

lational relations are changed. I would like to ask him whether the recent shift in the policy favourable towards America is a reflection also of the domestic policies, that is, the need for the Government of India to rely increasingly on American foreign capital, private capital and collaboration and their open-door policy so far as the American Government is concerned and whether the new honeymoon between India and America is a reflection of this domestic policy ?

SARDAR SWARAN SINGH : Sir, I am sorry to hear from the hon'ble member on what he has chosen to describe as pro-U. S. policy slant. I hope that such slangs would be avoided.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY : He said slant.

SARDAR SWARAN SINGH : I said such slants should be avoided. I mean both slang and slant. I would like to say that our policy has at no stage been governed by our domestic situation. We always have tried to develop friendly relations with all countries and this should kindly be appreciated.

DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN : You should stand for anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism.

SARDAR SWARAN SINGH : The hon'able Member in his excitement has not thrown up any new point. India's policy against colonialism, against racist regimes is well known. I think he was over-agitated when he made such a reference. We can never compromise with colonial powers in any case. Therefore, our opposition to the colonial rule, ending of colonialism, ending of racist regimes apartheid regime is well known. Not only our stand but the positive help that we have rendered to the freedom movement in all these regions is well known. I had occasion to mention this at the time of the last debate here on international relations. I would, therefore, appeal to the hon'ble Members not to find adjectives to criticise our policy, adjectives which have no meaning, which are not applicable and which are totally baseless.

Now, the second question that he asked is whether our policy to befriend or try to improve relations with the United States is motivated by domestic consideration. My reply to this is quite simple and quite categorical. We do

wish to improve our relations provided there is mutual desire on the part of the United States; also if this is based on mutuality of approach, and I would like to add to it mutuality of interest. And if by improving relations with the United States or with any other country any benefit can accrue to our country, benefits which should be inkeeping with our policies of economic development, I would not spurn those benefits, and that is the policy of all Foreign Offices, and I presume that is in the best interest of all countries. We improve our relations with countries in order to improve the climate of peace, understanding and goodwill, and we adhere to the pursuit of policies which we formulate for ourselves. If in that process any benefit accrues to our country which is within the framework of our policy, whether it is economic cooperation or any other cooperation, that should be welcomed rather than that it should become a matter of criticism. So I thought I should explain this position so that there may not be any doubt about it.

♦526. [*The Questioners (Shri Bhola Prasad, Shri S. Kumaran and Dr. Z. A. Ahmad) were absent. For answer vide col. 25 infra.*]

*527 [*The questioner (Shri Niren Ghosh) was absent. For answer vide col. 26 infra.*]

♦528 [*The questioner (Shri Jairamdas Daulatram) was absent. For answer vide cols- 27 infra.*]

Third Wage Board for Working Journalists

♦529. SHRI V.K. SAKHALECHA :
SHRI B.S. SHEKHAWAT :
SHRI D.K. PATEL : SHRI
SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY :

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) since when the question of appointing a Third Wage Board for Working Journalists has been under Government's consideration:

(b) what are the reasons for not appointing a Wage Board so far:

(c) whether Government have taken any decision for giving representation to the

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Subramanian Swamy.

National Union of Journalists on the proposed Board; and

(d) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI K.V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY) : (a) to (d) It was decided in principle in October, 1973 to set up a Third Wage Board for Working Journalists. Matters relating to appointment of Chairman, independent members and representatives of employers and workers are in process of being finalised.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY : On April 25 in Lok Sabha the Minister in reply to the same question, said, the Government have decided to set up a wage board and the board is likely to be constituted shortly. Now the word "shortly" according to the Rajya Sabha traditions means three months. And 3 months have expired on July 25. Could you tell us when you propose doing it, when you propose setting up this wage board?

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI : How short is "shortly"?

SHRI K.V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY : We are trying our best to finalise this proposal, and if possible, we are anxious that we should be in a position to announce it before the end of this Session.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY : Otherwise I would be forced to move it in the Committee on Assurances if this goes on. I am just giving this warning.

Then, the Minister seems to be, in my opinion, playing politics with the wages of journalists. He was in Bhubaneswar sometime ago and in a press conference, after ascertaining that no representative of the National Union of Journalists was present there, the Minister said that I will see to it that when the wage board is formed, the National Union of Journalists' representatives are not taken on it. I should like to ask the Minister whether he made this statement that he is not going to select any representative of the National Union of Journalists, and if so, how he is going to select the Journalists.

SHRI K.V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY : I can assure the honourable Member that we are not playing any politics with the working journalists and we have got uppermost in our mind the interests of the working journalists
...

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY : This is no answer to my question . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : He is still on his legs.

SHRI K.V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY : And we are not going to make any distinction as far as the question of representation is concerned. The decision will be taken on the basis of merits. As far as National Union of Journalists is concerned, I am seeing a delegation of the National Union of Journalists on 28th of this month and I can assure the honourable Member that any decision that will be taken for giving representation to the working journalists would be taken fully on merits, not on any political consideration.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY : Did you make that statement or not that you will see that the National Union of Journalists is not represented?

DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN : On a point of order . . .

श्री लाल आडवानी : उपसभापति जी, उनका ख़ास सवाल यह था कि इन्होंने ऐसा आश्वासन दिया या नहीं दिया, इसका ज़वाब नहीं आया है।

SHRI K.V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY : This question was asked last time also by one of the honourable Members. If I am right, Shri Lokanatha Misra had asked this question. At that time I would not have said anything of that sort. We have been discussing this question. I cannot exactly remember what I had said. It was not a Press Conference. Some members of the Press came and met me. . .

(Interruptions)

SHRI RABI RAY : He addressed a Press Conference on July 17, 1973, at Raj Bhavan. Bhubaneswar.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : He says that it was not a Press Conference.

SHRI RABI RAY : It was a Press Conference.

SHRI K.V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY : The decision will be taken on merit and a delegation of National Union of Journalists is meeting me on the 28th of this month. . .

(Interruptions.)

DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN : On a point of order. Sir, Prof. Swamy asked a very relevant question. . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : And he was replying to him.

DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN : If the Minister does not remember all the contents, let him give us the substance of what he said. In any case he could tell us whether in the constitution of the Wage Board, this particular organisation will be given representation or not.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY : This is what I asked.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : He said that it was not a Press Conference, but only an informal chat.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY : I asked him whether he will give representation to this body or not in the Wage Board.

SHRI K.V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY : With reference to the representation for the National Union of Journalists, I had said that the decision would be taken on the basis of merit. . .

(Interruptions).

SHRI RAJNARAIN : What is merit? MR.

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Let him complete his reply.

SHRI K.V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY : I said that a delegation of National Union of Journalists is meeting me on the 28th of this month. In the previous two Wage Boards it was only the Indian Federation of Working Journalists that was represented under the Working Journalists Act. According to the law, those persons who represent working journalists, as defined in the Act itself, should be given representation. This question of representation will have to be decided on merit and it is very difficult for me to say as to who is going to be represented. I can assure the hon. Members that the question of representation will be decided as per the spirit and letter of the provisions of the Act.

DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN : Sir, please allow us to raise this question in an half-an-hour discussion

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA : May I know whether there has not been already a delay of three years after the cabinet decision was taken that the Wage Board has to be set

up? What does the hon. Minister mean by merit? Does 'merit' mean that the members of a particular Union should either be cardholders or ex-card-holders of the Communist Party, or does it mean that journalistic profession will be represented? If that is so, how is the Minister continuously ignoring the demands of this particular Union which has already been admitted by the Press Council as the legitimate representatives of the working journalists, for all these years and how does the Minister who claims to be a great socialist play into the hands of the capitalists, owners of the Press- . .

(Interruptions)

SHRI I.D. SINGH : On a point of order. How can the Minister reply on behalf of the Communist Party?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : There is no point of order.

SHRI K.V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY :

As can be seen from the answer I have already given, it is not three years. The Cabinet decision was in October 1973. Unless the calendar of Mr. Lokanath Misra is different, I would beg to differ with him on this. Now, Sir, he raised the question of the card-holders. We are not concerned with the ex-card-holders or with the members of the Swatantra Party or the ex-members of the Swatantra Party. These are not the considerations that weight with us. We are concerned with the Act, the rules and also the spirit of the Act. But we will see that the representatives of the working journalists who are there represent the interests of the working journalists effectively. He also mentioned about the Press Council and also about the representation of the N.U.J. All these factors would have to be taken into account before a decision can be arrived at and I can assure the honourable Members that we are concerned with the spirit and the letter of the Act which provides for the representation of these people and we have to act within the four corners of the law.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Question Hour over.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY : Sir, we want an half-an-hour discussion on this. Sir, please give me a hearing.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Question Hour over.