

SHRI DEVENDRA NATH DWIVEDI : Then I would like to ask : Is there any rethinking on the part of the Government with regard to the continued Indo-Soviet co-operation and the nature of co-operation between India and the Soviet Union

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : I am afraid this does not arise out of this question. Why don't you ask questions specifically so far as these two plants are concerned ?

SHRI BIJU PATNAIK : Sir, on the question proposed by the Chair on behalf of the Honourable Member, I have already stated earlier that as far as the Bhilai Steel Plant is concerned, all the contracts entered into which the Soviet companies are being fulfilled. And, as far as the Bokaro Plant is concerned, as regards the items of machinery and equipment on which no contract has been signed, as I have said earlier, it has been decided that Indian engineers would do themselves so that we can become self-reliant.

Bonded Labour in the Rural Areas

*122. SHRI BHOLA PRASAD † :

DR. Z. A. AHMAD :

SHRI S. KUMARAN :

SHRI INDRADEEP SINHA :

Will the Minister of PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether any survey has recently been made by the Central or the State Governments to assess the magnitude of bonded labour in the rural areas ;

(b) if so, what are the results of the survey ;

(c) what is the number of the bonded labour freed in each State and Union terri-

tory since the law abolishing the bonded labour system came into force; and

(d) what is the number of the freed labour so far rehabilitated and what steps Government are taking to rehabilitate the rest of them ?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR (SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA) : (a) to (d) A statement is placed on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) No comprehensive all India survey has been conducted. The State Governments were requested to carry out surveys. The State Governments and Union Territories were also requested to constitute Vigilance Committees in every district as well as at every sub-division level for the same purpose.

The State Governments of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and the Union Territory of the Mizoram have reported the existence of bonded labour.

(c) and (d) The number of bonded labourers freed and rehabilitated as on 31-5-77 is as follows :

| | Freed | Rehabilitated |
|-------------------|--------|---------------|
| 1. Andhra Pradesh | 826 | 698 |
| 2. Bihar | 2,038 | 613 |
| 3. Gujarat | 37 | 36 |
| 4. Karnataka | 62,923 | 4,668 |
| 5. Kerala | 702 | 186 |
| 6. Madhya Pradesh | 1,500 | 33 |
| 7. Orissa | 307 | 296 |
| 8. Rajasthan | 5,533 | 2,381 |
| 9. Tamil Nadu | 2,882 | 1,975 |
| 10. Uttar Pradesh | 19,242 | 12,805 |
| 11. Mizoram | 3 | .. |
| TOTAL | 95,993 | 23,691 |

Freed bonded labourers have been rehabilitated by providing them with employment in Government Departments, allotment of agricultural lands, house-sites,

†The Question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Bhola Prasad.

loans for purchase of milch animals, sheep, carpentry implements, provision of education and free hostel facilities to the children of the freed bonded labourers. Collectors have been authorised to issue loans for agricultural purposes; loans have also been given by the Nationalised Banks at preferential rates of interest to such labourers. Collectors have also been directed to rehabilitate freed bonded labourers in on-going plan schemes and programmes including those of soil conservation, irrigation works, social welfare measures, tribal and harijan welfare programmes.

श्री भोला प्रसाद : उपसभापति महोदय, पिछले तीन महीनों के अन्दर विभिन्न राज्यों में बंधुवा मजदूरों को मुक्त करने का काम कितना किया गया है और उसके आंकड़े सरकार के पास हैं ? मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या सरकार उन आंकड़ों को दे सकती है ? इसके अलावा क्या सरकार कोई ऐसा कानून या टाईम्बोण्ड प्रोग्राम बनाएंगी जिसके अन्तर्गत बंधुवा मजदूरों को एक निश्चित समय के अन्दर मुक्त कर दिया जाएगा और उन्हें पुनः बसाने का काम भी पूरा कर दिया जाएगा ?

SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA : Sir, the Government is constantly pursuing this policy and implementing its decision. It is in touch with the State Governments. The steps that have been taken in this regard have been indicated in the statement that has been laid on the Table of the House. In the last three months particularly we have had a review of the progress that has been made, and the review has shown that there are some problems as far as identification, release and rehabilitation are concerned. We have reminded the State Governments on the steps to be taken and have promised them all support that they need in the implementation of the programme.

श्री भोला प्रसाद : उपसभापति महोदय, बंधुवा मजदूरों को मुक्त कराने में और उनको बसाने के सिलसिले में या फिर इन मजदूरों से संबंधित ऐसे मजदूर जो महाजनी कर्जों के शिकार हैं, उनको महाजनी कर्जों से मुक्ति दिलाने के लिए और उनको फिर से बसाने के लिये जो भी कार्यवाही

की जाये, तो उनको प्रोटेक्शन दिया जाय । खास-तौर से मजदूरों की ओर से जब भी इस कानून का अमल में लाने के लिये कोई दरखास्त की जाती है, कोई माग की जाती है तो महाजनों और भूस्वामियों की ओर से उन पर हमले किये जाते हैं, जुल्म किये जाते हैं । उनको कोई प्रोटेक्शन नहीं दिया जाता है और इसलिये उनका हिम्मत नहीं होती है कि वह बंधुवा मजदूरों से मुक्त होने के लिये दरखास्त दें, आफिसरों के पास जा सकें । पिछले एक साल के अन्दर जो बंधुवा मजदूरों की मुक्ति का कानून बना और कुछ कार्यवाही उसमें हुई...

श्री उपसभापति : कृपया क्वेश्चन कीजिये ।

श्री भोला प्रसाद : तो पिछले एक साल के अन्दर सिर्फ बिहार में एक सौ खेत मजदूरों, हरिजनों बंधुवा मजदूरों पर हमले हुए हैं और उनकी हत्या की गई है जाँकि महाजनों के कर्ज के शिकार थे, 75 बंधुवा मजदूर महिलाओं और हरिजन महिलाओं के साथ बलात्कार किया गया । एक साल के अन्दर डेढ़ हजार मामले ऐसे जुल्मों के दर्ज किये गये हैं ।

श्री उपसभापति : माननीय सदस्य सूचना दे रहे हैं । कृपया प्रश्न पूछिये ।

श्री भोला प्रसाद : प्रश्न ही पूछ रहा हूँ ।

उनको जब तक प्रोटेक्शन नहीं दिया जायेगा तो वह बंधुवा मजदूरों से मुक्त होने के लिये प्रयास भी नहीं कर सकते हैं । अगर कानून के जरिये उनको मुक्ति दे भी दी जायेगी तो फिर उनकी सुरक्षा नहीं हो सकती है ।

SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA : Sir, as you have pointed out, the hon. Member has given very valuable information, though I am not quite sure whether all the information is correct. However, it is the policy of the Government to give full protection in all such cases to see that there is no exploitation, to see that there is no difficulty placed in the way of those who want to avail themselves of the decisions taken by the Government. Sir, as far as the question of the possibility of their relapsing into debt and the question of the facilities that are offered are concerned, I

wish to point out to the hon. Member that more than 16,000 accounts have been opened in the nationalised banks to ensure that those released from bondage receive the necessary financial resources so that they do not relapse into bondage again.

SHRI S. KUMARAN : According to the statement given by the Government, out of a total of 95,993 bonded labourers who were freed, only about 23,000 have been rehabilitated. It is less than 25 per cent. It is a very regrettable thing. In the light of this statement, I would like to know whether the Central Government would seriously consider evolving a comprehensive scheme for their proper rehabilitation, for providing them with jobs, house sites, cultivable lands, loans and other things, secondly, according to the statement, in some States the bonded labour system still exists. May I know which are the States where the bonded labour system is still continuing ?

SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA : Sir, I may be permitted to answer the second question first. There are quite a few States which deny that there is any bonded labour within their area. It may be that in some of these States, forms of bonded labour are not so apparent. But the surveys that have been conducted by different bodies, including the reports of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, indicate the possibility of the existence of bonded labour in one disguised form or another in these States. The question, therefore, primarily is one of undertaking a proper kind of survey necessary to identify and characterise the disguised forms of bonded labour and then to take steps to see that those who are under bonded labour are freed and rehabilitated. The hon. Member pointed out the fact that though 95,993 persons have been released, only 23,691 have been rehabilitated. This is so according to the figures that we have. But I have no hesitation at all in accepting the fact that the number of persons rehabilitated is far below the number that we would like to

reach, far below the total number of persons freed. If the hon. Member has had a look at the statement that has been laid on the Table of the House, Sir, he would have seen that there are some States where the progress of rehabilitation has been particularly slow, and there are some states where it has been fairly fast and almost satisfactory. In Gujarat State 37 have been freed and 36 have been rehabilitated. But the State of Karnataka, unfortunately I have to mention, is one which is at the other end of the spectrum. There 62,923 have been freed but only 4,668 have been rehabilitated. The honourable Member in the first part of his question referred to the steps that we are taking. I would like to point out to him that there is already a very comprehensive scheme which involves the distribution of house sites and conferment of ownership rights in such sites in rural areas, allotment of agricultural land to the landless according to a set of priorities, free education to children and free hostel facilities for the children of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, loans for agricultural operations and agricultural development and loans from nationalised banks at differential rates of interest. And where the availability of land for distribution either for house sites or for allotment for agricultural purposes is not adequate, there they are absorbed in other agricultural professions like animal husbandry, poultry farming, village industries, pisciculture and sericulture. Every effort is also made to see that they are absorbed in the on-going Plan projects in the area. Every effort, therefore, is being made to evolve a comprehensive scheme and also to see that it is implemented. But the House knows that it is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments to see that these schemes are implemented. As the Central level there is a Central Review Committee which is constantly prodding, persuading, overseeing and making every effort to see that these schemes are implemented in the States.

श्री सुन्दर सिंह सण्डहरी : श्रीमान्, मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से यह जानना चाहूंगा कि पुनर्वाम

के लिये जो-जो व्यवस्थाएँ की गयी है—यहा पर बहुत ही जनरल टर्म्स में इनका उल्लेख किया गया है—क्या मंत्रालय के पास इस बात का ब्रेक-अप है कि कितनी भूमि कितने परिवारों को दी गयी, मकान कितने व्यक्तियों को दिये गये, बर्दईगरी के औजार कितने लोगों को मिले और कितने ऋण दिये गये। मैं इसी लिये इस बात पर आग्रह कर रहा हूँ कि पुनः बसाये गये आइटम में वह नम्बर तो इन्क्लूड हो जायेंगे लेकिन जो हमारा मुख्य परपज है—अगर हमने बंधुआ मजदूरों को मुक्त कराया है तो फिर एक प्रतिष्ठित जीवन वे प्रतिस्थापित कर सकें इस दृष्टि से जब तक सहायता नहीं दी जाती तब तक केवल मौखिक महानुभूति या केवल बहुत ही अल्प मात्रा में दी गयी मदद उनके किसी काम नहीं आयेगी। मुझे ऐसे केसेज मालूम हैं और मैं खेद के साथ यह कहता हूँ कि आज उनकी स्थिति पहले से ज्यादा बदतर हो गयी है। इसलिये मैं चाहूँगा कि मन्त्रालय कलेक्टरों से पीरिआडिकल रिपोर्ट्स इस बात की मांगें कि उन्होंने अपने-अपने क्षेत्र में बंधुआ मजदूरी के लिये क्या किया है और कितने लोगों के लिये क्या किया है? अगर इस समय कोई ब्रेकअप हो तो मैं चाहूँगा कि वह सदन के समक्ष प्रस्तुत करे।

SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA : I share the honourable Member's anxiety to see that there is no relapse. In fact, the honourable Member has said that in some cases their condition is worse than what it was. There is a possibility of that if the conditions are such that there is vulnerability for relapse. Sir, he has asked for a break-up of the figures under each head. I am afraid at this moment it will not be possible for me . . .

SHRI SUNDER SINGH BHANDARI : I want them to be collected.

SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA : But I can say that the question raised is so important that we are constantly trying to collect information on these aspects. In fact, the honourable Member may like to know, in the light of the suggestion that he has made that we have asked the Collectors to be constantly pursuing this question, that we have not only asked the Collectors

to pursue this question but also said that there should be vigilance committees constituted at the level of the district as well as the block.

SHRI SUNDER SINGH BHANDARI : Get the reports.

SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA : Yes, the reports are collected and reviewed by the Central Review Committee.

SHRI IRENGBAM TOMPOK SINGH : Sir, my questions are very very specific and brief : One. Has the Central Government given any deadline for conducting this survey ? Secondly, what is the amount involved in the rehabilitation of these 23,691 out of the total 95,993 ? And what is the per capita expenditure involved ? Will the Central Government bear part of that expenditure incurred by the State Governments ? What will be the total amount required for the rehabilitation of those released from the bonded labour ?

SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA : No deadline has been set, but the Central Government has constantly reminded the States of the importance of this question and reiterated its anxiety to see that the surveys are conducted expeditiously and thoroughly. But as I told the House earlier, the problem is not one of statement of intentions. The nature of the problem is such that a multi-pronged offensive is necessary even in the matter of conducting surveys especially when some State Governments are anxious to deny the existence of any form of bonded labour within their areas.

In the second part of the question, the hon. Member asked about the financial resources available to the States and the total finances that will be necessary for the rehabilitation of those who have been released from bonded labour. I wish to state in this connection that this question has been reviewed more than once at the Chief Ministers' Conference which was held in 1976, by the Committee of Secretaries as well as at the conference of Labour Ministers held in October, 1976. The conclusion of these discussions at these conferences was that by and large the financial resour-

ces necessary for the rehabilitation of those who have been liberated from bonded labour are available within the States' budgets and the Plan provisions. It has been pointed out at these conferences that if there are cases where there are difficulties and adequate finances are not available, then the Central Government will see that lack of funds does not stand in the way of rehabilitation and the creation of conditions under which nobody remains in bondage. The Central Government is also examining the possibility of providing assistance on the basis of matching grants if such cases are brought to their attention.

*123. [The Questioner (Shri S. A. Khaja Mohideen, was absent. For answer vide col. 33 infra.]

Working of Delhi telephone service

*124. SHRI HARSH DEO MALAVIYA :

SHRI SARDAR AMJAD ALI :

SHRI KHURSHED ALAM

KHAN :

SHRI JAGDISH JOSHI :

SHRI IBRAHIM KALANIYA :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state

(a) whether Government are aware that the telephone service in Delhi has deteriorated causing inconvenience to the subscribers;

(b) whether Government are also aware that the fault repair service has also become slack and the complaints do not receive prompt attention; and

(c) if he answers to parts (a) and (b) above be in the affirmative, whether Government propose to probe into its working with a view to ensuring efficient service?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES):

†The Question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Sardar Amjad Ali.

(a) to (c) The service being rendered to the subscribers of the Delhi Telephone System continues to be at the same level of efficiency as earlier. Sometimes, due to emergent situations, one of which was the fire in the Connaught Place Exchange building in December, 1976, there was some deterioration temporarily.

A special programme has been launched for overhauling the equipments in strowger Exchanges, upgrading the Cross Bar Exchanges, pressurisation of cables, adding of traffic relief equipments to reduce congestion, and inspection and attention to subscribers' fittings and installations. Additional switch board positions are being installed on the Special Services.

A continuous watch is being kept and the quality of the Service is being monitored. It is expected that the service will gradually improve further.

SHRI SARDAR AMJAD ALI : I am thankful to the hon. Minister that he was prompt enough in saying

SHRI JAGDISH JOSHI : You should answer in Hindi.

श्री जार्ज फर्नेन्डिस : जैसे आप पूछेंगे वैसे जवाब दूंगा।

SHRI JAGDISH JOSHI : No. You should stand by your commitment.

श्री जार्ज फर्नेन्डिस : जिसमें आपको शिकायत न आए इसका खयाल रखना।

श्री जगदीश जोशी : हिन्दी में जवाब दीजिए।

SHRI SARDAR AMJAD ALI : I am happy that the hon. Minister has very kindly said that the services rendered by the Delhi Telephone System are the same as they were. He has come to this assessment. But what I would like to know from him is whether it is his assessment that the persons who attend to the complaints of the subscribers are not trained enough to locate the defects in the system. I would like to know whether they are properly trained for the job and whether