

What is the strength of employees and does it have any recognised union or not?

SHRI T. A. PAI I expect the Hardwar Plant to break even next year. It is of the most recent origin and our Foundry Forge is yet to be installed. The number of employees as far as I remember is about eight thousand. Now there are two unions, both are fighting for recognition.

SHRI N. R. CHOUDHURY I would like to know from the Minister whether they have any plan to constitute any such Joint Committee for other industries also.

SHRI I. A. PAI As the honourable House knows, for the steel industry we have a similar Committee and we have now a Committee for the coal industry.

SHRI MONORANJAN ROY Is there any other union in this establishment apart from the INTUC and the AITUC and what is the present minimum wage for an unskilled worker and what was the interim increment suggested?

MR CHAIRMAN Does it arise out of this?

SHRI T. A. PAI I do not have the figure of the minimum wages now. But I can tell the House that the two major unions involved are the INTUC and the AITUC because they represent the majority of the workers.

(Interruptions)

MR CHAIRMAN No other question.

SHRI T. A. PAI These are the recognised unions in most of these plants.

SHRI T. V. ANANDAN May I ask the Minister whether it is practicable in this country to fix the wage linked to production as long as you have not guaranteed the need based minimum to a wage earner?

SHRI I. A. PAI Sir, I do not want to get into a debate over this question.

MR CHAIRMAN It does not arise next question.

*509 [The questioner (Shri M. K. Mohita) was absent. For answer vide col 32 infra.]

Wage Board for Working Journalists

*510 SHRI KRISHAN KANTI †

DR. L. A. AHMAD

SHRI KALI MUKHERJEE

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR

SHRI KOTA PUNNAIAH

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI

SHRI P. K. KUNJACHEN

Will the Minister of LABOUR AND REHABILITATION be pleased to state

(a) whether any decision has been taken to constitute the new Wage Board for Working Journalists and

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

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY)

(a) and (b) The matter is under consideration.

SHRI KRISHAN KANTI Sir, Mr. Raghubatha Reddy has been addressing a number of conferences of working journalists where resolutions are passed in his presence. Last session also we asked the question as to how long this question will remain under the consideration of the Ministry of Labour. I do not know whether this question is having any labour pain. I want to know by what time you will take a decision.

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY Sir, I assure Shri Krishan Kant that we do not need his obstetric ability to deliver. As far as this matter is concerned, it is under the consideration of the Government.

SHRI KRISHAN KANTI I asked how long it will take.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI So many seminars have taken place.

MR CHAIRMAN Well, Mr. Kulkarni.

† The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Krishan Kant.

SHRI A G KULKARNI Sir the Minister is addressing conferences having assumed that it will be considered

MR CHAIRMAN Do you still think that Mr Krishan Kant is not enough?

SHRI K V RAGHUNATHA REDDY It is true that I attended a number of conferences and at the conferences also I said that the matter will be considered. And now, the matter is being considered.

SHRI A G KULKARNI Sir, you must force him to say how soon it would be.

MR CHAIRMAN You are not answering the question Mr Minister. If you can not give a definite date kindly say so.

SHRI A G KULKARNI Say something now.

SHRI K V RAGHUNATHA REDDY You will kindly appreciate Sir when a proposal is initiated by any Minister it has to go to several Ministries for their opinions and when once the concerned Ministries express their opinions a Cabinet Note goes to the Cabinet Secretariat.

MR CHAIRMAN Therefore it is not possible to give.

SHRI K V RAGHUNATHA REDDY Yes.

SHRI A G KULKARNI Sir every thing goes to the Cabinet. That is the procedure everywhere. You have asked him to indicate the time. Now he says that it has gone to the Cabinet. The Minister is adopting the usual delaying tactics of the Government. Why did he then address seminars and conferences?

SHRI KRISHAN KANT Through you Sir I will request him again not to go on considering this procedure which he has given. There is nothing unusual in it. It is the Cabinet which considers everything the various Ministries which consider. Why is he trying to throw the blame on others. There have been agitations by the journalists and non journalists both. Sir the condition of non journalists is very bad.

May I know, Sir how long the Government will go on fiddling with this problem. The newspaper management is trying to deal roughly with the non journalists. They are trying to impose 50 per cent cut.

MR CHAIRMAN No Mr Krishan Kant you need not give the history of it. You have put your question and the question has been answered. Well you are not satisfied with the answer. But I do not want a speech on this.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT Sir are you satisfied with the answer?

MR CHAIRMAN Whether I am satisfied or not satisfied is not relevant.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT It is very relevant for us. If you are satisfied you will advise us. You are part of this House as long as you are the Chairman.

MR CHAIRMAN Now put your question.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT Sir will you ask him whether he will announce this decision or any other decision within the next fifteen days? Secondly may I know if they have got representation from non journalists that due to 50 per cent cut in the news print quota the management is trying to retrench non journalists and trying to put pressure on the Government to restore the cut. May I know what the Government is going to do about it.

SHRI K V RAGHUNATHA REDDY Sir three questions have been raised by Shri Krishan Kant in his second question. One is whether within 15 days we will be able to announce the decision. I can only assure him that the Government also is as much seriously concerned about this matter and also as anxious as Mr Krishan Kant himself in order to consider the matter and arrive at a decision. But whether it will be 15 days or 20 days I cannot give a categorical assurance. You know Sir how the Government machinery works. Therefore I cannot give a categorical reply. But I can only say that the Government is very seriously concerned and as anxious as the hon'ble Member to arrive at a decision is early as possible. I think a decision will be taken very soon.

The second question which the hon ble Member asked was about non working journalists. As far as non working journalists are concerned I said on the floor of the House that we had discussions with the non working journalists. They want to have bilateral negotiations with the management. If they want to have bilateral negotiations they can start negotiations with the management and if they want assistance of the Government they can easily have it whenever they want.

The third question which Mr. Krishan Kant asked was whether as a result of 30 per cent newspaper cut the daily newspaper managements are indulging in some kind of retrenchment and other practices or they are taking cover of this cut to derive some advantages. We have received some complaints from some journalists. The Ministry of Labour is seriously concerned. I have impressed upon the various Labour Ministers that the management should not normally be allowed to impose any cut. They should get in touch with the managements concerned. I may tell you Sir, that we are deeply concerned about it that the management of the newspaper companies do not resort to this method.

SHRI KRISHAN KANTI May I know about the last point? You said that due to the 30 per cent cut you are impressing on the Labour Ministers to impress on the managements that there should be no cut etc. May I know if you are going to statutorily protect the journalists from this unilateral action of retrenching employees due to this newspaper cut. If so what steps do you propose to take in this connection?

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY Sir, I would like to have all the facts collected first before I can express any opinion on this.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI No, Sir. He replied to Mr. Krishan Kant saying that he has taken it up with the Labour Ministers of the States. Is he going to take up everything in vacuum with the Labour Ministers of the States? He is now taking umbrella saying that he is going to collect

the facts. The situation is such that employees are being retrenched. You must take some steps.

MR. CHAIRMAN Are you adding anything?

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY What I said was this: we have received certain complaints and as soon as we receive certain complaints the immediate step that we should take in this matter is to inform the Labour Ministers of the various States so that immediate remedial measures may be taken instead of going in for legislation. But as I said after the facts are ascertained if the situation is such that a legislation is warranted then the matter can be considered.

श्री जगदीश प्रसाद माथुर : क्या यह सही है कि जा वर्किंग जर्नलिस्ट है उनमें दो यूनियन काम कर रही हैं। जो यूनियन आफ जर्नलिस्ट है, उसके सम्बन्ध में मंत्री महोदय श्री रेड्डी जी जब उड़ीसा गये थे तो उड़ीसा में वर्किंग जर्नलिस्ट की एक मीटिंग में आपने कहा कि मैं यह देखूंगा कि किसी प्रकार से वेज बाड के अन्दर नेशनल यूनियन आफ जर्नलिस्ट्स का प्रतिनिधि नहीं आ सके। क्या स्वयं मंत्री महोदय द्वारा जो जर्नलिस्ट्स है उनके बीच में इस प्रकार का भेदभाव करने का प्रयास नहीं किया जा रहा है? क्या यह सही है कि यह जो प्रेस काउंसिल है उसने नेशनल काउंसिल आफ जर्नलिस्ट्स को मान्यता दी है और उसके बावजूद भी क्या जो वेज बोर्ड आप बनायेंगे उसमें दोनों यूनियनों के प्रतिनिधि लगे या केवल एक का लगे या जिसका पक्ष आप लेते हैं उनका लगे? उड़ीसा में इस प्रकार से आपने जर्नलिस्ट्स में जो फूट डालने का काम किया है उसके सम्बन्ध में मंत्री जी का क्या कहना है?

SHRI JOKANATH MISRA Why do you still behave as a card holder, Mr. Raghunatha Reddy. Please don't do it.

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY: On the question of appointment of the Wage Board itself, no decision has yet been taken. The matter, as I said, is under various processes of consideration. With respect to the question raised about representation of the National Union of Journalists, I can only say at this stage that the decision would be taken on the respective merits of the case.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: No, the question was specific.

SHRI PITAMBER DAS: The question was categorical. Did he say it when he attended the meeting in Orissa? If he did say that, how does he explain it?

SHRI N. G. GORAY: That means the decision is already taken.

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY: Some journalists met me in Orissa, but I am not able to recollect what exactly I said . . .

(Interruptions)

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: No, no. The point is, did you enquire as to whether there was not anybody who represented the Federation of Working Journalists? When the representatives of the other Union met you, you almost refused to meet them and when they wanted to convene a meeting and asked Mr. Gujral to preside over it, you said, "I will see that I dissuade Mr. Gujral from coming and presiding over it." *(Interruptions)* May I know whether they have represented to the Prime Minister regarding this?

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let him answer.

SHRI N. G. GORAY: Sir, we seek your protection. He cannot say, "I forget everything."

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: If he forgets everything, he cannot be a Minister. He should resign.

(Interruptions)

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY: I have already said that some journalists met me and they naturally asked about the Wage Board. About this representation and all that I am not able to recollect what had happened . . .

(Interruptions)

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: If he has developed senility, we have to dispense with him. We cannot afford to have a Minister who has developed senility.

SHRI N. G. GORAY: This is cowardice.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: This is complete cowardice.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY: When a number of journalists met me, I really cannot recollect what I have said. As far as representation of the National Union of Journalists is concerned, when the decision is taken to appoint the Wage Board, their claims will be considered on merits.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Free ration facility to Commissioned Officers

*504. **SHRI DEBANANDA AMAT:** Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Commissioned officers in the Army have to spend more than their salary while they remain in the Army mess; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto; and whether it is proposed to provide free rations to the commissioned officers posted in peace areas like other J.C.Os?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI JAGJIVAN RAM): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Aid given to foreign countries from 1970 to 1973

*507. **SHRI P. K. KUNJACHEN:** Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state.

(a) the number of countries which were given financial aid by India from 1970 to 1973; and

(b) the total quantum of aid given (country wise) during this period?