

RAJYA SABHA

Friday, the 13th August, 1976 [the 21st
Savana, 1898 (Saka)]

The House met at eleven of the clock. Mr. Chairman in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Wage board for working journalists and non-working journalists

*91. SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Wage Board for Working Journalists and Non-working Journalists has submitted its report to Government;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) if the answer to part (a) above be in the negative what are the reasons for the delay; and

(d) whether the Wage Board has recommended any interim relief till the report is submitted?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY): (a) to (d) There are two separate Wage Boards, one for non-journalists and the other for working journalists. The Central Government had asked for their views on the question of fixation of interim rates of wages. These have been received from the Wage Board for Non-journalists and are awaited from the Wage Board for Working Journalists which was constituted only about 6 months ago.

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: Sir, I would like the hon. Minister to let me know if the Wage Board was not set up one year ago and what are the reasons that it has not submitted its report so far because naturally the working journalists who do not feel secure in their service or do not get the wages they are supposed to get cannot do objective reporting. I want

to know what is the real reason for for the delay.

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY: Sir, the Wage Board for non-journalists newspaper employees—for the first time it is a statutory Wage Board under the present Act which had been amended for this purpose—was set up on 11-6-1975, and the Government received the recommendations of the Wage Board for non-journalist newspaper employees with regard to interim relief on 19-6-1976. Then, after the receipt of this report, on 22-6-1975 we referred the matter to the concerned Ministries for their views. We are awaiting the views of the concerned Ministries for further processing and consideration of this matter. With regard to working journalists, the Wage Board was appointed on 6-2-1976. We have also requested this Wage Board to consider the question of interim relief and now they have given hearings to the parties—both the employers and the employees and on 17th August and 4th September the Wage Board is going to sit to consider this question. We are expecting this report sometime in September.

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: Is it not true that an interim relief of Rs. 75 had been fixed whereas the demand was for Rs. 125 and is it not true against that this interim relief is also not given on a uniform pattern to all the journalists and distinction and discrimination is made between regional and all-India newspapers, big and small newspapers? I would like to know from the hon. Minister why the interim relief of Rs. 75—though inadequate—is not given to all the working journalists on a uniform pattern.

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY: Sir, I think there is some misunderstanding on the subject. The very Wage Board which is dealing with interim relief to the working journalists has not yet given its report with regard to interim relief. Only the second Wage Board—which is a statutory Wage Board for the

first time for non-journalists—had given an interim report with regard to interim relief to the non-working journalists, and that report is received.

SHRI ABU ABRAHAM: Sir, the Minister used the words "non-working journalists"—those who are not working. I take it that the Minister meant the words "non-journalists".

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY: I do not think I used the expression "non-working journalists". I used the expression "non-journalists." You can have some confidence in my English.

श्री जगदीश जोशी : क्या मंत्री महोदय यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि वेज बोर्ड के सदस्य कौन हैं और उनके नाम क्या हैं और किस तारीख को गठन हुआ था ? दूसरे, उन्होंने वेज बोर्ड का निर्णय प्राप्त करने के लिये किन-किन स्थानों का दौरा करके किन-किन प्रतिष्ठानों के बयानात लिये हैं और इसका कोई विवरण हो तो वह भी बताने की कृपा करें ।

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY: Sir, for working journalists, the members of the Wage Board are: Chairman, Shri D. G. Palekar, retired Judge of the Supreme Court of India. Among independent members are, Shri B. C. Bhagawati, Member Rajya Sabha and Chairman, INTUC and Shri R. C. Dutt, Retired Secretary to the Government of India. Employers' representatives: Dr. Ram S. Tarneja, Associate General Manager, Times of India, Bombay; Shri Narendra Tiwari, "Nai Duniya", Indore. Working journalists: Shri S. B. Kolpe and Shri T. R. Ramaswamy. With regard to the non-journalists, the independent members and the chairman are the same. The representatives of non-journalist are Mr. Kolhatkar and Mr. Ramamurthy. The employers' representatives are Shri Santosh Nath, General Manager, Hindustan Times, New Delhi and Shri K. S. Desh-

pande of the Marathawada Aurangabad and they are entitled under the Act to take evidence. I do not think they have taken the entire evidence. Naturally, the representatives of the working journalists, non-journalists, employers, etc. must have appeared before them and submitted memoranda, and the same must have been sent to the Wage Board for conciliation.

श्री श्रीकान्त वर्मा : सभापति महोदय, एक जरनेलिस्ट होने के नाते मैं इस बात को जानता हूँ कि जब भी इस तरह के वेज बोर्ड बनते हैं तो उनकी सिफारिशों पर अमल नहीं किया जाता है। कुछ समाचार-पत्र जो डरते हैं या दबते हैं वे तो जरूर इन सिफारिशों पर अमल करते हैं। लेकिन छोटे-छोटे समाचार-पत्र या मझौले समाचार-पत्र इन सिफारिशों पर अमल नहीं करते हैं। इसके अलावा न तो श्रम मंत्री महोदय और उनका मंत्रालय और न ही सुचना मंत्रालय इस बारे में बहुत दिलचस्पी लेते हैं। ये बातें मैं अपनी जानकारी के आधार पर कह रहा हूँ। ऐसी स्थिति में मैं माननीय मंत्री महोदय से यह जानना चाहूँगा कि पिछली बार पत्रकारों के लिए जो वेतन-मंडल नियुक्त हुआ था और उसने जो सिफारिशें की थीं उन सिफारिशों पर जिन समाचार-पत्रों ने अमल नहीं किया उनके खिलाफ सरकार की तरफ से क्या कार्यवाही की गई ? इसके अलावा इंटेरिम रिलीफ के मामले में वेज बोर्ड की सिफारिशों के बारे में जिन समाचार-पत्रों ने अमल नहीं किया उनके मनेजमेन्ट के विरुद्ध क्या वाकई में कोई कार्यवाही की जाएगी ?

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY: Sir, it is true that the language newspapers and small newspapers have also represented this time in the context of their own economic position that it would be difficult for them to implement the recommendations. But we are not concerned at this stage because the implementing authority is the appropriate Government, in other words,

the State Government concerned. The question of interim relief would also arise only when the same is announced.

With regard to the previous recommendations, I may bring to your notice that as late back as 15th April, 1976 I have requested all the Labour Ministers to take vigorous steps to see that all the recommendations are implemented.

श्री श्रीकान्त वर्मा : क्या माननीय मंत्री महोदय यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि जब पिछली बार दी गई रिपोर्ट की सिफारिशों पर अमल नहीं किया गया है और उन सिफारिशों को अमल में नहीं लाया गया है तो नया वेज बोर्ड बैठाने का क्या अर्थ है, यह बात मैं नहीं समझ पा रहा हूँ ?

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY: With regard to this point, I have already said that realising that certain recommendations are not being implemented by certain parties, we have written to the Labour Ministers concerned as early as 15th April requesting them to take necessary steps to see that these recommendations are implemented.

SHRI HARSH DEO MALAVIYA: Sir, the working journalists constitute a very important segment of our Indian social life. I would like to know when its recommendations are implemented. I am aware of the discontent among working journalists at the dilatory methods and the delays in the appointment of the Board, in the final report of the Board and nobody knows when its recommendations would be implemented. This is causing great discontent among the working journalists and we would not like to see them unhappy or discontented any more. In view of this, will the hon. Minister assure the House that he will take immediate steps to see that the recommendations of the Wage Board are examined and implemented very soon and give time-

limit by which the same will be implemented?

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY: The hon. Member is well aware of the pre-history and post-history of all these matters. The Government is not at all responsible for the delay. When we first announced the appointment of a Wage Board, some working journalists went to the court and got stay orders. Therefore, until the matter was settled in the court, we could not do anything. About the functioning of the Board itself, once the report is received and the recommendations are known, certainly it will be our duty to see in what manner it could be implemented.

SHRI HARSH DEO MALAVIYA: Will the Minister give any assurance? Otherwise, it will go on for three years.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nobody can give a time-limit.

SHRI N. H. KUMBHARE: As has been pointed out, the essential question is that of delay, because of which there has been a lot of unrest amongst the journalists. Now, we are being told that there is no fault of the Ministry. The Ministry awaits the recommendations of the Wage Board. In the first place, I would like to know whether the recommendations which are given by the Wage Board are accepted as such; or is it necessary for the Ministry to give another consideration to the recommendations and then given final order?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please resume your seat. Only then will he be able to reply.

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY: Sir, the legal position is this. With regard to the interim relief, we request the Wage Board that they may give their advice, and it is for the Government to take a final view in the matter. Therefore, the Government has got a duty to consider the report and take a decision. With regard to the complaint of delay, I can

only submit that such a respectable honourable Member of this House as Shri Bhagwati Chairman of INTUCS, is there. No doubt, those people are as much interested in the matter as the honourable Members are in recommending that the report be made available as early as possible.

SHRI SANAT KUMAR RAHA: Sir, I want to know from the honourable Minister as to who are to be indentified as non-journalist workers, and whether a number of correspondents who are working on an honorary basis in small news papers will be identified as journalist or non-journalist workers. Secondly, what is the total strength of non-journalist workers and may I know whether they have got an all-India organisation, and if so, whether representation is there on behalf of that organisation?

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY: Sir, with regard to the question as to who is a non-journalist, the law itself contains a definition of the non-journalist worker. I do not want to advise the honourable Member on that. And with regard to the representation on the Non-Journalist Wage Board, two representatives of the organisation are there as members of the Wage Board.

*92. [The questioner (Shri Viren J. Shah) was absent. For answer vide col. 35 infra].

Assault on Indian Youths in London

*93. **SHRI LAKSHMANAMAHAPATRO:**

SHRI S. K. VAISHAMPAYEN:†
SHRIMATI SAROJ KHAPARDE:

SHRI VEERENDRA KUMAR SAKHALECHA:

SHRIMATI LAKSHMI KUMARI CHUNDAWAT:

Will the Minister of **EXTERNAL**

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri S. K. Vaishampayan.

AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that two Indian youths were assaulted and one of them was stabbed to death in London on the 5th June, 1976;

(b) if so, whether these assaults were as a result of racial tension prevailing in U. K.; and

(c) if the reply to part (b) above be in the affirmative what action the Government of India have taken in the matter?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI BIPINPAL DAS): (a) Yes, Sir. Two young men of Indian origin were attacked and one of them was stabbed to death on the night of the 4th/5th June, 1976.

(b) It is not possible to say whether the incident was a direct result of recent increase in racial tension until the Court hearing takes place. The British Police have registered a case of murder.

(c) We have raised the matter, in the general context of deteriorating race relations, with the British authorities at appropriate levels and our concern has been conveyed both to the British High Commission here as well as to the British Foreign Office in London. Our mission in London has held periodic consultations with the Pakistan and Bangladesh missions in order to coordinate their approach on the general issue. Our High Commissioner and Deputy High Commissioner have kept in close touch with leaders of the Indian immigrant community in Britain and have assured them of our deep concern for their safety and welfare. They have been urged to remain calm, extend their fullest cooperation to the local authorities in maintaining law and order and to refrain from saying or doing anything that might aggravate racial feelings.