SARC Ministerial meeting at Bhutan. This shows the approach the Sri

Lankan Government is taking and, therefore, the deterioration in the Indo-Sri Lankan relations has come to a sorry pass.

I think the matter is serious enough because the life of a journalist is involved. The Government should be asked to, make a statement on this matter.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY (Karnataka): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I associate myself with the views expressed by my hon. friend on the opposite. This is indeed a serious matter. It looks as if the Sri Lankan Government is resorting to reprisal. The other day the Minister of State for External Affairs made a statement in this House regarding Sri Lanka while replying to Q the debate. This has been misunderstood by the Government of Sri Lanka. As a result of this they seem to have taken two steps. Firstly, they are (boycotting the SARC meeting in Bhutan and secondly they have arrested our PTI correspondent in Sri Lanka. And the most painful fact is, this correspondent was in the hotel. Intelligence men of the Sri Lankan Government came there, took him away. He was telling them that he would like to contact the Indian High Commission. He was not permitted to do so and he was taken away physically by force and now he is under their custody. We do not know the reasons for the arrest. But one reason that has been given by the press is that he made a wrong report of the speech of the President of Sri Lanka at the banquet given in honour of the British Prime Minister, Mrs. Thatcher. If that is the reason, then it involves a bigger issue—the issue of freedom of the press itself. All over the world, including Sri Lanka which believe in democracy, the freedom of the press is important and even sacrosanct. He could have been told that this report was wrong and misleading. He was not told that way. He was not given any opportunity to explain. He was simply arrested. It is a very serious matter. I feel it is a case of reprisal.

[Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy] adopted by the Sri Lankan Government which is most unfortunate. The Government has already called the Deputy High Commissioner here and taken up the matter. But I think something more than this is necessary and the Government of India should tell the Government of Sri Lanka to release the correspondent and if he is found fault with, if he has committed any wrong and if he is really guilty, the law is there they can proceed on the basis of law.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI (Madhya Pradesh): Sir, no words can be too strong to condemn the action of the Sri Lankan Government. We have much to say about Sri Lankan Government's handling of the entire Tamil issue, but this episode adds a new dimension to India—Lanka relation, I think the Government should take it up very strongly with that Government to ensure that the PTI correspondent is released at the earliest. After all, from all reports it is evident that it is only because of a report that he has been arrested. And after being taken to the police station or wherever it was, he was refused even assistance by a counsel and it was much later that he was allowed to talk to our Embassy. Therefore I think this is a matter in which the Government should act very strongly and firmly. It would be well if the Government also enlightens the House about the developments.

SHRI M. KALYANASUNDARAM (Tamil Nadu): Sir, in view of its importance and seriousness, you were good enough to permit us yesterday to raise this matter through a Special Mention. Three Members of this House raised this point. I have a copy of the speech of Mr. Jayewardene with me which was supplied by the Sri Lankan High Commission in Delhi, if any one goes through that speech, he will understand how the President of a country, however, small it may be, bowed before the Prime Minister of

U.K. It will not bring credit to any citizen of Sri Lanka. Even the Indian Princes of the old days never bowed before Her Majesty, the Empress of England. This is worse than that. There is an invitation for Britain to send their army to help the Sri Lankan Government led by Mr. Jayewardene. Now the matter has taken a serious turn. I do not know what the Government of India did the whole day yesterday. Further, some Minister of Sri Lanka has made irresponsible remarks against our Minister. Earlier they made irresponsible remarks against Mr. Parthasarthy, now against Mr. Khurshid Alam Khan. Now they have arrested an Indian reporter for alleged distortion of the speech made by the President. There is no distortion of the speech. He has just intelligently interpreted the speech and told the truth to the whole world. He must be congratulated for his courage and intelligence. As has been stated by my colleague, Mr. Advani, this has now taken a new dimension. It is a provocative action against India. Now our Government must assert itself and take firm action to get the reporter released. Some counter-measure will be necessary. What that counter-measure should be, I can't say from the floor of this House, but some counter-measure to secure the release of the reporter and to maintain the dignity of our country is necessary.

SHRI S. W. DHABE (Maharashtra): Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is a very serious matter. It is an assault on Indian sovereignty and also an assault on the freedom of the press. It appears the Sri Lanka Government has been emboldened. Previously some fishermen were killed and even after demanding compensation the Sri Lanka Government refused to give it. It thinks that we have got a soft policy and they can do anything. This arrest of the PTI correspondent who is an Indian citizen has shocked everybody and the conscience of this country. The Leader of the House must apprise this House immediately as to what is the position and what steps Government is taking.

ing. On behalf of my group and all the other groups in my party, I strongly condemn the act of the Sri Lankan Government and request the Government, through you, that they must immediately tell the House and take the country into confidence as to what prompt action they have taken in this regard because it is not only an assault on the PTI correspondent but on our country also.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Valampuri John- He will be the next and the last.

SHRI VALAMPURI JOHN (Tamil Nadu): Mr. Chairman, Sir, this arrest of the PTI correspondent in Sri Lanka deserves stout condemnation of the civilized world. We would *like* to associate ourselves with the sentiments expressed in this august House. This kind of an arrest, this kind of a criminal slur on the very face of India goes on unabated and that is why time and again we have been fervently pleading with the Government of India that they should explore the possibility of a solution other than political. We assertively and positively say "other than political" because daily this has been going on unabated. Apart from the arrest of the PTI correspondent which deserves strong and stout condemnation by the civilized minds is the world, day before yesterday, 15 worshippers were butchered at Srimurugandi when the liturgy was on.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Don't go away from the subject.

SHRI VALAMPURI JOHN. This has been widely reported.

MR. CHAIRMAN; Don't record.

SHRI VALAMPURI JOHN:*

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't allow it.

SHRI VALAMPURI JOHN: The External Affairs Minister has to come out with a categorical statement as to what

*Not recorded. ,

steps the Government of India has taken to get the PTI correspondent released.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, that will go on record.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH (West Bengal): Mr. Chairman, Sir, when you first announced that one from that side and one from this side will speak, I gave the preference to Mr. Gurupadaswamy to speak on behalf of all of us.

MR. CHAIRMAN; How can I deprive you?

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH; That is why, Sir, on behalf of my party I join my other colleagues to express our concern at the arrest of the PTI correspondent in Sri Lanka by the Sri Lankan Government and I also join them to demand his immediate release and action by the Government of India to get him released immediately should be taken. Even if there was any distortion in sending the message from Sri Lanka, as alleged by their President, this could have been pointed out to the correspondent and that person could have been asked to leave that country. There was no point in arresting him, torturing him and committing him to the jail. Naturally what I want to say is that yesterday it was mentioned and we thought that at least, on behalf of the Government of India, some Minister or the Leader of the House would come out with a statement as to what steps the Government has already taken because what is needed is not simple mention here. Naturally, I would expect that before we adjourn till next Monday someone from the Government of India would come out with a statement as to steps have since been taken.

SHRI S. W. DHABE: Today, today. . . .
(Interruptions)

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: Today is Friday and the House is going to adjourn till Monday next. So, before

[Shri Dijpen Ghosh]

that the Government should make a statement.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Taking the strong sense of opinion in this House, I would request the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs to convey the same to the Government and, if possible, make a statement in this regard today itself.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA): I will convey the same.

CALLING ATTENTION TO A MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Situation arising out of reported move at management of Delhi Cloth Mills to close its textile mill.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now Calling Attention. Mr. Dhabe.

SHRI S. W. DHABE (Maharashtra): Sir, I call the attention of the Minister of Labour to the situation arising out of the reported move of the Management of Delhi Cloth Mills to close its textile mill rendering several thousand workers jobless and the action taken by Government in the matter.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI T. ANJIAH): Sir, . . .

[The Deputy Chairman in the Chair] The management of M/s. Delhi Cloth Mills, Delhi had applied for a closure of the Delhi Cloth Mills with effect from 1-7-1985 under Section 25 (O) of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947. The Delhi Cloth Mills is engaged in spinning, processing and weaving for the manufacture of cotton textiles. The mill employs a total of 6109 workers of which 4388 are permanent, 1317 Badlis, 328 temporary and 76 trainees.

The Delhi Administration received the notice of closure on the 28th March, 1985. According to the Administration which has examined the case, the closure is not justified in public interest as this would render 6,000 workers jobless. According to the Delhi Administration, the mill is by no standard a sick mill and is, in fact, technically viable. Accordingly, the Delhi Administration has refused permission for closure of the mills in public interest under Section 25(O) of the Industrial Disputes (Amendment) Act, 1982. In the circumstances, it would be illegal for the management to close down the mill. I would like to assure the House that the Delhi Administration is seized of the situation and would take all possible steps to avert the closure.

SHRI S. W. DHABE: Madam Deputy Chairman, it is a very unfortunate situation in the country that the textile mills are closing one after another, and the Delhi Cloth Mills is also following the same.

I had asked a question, No. 632 on the 7th of May, 1985 asking the number of mills closed in our country. The reply that has been given by the Minister of Supply and Textiles was that there were 70 mills closed down up till then in the country, and that the number of workers affected were 1,07,619. A very large section of the workers are out of employment. Mr. Minister. And most surprising is that 01 mills, textile mills, were closed from 1981 to 1985. In 1981, the statement shows, three mills were closed; in 1982, 15 mills were closed; in 1983, 15 mills were closed; in 1984, 26 mills were closed; and in 1985, within these four months, seven textile mills have been closed. So, from 1981 onwards the number is going up. In 1984 they were 26. I am certain that as of now more than 80 mills have been closed down in our country. Therefore, it is a very serious matter concerning the working class. Textile is a traditional industry. Even in my State of Maharashtra, in Jalgaon and Bombay some