

[Shri K. V. Raghunath Reddy.] section 17 of the Provident Fund Act, the Finance Ministry will have to decide the investment policy. The interest rates given on various types of deposits vary. The investment policy is decided by the Finance Ministry. On certain deposits the interest rate is 10 per cent whereas in the case of some others it may be less. Notwithstanding that, a certain average is maintained. Then, Sir, with regard to the point raised by my friend, Shri D. P. Singh, certainly I will look into it. I repeat, Sir, that I do not want this to be treated as an assurance.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI LOKA-NATH MISRA) : The question is :

"That the Bill further to amend the Coal Mines Provident Fund, Family Pension and Bonus Schemes Act, 1948, the Employees' Provident Funds and Family Pension Fund Act, 1952, the Wealth-tax Act, 1957 and the Income-tax Act, 1961, as passed by the Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI LOKA-NATH MISRA) : We shall now take up the clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill.

Clauses 2 to 41 were added to the Bill.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Title were added to the Bill.

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY: Sir, I beg to move :

"That the Bill be passed."

The question was proposed.

SHRI B. N. BANERJEE (Nominated) : Sir, only one word I would like to say.

Sir, Mr. Raghunatha Reddy has brought forward many healthy pieces of legislation on the floor of this House for the benefit of labour and for that he deserves our congratulations. Sir, this Bill is also one such piece of legislation under which an employee, without making any contribution,

gets some benefit and some money would be payable to his family from this Fund on his death. This is very good. But I would like to tell him only one thing. The Employees' Provident Fund organisation is very notorious in the matter of delaying the payment of the Provident Fund dues of the workers. Will Mr. Raghunatha Reddy, who is pleading so much for these poor persons, give an assurance that he would issue instructions to the Provident Fund offices that in the event of death of an employee, where the Provident Fund moneys become payable to his heirs and where the extra money on account of the insurance becomes payable, they should be paid without any delay and that these cases would be given prompt attention ? Sir, If this is not done, whatever money he gives, whether it is eight thousand rupees or nine thousand rupees, on account of insurance, will be of no use.

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY : Sir, I have always treated Mr. Banerjee with great respect, both as the former Secretary-General of this House and as our present colleague and I treat with great respect whatever he says. Sir, even before he mentioned this point on the floor of the House, I have been myself thinking of calling for a conference of the Regional Provident Commissioners and for seeing in what manner this insurance scheme should be implemented with promptness and also for seeing that the benefit accrues to those affected people within a period of ten days. Thank you, Sir.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI LOKA-NATH MISRA) : The question is :

"That the Bill be passed."

The motion was adopted.

THE DHOTEES (ADDITIONAL EXCISE DUTY) REPEAL BILL, 1976

SHRI SANAT KUMAR RAHA (West Bengal) : Sir, I would like to make a request. I would request you not to take up this Bill because I feel that we should not rush through this Bill.

SHRI B. N. BANERJEE (Nominated) : Sir, this is only a Repeal Bill and, therefore, it can be taken up now and finished.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI LOKA- [NATH MISRA) : I would like to inform the House about the decision of the Business Advisory Committee. The Business Advisory Committee has recommended—which, ultimately, must have got the consent of the House—that the House is to sit normally up to six O'clock for the transaction of business and, when it becomes necessary, it has to sit beyond six O'clock. Today is one such day when we have on the List of Business this Bill and it is now only two minutes to six and there is only one speaker. If the honourable Minister can take just two minutes to introduce this Bill, it will be good and it can be finished. There is only one speaker and he can take about five to ten minutes and we can dispose of it.

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH : We can take it up, Sir, today.

SHRI B. N. BANERJEE : Sir, this Bill, as its name suggests, is only a Repeal Bill—it is called the Dhoties (Additional Excise Duty) Repeal Bill, 1976, and, therefore, we can pass it and it need not be delayed.

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH) : Sir, I beg to move :

That the Bill to repeal the Dhoties (Additional Excise Duty) Act, 1953, as passed by the Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration."

The question was proposed.

6 P.M.

SHRI SANAT KUMAR RAHA : Sir, I shall put only one question. By repealing this Act, the Dhoties (Additional Excise Duty) Act, 1953, is the Government supporting the mill-owners or is it in the interest of the handloom industry ? That should be explained. Nothing else.

श्री श्याम लाल यादव (उत्तर प्रदेश) : बाजार में धोतियां बहुत हैं लेकिन उसका खरीदार कोई नहीं है क्योंकि उसके दाम अधिक हैं। मैं मंत्री महोदय से यह निवेदन करना चाहता हूँ कि ये धोतियां, जिन्हें ग्राम जनता पहनती है उस पर जब आप एक्साइज ड्यूटी घटा देंगे तो साथ घटाही साथ उसका माइज भी ठीक करे। यह धोती कम से कम 5 गज की होनी चाहिए।

उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्री लोकनाथ मिश्र) : उसे साड़ी बोला जाता है।

श्री श्याम लाल यादव : वह लेडीज के लिए साड़ी हों गई और आदमियों के लिए धोती हों गई है। मेरा निवेदन यह है कि उसका कपड़ा भी अच्छा होना चाहिए और किनारी भी अच्छी होनी चाहिए ताकि लोग उसको पसन्द से पहन सकें।

उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्री लोकनाथ मिश्र) : एक दो मिनट में अगर कोई बोलना चाहे तो कोई हर्ज नहीं।

डा० चन्द्रमणि लाल चौधरी (बिहार) : उप सभाध्यक्ष, जो अधिकांश गांव में रहने वाले लोग और जहां तक बिहार, असम और बंगाल का ताल्लुक है, वे भी इसमें लिए जा सकते हैं, इन तमाम लोगों की जिन्दगी धोती पर ही बसर करती है। गांधी जी भी धोती पहनने वाले मजदूरों को बड़े प्यार से और स्नेह से देखते थे। आज उसी धोती की जो कास्ट है वह इतना ऊंची है कि मजदूरों को, श्रमिकों को उस धोती को पहनने में बड़ी मुश्किल होती है। वे लोग धोती पहनना चाहते हैं और पहनते भी हैं पर उनको खरीदते हुए बड़ी दिक्कत होती है; क्योंकि उसकी कीमत बहुत ज्यादा होती है। यह बात मैं साफ तौर से कह रहा हूँ। दूसरी बात मैं यह कह रहा हूँ कि गांवों में जो महिलाएं रहती हैं जो बैकवर्ड क्लास की हैं गरीब क्लास की हैं। या दरभंगा के अन्दर, वे साड़ी पहनने में बड़ी दिक्कत महसूस करती हैं। जो साड़ी पहले क्राउन और कैलिको की 10 या 12 रुपए में मिलती थी आज उसकी कीमत 55 या 56 रुपए है। माफ करें, इस कीमत की साड़ी मिडल क्लास के लोग पहनते हैं। पहले जो धोती का

[डा० बन्धुमणि लाल चौधरी]

जोड़ा 16 रुपए में आता था आज उसकी कीमत 60-65 रुपए है। इसलिए मैं बेयर से, हिन्दुस्तान की गुरवत को देखते हुए, काश्तकार और मजदूरों को देखते हुए और बिहार को बदकिस्मती को देखते हुए रिक्वेस्ट करता हूँ कि उसके दाम जितने कम से कम हो सकें, वह करें जिससे हिन्दुस्तान को मर्यादा बरकरार रहे।

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH : Sir, I must thank the hon. Members for their co-operation and also the suggestions and questions they have put on this Bill. They have been brief in their comments. I am assured of their complete acceptance of the proposal.

About the query raised by hon. Member, Shri Raha, whether this will benefit the mill-owners or it is otherwise, I must say categorically that this Bill is not meant for the benefit of the mill-owners. In 1950, as a protection for the handloom industry some reservation was made of certain dhoties having borders exceeding half-an-inch width. As soon as this was introduced, there was a fall in the production of dhoties in the mill sector. In 1949, 5.48 million metres were produced in the mills sector. It fell to 274 million metres. But thereafter in 1951 and 1952, the production again rose to 682 million metres. The mills could somehow augment their production of dhoties by taking advantage of the description and making certain changes. Thus, we saw that more measures were necessary and that is why this Additional Excise Duty Act of 1952 was brought in and a quota was fixed. This excise duty was attracted on more than 60 per cent of the production during a specified period. This had its definite effect on the production of dhoties. The production of dhoties which was 325 million metres in 1963 fell down to 185 million metres in 1975. During this period, the mills adjusted their variety of production. Most of the mills went off the production of dhoties and the machinery that was required for dhoties had been discarded. When it came to production of controlled cloth, we found it necessary to produce dhoties

and we imposed an obligation that at least 20 per cent of dhoties should be produced. We found that some mills had to make readjustments to produce the necessary quantity of dhoties under the controlled cloth sector. The production, having gone down once, never reached the level of 1952 and, therefore, the necessity of the Additional Excise Duty Act was no more and it became redundant. There was another difficulty. While insisting on the necessity of production of dhoties under the 20 per cent controlled cloth obligation, we found that this additional excise duty was attracted and it became a tax on that very quota which we went to sell cheap to the poor sections. In this context also, a revision was necessary.

As far as making dhoties available in sufficient quantities in Bihar or in other parts of the countries is concerned, we have laid down a pattern of production under the controlled cloth sector. The prices of controlled cloth have not been allowed to rise in order to keep down the prices. It has also been decided that the controlled varieties of dhoties and sarees will be produced in the handloom sector in a phased manner. While thanking the hon. Member, I commend the Bill for the consideration of the House.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI LOKANATH MISRA) : The question is :

"That the Bill to repeal the Dhoties (Additional Excise Duty) Act, 1953, as passed by the Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI LOKANATH MISRA) : Now, we shall take up clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill.

Clause 1 was added to the Bill.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Title were added to the Bill.

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH) : I move :

"That the Bill be returned."

The question was put and the motion was adopted.