

States have by now notified revised wages for agricultural labour and a few who have not so far revised wages have initiated necessary steps therefor. In regard to enforcement, most of the States have strengthened the enforcement machinery by appointing more inspectors and claims authorities under the Minimum Wages Act, specially to look after the interests of agricultural labour. For this purpose the resources of other departments like Revenue, Agriculture, Rural Development, Panchayat Raj, etc. have been tapped in addition to those of the Labour Department which is primarily responsible in every state for the implementation of the Act.

3. Workers' Participation in Management

In October 1975, the Ministry of Labour announced a Scheme for workers' participation in industry at shopfloor and plant levels to cover the industrial and mining sectors. The scheme was made applicable to units in these industries employing 500 workers or more, whether in the public, private or cooperative sector, including departmentally run units. By the end of May, 1977, 545 public sector and departmental undertakings of the Central Government had either implemented or initiated steps to implement the scheme. Reports received from some of the units show that the forums set up under the scheme have helped in improving production, productivity and overall efficiency. Apart from 545 Central Public Sector Units, reports from 25 States/Territories show that by the end of May, 1977, 1468 units had also either implemented the scheme or initiated steps to do so or had made alternative arrangements.

4. Apprenticeship Training Scheme

Directorate General of Employment & Training under the Ministry of Labour was concerned with the implementation of apprenticeship training scheme which was the 20th point of the 20-Point economic programme launched after June, 1975. Implementation of Apprentices Act 1961 is a

statutory programme starting from 1963 onwards and every establishment is obliged to train a specific number of apprentices as fixed by the concerned Apprenticeship Advisers. It is not a fact that the implementation of Apprentices Act started only after the emergency. The assessment of the achievements of the programme has been made. As against 110087 located seats and 69236 utilised seats as on 30-6-1975, the utilised seats have increased to 156531 out of 163466 located seats as on 13-5-1977. There has been an increase of 87295 in the utilised seats and 53379 in the located seats. The utilised include 53641 apprentices (over 34 per cent) belonging to weaker section viz. Scheduled Castes 16857, Scheduled Tribes 4375, Physically Handicapped 495, Minorities 28110, & Women apprentices 3804. The purpose of the apprenticeship training scheme is to provide the necessary skill and knowledge to the youngsters in order to make them employable in the various trades in the industry.

Closure of industrial units

318. SHRI SHYAMLAL GUPTA : Will the Minister of PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that many industrial units were closed down during the last two years resulting in a number of workers being laid off ;

(b) if so, what is the number of such units, State-wise, and what are the reasons for their closure ; and

(c) what is the effect of these closures on production and economy of the country ?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR (SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA) : (a) to (c) The requisite information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha when it is received.