

**STATEMENT BY MINISTER RE-
QUESTION OF FIXATION OF IN-
TERIM RATES OF WAGES IN
RESPECT OF WORKING JOUR-
NALISTS AND NON-JOURNALIST
NEWSPAPER EMPLOYEES.**

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI LOKANATH MISRA): There are two minutes left. Shri Ravindra Varma, Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and Labour, has to make a statement. Yes, Mr. Varma.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR (SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA): Sir, a statutory Wage Board for non-journalist newspaper employees was constituted by the Central Government on the 11th June, 1975, under section 13C of the Working Journalists and Other Newspaper Employees (Conditions of Service) and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1955.

2. A similar Wage Board for working journalists was also constituted under section 9 of the Act, on the 6th February, 1976. The Central Government, being of the opinion that it was necessary to fix interim rates of wages both in respect of non-journalist employees and working journalists, sought the advice of the two wage boards in the matter. The advice of the Wage Board for Non-journalists as well as that of the Wage Board for Working Journalists was made available to the Government in June and October, 1976, respectively. Both the Wage Boards were of the view that non-journalists and working journalists should be given relief from the 1st June, 1975. The Wage Boards also proposed further enhancement in the quantum of relief from 1st January, 1976. An immediate decision should have been taken in view of the urgency of providing relief to the employees. Unfortunately, the then Government took no decision in the matter and kept the

question pending. Government have now taken a decision to fix immediately the interim rates of wages under section 13A and 13D of the Act on the basis of the advice tendered by the Wage Board for the Non-journalists and the Wage Board for Working Journalists. Government have also considered carefully and sympathetically the question of grant of relief from the 1st of June, 1975, as proposed by the two Wage Boards. While the Government can well understand the case for retrospective fixation of interim wage rates, they have to consider the matter within the framework of the law. Whereas sub-section (3) of section 12 of the Act, enables final recommendations of Wage Board being brought into operation retrospectively, there is no such provision in the existing Section 13A relating to the fixation of interim wage rates. The law as it stands, therefore does not clearly empower the Government to fix interim wage rates retrospectively. Government, therefore, propose to take early action to examine in detail whether Section 13A of the Act needs to be changed to give clear power to Government to fix interim rates of wages with retrospective effect.

I am glad to announce that without delaying the matter further, Government have decided to take action to fix the interim wage rates, according to the recommendations of the two Wage Boards, to come into immediate effect from the date of notification.

I am also glad to inform the House that as a result of the fixation of the interim wage rates there will be increase in the existing emoluments of non-journalist employees ranging from Rs. 23/- to Rs.

p.m. depending upon the class of newspapers,

weeklies, periodicals etc. to which they belong. In the case of working journalists the increase will similarly range from Rs. 85]-p.m. to Rs. 1311- p.m. Relief is also being given to part-time correspondents.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI LOKANATH MISRA): The House stands adjourned till 11 A.M. on Monday, the 4th April 1977.

The House then adjourned at one minute past five of the clock on Monday, the 4th April 1977.