

MR. CHAIRMAN: He does not say that it's not possible in other States. He says that other States can follow Kerala.

SHRI YOGENDRA SHARMA: I am saying the same thing. What is the reaction of other State Governments to the Kerala Act? Secondly, since the hon. Minister admits that this legislation is not being implemented properly because of lack of machinery will he consider making a provision in this Act for the constitution of vigilance committees, as has been made in the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act?

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY: Sir, let me first make it clear that we have the machinery under the Minimum Wages Act. But my sub-mission is, notwithstanding the machinery, unless there is a corresponding labour movement also, the decisions taken by the Government may not be implemented properly, however good they may be. In the conference of Labour Ministers also, it was decided that various State Governments should express their views on the legislation passed by the Kerala Government so that having regard to their views, a model legislation can be prepared by the Center for the purpose of being circulated. About the proposal for vigilance committees, this suggestion would be examined.

SHRI YOGENDRA SHARMA: I am very sorry, Sir, he has not replied to my question. My question was: What is the reaction of other State Governments to the Kerala law?

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY: The reactions of some State Governments have been received. We are yet to receive the reactions of some other State Governments. Some State Governments have reacted favourably, with certain reservations. After receiving all the reactions we would like to prepare a model legislation for this purpose.

SHRI S. W. DHABE: Sir, the National Labour Commission has said in this connection that the enforcement machinery for minimum wages to rural workers has remained a dead-letter. Revenue officers will not be useful, naturally, because they are not likely to do justice. Enforcement being with the State Governments, at present two machineries are available at the State Government level. One is the Labour Court in which, under section 33(c) (ii) the workers file the cases. The other is the Small Causes Court and about minimum wages they go there. Will he consider mobile courts so that the Small Causes Court and the Labour Court can go and decide at the block level because the cases are not large in number? Also will he strengthen the inspection machinery at the Central level?

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY: In fact, I said that it is the recommendation of the National Labour Commission that village panchayats, zilla pari-shads and other institutions should be associated. But the Labour Ministers did not find it reasonable.

Telephone Racket in Bombay

•483. SHRI SARDAR AMJAD ALI DR. V. B. SINGH: SHRI HARSH DEO MALAVIYA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a telephone racket has recently been unearthed in Bombay;

(b) whether it is also a fact that some employees of the Deptt. acquired keys for opening public telephone booths and removed the 10-paise coins causing great loss to Government revenue; and

(c) if so what steps Government have taken to punish the guilty and ensure prevention of such undesirable practice in future?

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

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI JAGANNATH PAHADIA): (a) Three officials of the Bombay Telephones were apprehended by officials of the CBI, in a trap laid by them on 3-1-76, for accepting an amount of Rs. 170 from the Telephone Subscriber ostensibly for changing telephone wires in the subscribers premises. The CBI have registered a criminal case or investigation. They have not so far reported the exis-tance of a racket.

(to) One key for opening the cash box of a private PCO which was disconnected about a year ago and which had been given for dismantling the PCO was also found with one of the three apprehended officials. This key cannot be used for opening other public telephone booths for removing the 10 paise coins.

(c) The punishment of the guilty will be based on the outcome of the CBI investigation. Greater vigilance will be exercised to prevent such occurrences in future.

SHRI SARDAR AMJAD ALI: Sir, I would have been very glad if I could say that the whole telephone system in the country is a racket, but I won't say that since the Minister has said that at least CBI has made investigation into the affairs and that three persons have been apprehended. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he is aware of the fact that in almost all the public telephone booths where you have to put three coins inside a particular box, these boxes have been named inside the country as "coin-devouring boxes". You put in the three coins; the telephone is not connected and the coins also do not come back. A person who inserts the coins neither gets the call nor the coins. Have you any programme or plan to put some individuals to look into these difficulties immediately there? Do you have some such plan?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI S. D. SHARMA): The complaints are there, we are conscious of them and we are trying to improve. We have asked our engineers to look into the whole question.

DR. RAJAT KUMAR CHAKRABARTI: But why is the money not coming back even when there is no connection? That is the question here. Everywhere in the world, Sir, where such machines are there, if the connection is not made the money automatically comes out. That is the nature of the machine. But why here in India it is not developed?

SHRI S. D. SHARMA: In certain cases the machine is not working. If it is working, then you will get it back. It is because it is not working you lose both your connection and your coins. That is what we want to set right and that is why we are not really encouraging them very much. Various problems have come up. In foreign countries, usually it is only one coin. In America it used to be a quarter; I do not know how much it is now. Just one coin goes there and it gives the result. Here we have three coins and three coins create their own problems. Then, these three coins themselves can be of different metals. So, various problems are created. One idea suggested is that there should be a token. Then there is another problem. Sometimes people kick it, there have been complaints from the other side also.

They do not put the coin and still they get the call. Sometimes what happens is that the persons after putting the coins leaves it or does not follow the correct mechanism. The result is that the other man disconnects the call. That also creates complications. The whole system is complicated. That is why we are not encouraging putting these boxes at the present moment. We have thought

about the method of obviating this and giving it to some man, who may be in charge, who may be given commission. He will give proper account of the coins and also will get commission. We are thinking of some such methods. The whole matter is under consideration.

DR. V. P. DUTT: You mean if it is privately done it will be more efficient.

SHRI S. D. SHARMA: May be.

SHRI ARVIND GANESH KULKARNI: The hon. Minister has informed us that the CBI is looking into the case of the three persons who have been caught but is the Minister aware of the working of the trunk telephones in metropolitan cities? In these thickly populated cities, where automatic telephones are not there where manual operators are giving connections, there is a virtual racket, favouritism is shown, people get numbers for the asking, whereas others do not get numbers for hours together. This type of racketeering shows that the telephone operators or the telephone personnel require some type of disciplining. What type of discipline is required, that you know better. So far, the consumer is always the sufferer. Whether you call it a devouring machine or whatever you may call it, the point is that it is the consumer who suffers all along because of various types of racketeers operating in your telephone department along with the Ministry. So, will there be a specific reply as to what type of arrangements you are going to make so that consumers will be protected in future?

SHRI S. D. SHARMA: These complaints are there.

SHRI ARVIND GANESH KULKARNI: For how many years they are there?

SHRI S. D. SHARMA: I do not know. The hon. Member may be knowing it for a longer period than I

do but the position is that the difficulty is there and we are trying to set it right. We have put people to investigate. We have adopted various other methods also. We have been able to catch some people but the ultimate solution lies in, and we are thinking of laying more emphasis on more of STD so that the operators are eliminated. That is why I have also thought about having more of the STD.

SHRI ARVIND GANESH KULKARNI:

The other day we heard about the problems of the STD also.

SHRI S. D. SHARMA: The problems of STD will remain but the solution is there. If you want to remove problems of the STD, the solution will be found only if we are able to invest in the telecommunications at least 50 times of what we have already done. Till that time the problems in the STD will remain as I said in the very beginning, because the traffic is much larger in the channels than we are able to provide. But a method has to be found. We cannot throw away what is available because we cannot have the best. Whatever improvements we can make we are trying to make and among those improvements are. Eliminating operators, training of operators, setting them right, catching the filthy, and thus them with the national patriotism and in that I seek the help of all of you. We are also thinking of increasing the number of transmission lines. If there will be more transmission lines, he will not have much of the excuse to say that the line is engaged. That is why during this period, I am going to intensify transmission lines and direct lines to important places, where the calls are usually there. I think this is one of the solutions which may work to a certain extent. I cannot promise that this can be fully eliminated. So long as greed is there, so long as, perhaps, we do not have socialism, the problem will remain.

SHRI V. P. DUTT: Sir, the question was about racket and mismana-

gement and not about these technical matters.

SHRI ARVIND GANESH KULKARNI: Sir, are you satisfied with his philosophy? The problem is that of improving the efficiency.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He will try to improve it.

Next question.

P. F. Dues From Coal Companies

*484. SHRI DHARAMCHAND JAIN: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Provident Fund dues to the tune of Rs. 100 lakhs have not been deposited by the Coal India Ltd., Bharat Coking Coal and Coal Mines Authority; and

(b) if so, what are the reasons there-for?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY): (a) According to the Coal Mines Provident Fund Commissioner upto December, 1975 the arrears of provident fund dues from Bharat Coking Coal Ltd. and Eastern Coalfields approximately amount to Rs. 14 and Rs. 12 crores respectively! the Coal India Ltd. have deposited the provident fund dues of their staff. Coal Mines Authority—is now replaced by a holding company as Coal India Ltd. It has five subsidiaries namely, B.C.C.L., Eastern Coalfields, Western Coalfields, Central Coalfield and Coal Mines Planning and Designs Institute.

(b) According to the Department of Coal, the provident fund dues have been delayed due to difficult ways and means position of the companies.

SHRI DHARAMCHAND JAIN: What steps you propose to take against this default of not depositing the

money which, I hope, has been realized from the employers as well as by way of contribution of the employers?

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY: Sir, as I have submitted, there are three stages at which these arrears have accumulated—the pre-take-over stage, the stage between the pre-take-over and nationalization, and the stage after nationalisation. After nationalization, the Bharat Coking Coal Limited from 1-5-72 to 31-12-75 owes Rs. 13.98 crores, and the Eastern Company also owes something; I have already quoted the figure. With regard to this matter, as I have submitted, these are nationalised companies and the ways and means position is not happy. I understand the B.C.C.L. has to get Rs. 23.64 crores from their customers; and the Eastern Company has to get Rs. 14.15 crores from their customers. These companies are nationalised companies and the management being in the public sector, one can be rest assured that these moneys are safe, and as soon as the ways and means position improves, I presume, Sir, money would be deposited.

SHRI DHARAMCHAND JAIN: Suppose the money is not realised from the public companies, what steps are you going to take? After all, this is the money which-----

AN HON'BLE MEMBER: No presumption.

SHRI DHARAMCHAND JAIN: Why? There are other companies. What steps will the Minister take in this matter? You cannot have two sets of laws for the public sector and private sector. What is your clear-cut policy about this?

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY: Sir, it is not a question of two sets of policies. Naturally with regard to a public sector company managed by the Government, the