

RAJYA SABHA*Friday, the 16th November, 1973/the 25th**Kartika 1895 (Saka)*

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

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**Wage Board for working/non-working Journalists**

- *121. SHRI SUNDAR MANI PATEL :
 SHRI KALI MUKHERJEE :
 SHRI S. C. ANGRE :
 SHRI N.K. SHEJWALKAR :
 SHRI O. P. TYAGI :†
 SHRI PREM MANOHAR :
 SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MA-
 THUR :
 SHRI K. C. PANDA :
 SHRI NAND KISHORE BHATT :
 SHRI J. S. TILAK :
 SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR :
 SHRI D. K. PATEL :
 SHRI YOGENDRA SHARMA :
 SHRI SURAJ PRASAD :
 SHRI G. R. PATIL :
 DR. Z. A. AHMAD :
 SHRI DEBANANDA AMAT :
 SHRI KOTA PUNNAIAH :
 SHRI LOKANATH MISRA :
 SHRI A. G. KULKARNI :
 SHRI GURUMUKH SINGH
 MUSAFIR :
 SHRI KRISHAN KANT :
 SHRI M. S. ABDUL KHADER :
 SHRI SANAT KUMAR RAHA :
 MISS SAROJ PURUSHOTTAM
 KHAPARDE :
 DR. R. K. CHAKRABARTI :
 SHRI N. R. CHOUDHURY :
 SHRI K. B. CHETTRI :
 SHRI SHOWALESS K. SHILLA :
 SHRI SAWAISINGH SISODIA :

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri O.P. Tyagi.

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(a) whether any decision has been taken in regard to the constitution of a new wage board for working and non-working journalists; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY) : (a) and (b) Government have decided to set up a Wage Board for Working Journalists. No decision has yet been taken to constitute a Wage Board for non-journalists.

श्री श्रीम प्रकाश त्यागी : अध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं मंत्री महोदय से यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि जब उन्होंने सरकारी कर्मचारों और दूसरे लोगों के लिये वेज-बोर्ड के सम्बन्ध में विचार किया है, उनके सम्बन्ध में वेतन आयोग भी बनाया, तो जो श्रमजीवी और गैर-श्रमजीवी पत्रकार हैं, उनके सम्बन्ध में सरकार की क्या नीति है? क्या श्रम-जीवी और गैर-श्रमजीवी पत्रकारों के सम्बन्ध में सरकार का कोई वेज-बोर्ड बनाने का विचार है या नहीं ?

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY : Sir, as far as the working journalists are concerned, there is a legislation which provides for the appointment of a statutory Wage Board-the Working Journalists (Conditions of Service and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1955. As far as the non-journalist employees are concerned, there is no statutory provision for the appointment of a Wage Board. At the time when we invited the employers as well as the non-journalist employees for a discussion, both the parties were rather reluctant to have a Wage Board and they thought that bilateral or bi-partite negotiations would lead to better results than a mere Wage Board. Nevertheless this aspect is also being examined to see in what manner the non-journalist employees also can be helped by the Government.

श्री श्रीम प्रकाश त्यागी : मैं मंत्री जी से यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या श्रमजीवी और गैर-श्रमजीवी पत्रकारों ने अपने वेज-बोर्ड के सम्बन्ध में कोई आवेदन पत्र दिया है? अगर दिया है तो उनकी प्रमुख मांग क्या है और उसके सम्बन्ध में सरकार क्या विचार कर रही है?

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY : Sir, Mr. Kolhadkar, who is connected with the non-journalist employees organisation, has written me a letter saying that their case also should be taken up, and this aspect is being examined to see in what manner it can be done.

श्री श्रीम प्रकाश त्यागी : मैंने यह पूछा था कि उन्होंने कोई आवेदन-पत्र दिया था और क्या उनसे आवेदन-पत्र में कोई मांग की गई थी और उसके सम्बन्ध में सरकार का क्या विचार है?

MR. CHAIRMAN : He wants to know what their demands are.

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY : Their demands are that they should also have similar benefits as the working journalists who have got the benefit of wage board, they should be given interim relief, wage revision, etc. These are the demands.

श्री श्रीम प्रकाश त्यागी : सरकार का क्या विचार है आवेदन-पत्र के सम्बन्ध में ?

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY : Sir, I have already submitted to you that the Government, with all sympathy, is considering these matters and is trying to find ways and means to see in what manner they can be helped.

श्री जगदीश प्रसाद माधुर : पिछली बार सदन में जब यह सवाल उपस्थित हुआ था तो उस समय भी आपसे सवाल पूछा गया था। उड़ीसा के अन्दर जो आपने वक्तव्य दिया था पत्रकारों में से किसको सदस्य बनाने या न बनाने के बारे में उस सम्बन्ध में यह सवाल पूछा गया था। पत्रकारों की जो दो यूनियन हैं उनमें से सदस्य बनाने की दृष्टि से आपने क्या निर्णय किया है, आप पत्रकारों को किस आधार पर इसके अन्दर प्रतिनिधित्व देंगे या जो कुछ आपने उड़ीसा में कहा था उस निर्णय पर आप कायम हैं या इस पर गम्भीरता से विचार करके सब पत्रकारों को प्रतिनिधित्व मिले ऐसा विचार कर रहे हैं?

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY : At present the Government has taken a decision to appoint a wage board within the provisions of law. According to the constitution of the wage board, there must

be three independent members of whom the chairman must be a judge of the Supreme Court or a Judge of the High Court or a retired Judge and two other independent members, two representatives of the employees and two representatives of the employers. Now, in selecting the representatives of the working journalists, the National Union of Journalists also had made representations and their representations also would be taken into consideration...

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : Why? What is that organisation ?

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY : their representations also would be taken into account and proper representatives would be appointed on this board.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI : Sir, first I congratulate the Minister on having taken decision to appoint a wage board for working journalists. But while constituting the wage board, the Government will have to be careful to select representatives of real working journalists and pseudo-representatives like the National Federation of Working Journalists which is an employers' protégé. So I warn you that you must promise here that representatives of real working journalists would find a place on the board..

SHRI N. G. GORAY : Sir, is this a question ? When the Member warns the Minister, is it a question ?

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : What is wrong there ? I want to tell him that there is lurking threat being given by various employers of newspapers that if the wage board is appointed, they will close down their papers under the guise of newsprint shortage. Would the Minister assure the House that no working journalists or non-working journalists would face this closure because of the appointment of the wage board ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : Your questions are always warnings.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : Sir, he himself is a warning.

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY : I submit that it would be my endeavour to see that real representatives of the working journalists would become members of the wage board. As far as possible it is the duty of the Government to prevent fake organisations or dubious representatives of the working journalists...

SHRI HARSH DEO MALAVIYA :
Are you sure that there are dubious organisations ?

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY :
If there is any dubious organisation...

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Malaviya, I will not call you if you interrupt.

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY :
Sir, I can assure my honourable friend, Mr. Kulkarni, that it would be our endeavour to see that real representatives would become members of the wage board. Then, as far as the second part of his question is concerned, when the threat becomes imminent after the appointment of the wage board, certainly the Government will take such steps as will be necessary in order to deal with the situation.

श्री गुरुमुख सिंह मुसाफिर : जैरे-बड़म सबान की चर्चा से ऐसा मालूम होता है कि इसकी चर्चा बहुत हो चुकी है। मैं सिर्फ इतना ही पूछना चाहता हूँ कि इसका निर्णय कब तक हो जायेगा ?

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY :
As far as decision is concerned, Government have already taken a decision to set up the Wage Board. Now we are sorting out certain personnel problems as to who will be the Chairman and who will be the members of the Board.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT : I would not like to congratulate the hon. Minister. But I would congratulate the hon. Chairman because it was at his insistence during the last session that the Government has taken the decision. The Chairman's directive has its own value and importance. I would like the hon. Minister to tell us why it is not possible for us to have a statutory wage board for non-journalists as well. You can have even a common Chairman for the two separate Wage Boards, so that correspondingly better and inter-related decisions can be brought about. Before the Wage Boards are constituted, in order to see the economics of the newspaper industry a Committee has gone into this question. I would like to know whether they have submitted their report or not. Otherwise, the newspapers will give some other figures so that the Wage Boards cannot come to right conclusions. May I know what is the position about that ? I am glad that the Minister is trying to give representations to the right type of journalists and not to those who are really representing the employers.

I would like to know by what time they will be able to form the Wage Board.

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY :
You will kindly permit me to join Shri Krishan Kant and other members and to express that we always obey your orders. It is my duty to obey your orders and carry out them. As far as non-journalists are concerned, as I submitted, there is no provision in the Act for the appointment of a statutory wage board. We are examining the position in what manner we can have a wage board for them, if both the parties want one. We are trying to find out what we can do to help them. I can only assure the House that is under the very serious consideration of the Government.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT : I asked about the economics of the papers.

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY :
This question belongs to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. I hope the hon. Member will not press me to answer that.

SHRI SANAT KUMAR RAHA : I want to know from the Minister whether the Labour Minister had a talk with the representatives of the National Federation of Working Journalists and the employees' organisation in regard to the constitution of the Wage Board. The Wage Board should be composed of some people who have got sufficient knowledge of the Industrial Disputes Act and the real representatives of working journalists. Secondly, the Wage Board should provide some interim relief to the working journalists who are at the bottom, especially, Reporters and Correspondents.

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY :
I have said that it is our endeavour to see that the proper representatives of working journalists and eminent persons who have special knowledge of the subject become members of the Wage Board. After it is appointed, under the provisions of the Act, Government can consult the Wage Board. About interim relief, certainly after the Wage Board is constituted, the matter will be examined.

SHRI K. B. CHETTRI : May I know from the hon. Minister whether there is any proposal to include some M.Ps, representing labour unions in this new Wage Board?

SHRI BRAHMANANDA PANDA : Sir, the Minister is reported to have said in one

of his speeches which appeared in "The Hindu" of 2nd October that in a dispute between the employer and the employees the Government should stand by them.

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATH* REDDY : Stand by whom?

SHRI BRAHMANANDA PANDA : The Government should stand by the employees and not the employers. Sir, this was reported in the issue dated 2nd October of "The Hindu". In the light of this, Sir, may I seek an assurance from the honourable Minister that after this Wage Board is constituted, as there is bound to be some dispute between the owners of the Press and the journalists, the Minister will stand by the working journalists and not by the employers?

MR. CHAIRMAN : Yes, Mr. Minister.

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY : Sir, the question is purely anticipatory.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Yes, Mr. Bhupesh Gupta.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : Sir, is the honourable Minister aware that the so-called National Union of Journalists was constituted in 1971 deliberately by the Press barons and their henchmen with a view to countering the democratic influence and the trade union activities and also as a counterblast to the progressive trends of the times? Sir, this is a critical period. Is he aware of these things? Has he taken the names of those who constitute that body and found out how it was formed and so on? And, Sir, may I know finally whether, before he selects these people, he will have consultations with the people who stand for normal trade unionism and against this kind of fake organisations being put up to disrupt the journalists' movement?

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY : Sir, I do not wish to express any opinion on the question. But I can only assure the honourable Member that proper representatives of the working journalists would become the members of the Wage Board.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Yes, Mr. Malaviya, the last question.

SHRI HARSH DEO MALAVIYA : Sir, is the honourable Minister aware of the fact that the Indian Federation of Working Journalists is the most representative body which has such eminent persons as the doyen of Indian journalism, Shri Chalapati Rau, I and Shri J. P. Chaturvedi, that it was bless-

ed by the late Shri Jawaharlal Nehru and that the Jana Sangh and such other parties are sponsoring the other organisation, the National Union of Journalists or whatever it is which shows that it is a body set up by the capitalist press barons and others? So, Sir, when the Minister takes a decision on the question of representation, will he see to it that the IFWJ of Shri Chalapati Rau and others, gets of which Shri B.R. Vats is General Secretary, proper representation and the other organisation propped up by the Press barons is completely ignored by him? Will he give this assurance?

SHRI C. D. PANDE : He has already given.

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY : Sir, since the contribution made by the Indian Federation of Working Journalists, which was founded by our eminent leader of Indian journalism, Shri Chalapati Rau is well known, the representatives of the Indian Federation of Working Journalists were represented on the last two Wage Boards. But I do not want to say anything more than this except that proper representatives of the working journalists would be taken on the Wage Board.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Yes, next question.

Sharp rise in unemployment

*122. DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN: 1

SHRI KRISHAN KANT : DR. Z.

A. AHMAD : SHRI NAND

KISHORE BHATT : SHRI SURAJ

PRASAD : SHRI J. S. TILAK :

SHRI KOTA PUNNAIAH :

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR:

SHRI KALI MUKHERJEE : SHRI

A. G. KULKARNI : SHRI

GURUMUKH SINGH

MUSAFIR :

SHRI N. R. CHOUDHURY :

SHRI NIREN GHOSH :

Will the MINISTER OF LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) the number of unemployed persons registered with the Employment Exchangers during the last two years;

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Dr. K. Mathew Kurian