

Report on the Accounts and the comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India thereon.

(ii) Review by Government on the working of the Company.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT—3420/72 for (i) and (ii)].

CALLING ATTENTION TO A MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

STRIKE BY ABOUT 75,000 WORKERS OF CEMENT FACTORIES ALL OVER THE COUNTRY

श्री सुरज प्रसाद (बिहार) : श्रीमान्, देश भर में सीमेंट के कारखानों के लगभग 75 हजार मजदूरों द्वारा 17 अगस्त, 1972 से हड़ताल तथा इस मामले में सरकार द्वारा प्रस्तावित कार्यवाही की ओर श्रम और पुनर्वास मंत्री का ध्यान दिलाता हूँ।

[MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair]

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA) :

Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, Wages of cement workers have been revised on two occasions in the past on an industry-wise basis, through the agency of tripartite Wage Boards. The first Wage Board was setup in 1958. At that time there was no uniformity in the wages paid to cement workers at various places. The system of dearness allowance also differed from place to place. As a result of the recommendations of the First Wage Board, a standardised wage structure came into existence. This meant a substantial increase over the then prevailing wages and in some cases it exceeded Rs. 25/-per month. Moreover, payment of dearness allowance was linked to the cost of living index.

2. A Second Wage Board for the Cement Industry was set up in September, 1964. Unfortunately, its report was not unanimous. After discussions with the representatives of employers and workers, Government decided to accept the recommendations subject to some modifications. It was also decided that the recommendations of the Wage Board, as accepted by Government, should remain in operation for a period of 5 years. As a result of the Second Wage Board's recommendations, the workers were to get a guaranteed increase ranging from Rs. 10/- to Rs. 32.50 per month for different categories of workers.

3. Though the present wage structure, based on the recommendations of the Second Wage Board is to be operative upto the 12th February, 1973, the cement workers started making demands from March, 1972 for a further wage revision and payment of interim relief. The workers' demand was that their wages be raised to the same level as that of the steel workers who got a minimum wage of Rs. 240/- p.m. from 1st September, 1970 as a result of the bilateral negotiations with the employers. The employers contention is that any increase in wages must be accompanied by an increase in the retention price of cement. In this connection, I would like to mention that on 28th April, 1972, Government has made a reference to the Tariff Commission for a comprehensive review of the cement industry, including the question of fair ex-works price payable to the producers. The question of wage-increase was discussed between the parties and in this process they were assisted by the Chief Labour Commissioner (Central). No agreement could however be reached and a notice of a strike from 12th July 1972 was served by the Unions. I intervened at this stage and on my assurance that a meeting would be held with the representatives of employers and workers to discuss the issues involved, the strike was postponed.

4. At the meeting which I held with the representatives of the workers and employers on 11th July 1972 in New Delhi, it was agreed to set up a Joint Wage Negotiating Committee consisting of the representatives of employers and workers, to consider the question of interim relief as well as the final wage structure for the industry. The Wage Negotiating Committee met in Bombay on 27th July, 1972 but unfortunately, the negotiation did not succeed because of the divergent stands taken by the employers and workers. The various workers' organisations represented on the Negotiating Committee there upon decided to go ahead with the general strike in the industry with effect from 17th August, 1972. I, therefore, requested the President, Cement Manufacturers' Association and the President, Indian National Cement and Allied Workers' Federation to meet me on the 16th August 1972 so that some way may be found out to settle the dispute. After a day-long discussion and in consultation with the Minister of Industrial Development, I proposed that an interim relief of Rs. 20/-might be paid to the workers from 1st July, 1972 and that a five-year wage settle-

[Shri Bolgovind Verma]

ment may be signed on the basis of a total wage of Rs. 230/- per month payable from the 1st February, 1973. I also proposed that matters like annual increments, rate of neutralisation from 1st February, 1973 etc. could be discussed and settled later. Despite this the strike in the cement industry commenced on 17th August, 1972. I have, however, not given up my efforts to find a solution and have called the representatives of both employers and workers to meet me again on the 21st August. I hope that a mutually acceptable solution will be found and that the strike will be called off soon.

श्री सूरज प्रसाद : मंत्री जी ने अपने स्टेट-मेंट में कहा है कि सीमेंट मजदूरों की मांग सीमेंट के कारखानों के मालिक मानने के लिए तैयार नहीं हैं। वे यह चाहते हैं कि सीमेंट की कीमत बढ़ा दी जाए तभी वे सीमेंट के मजदूरों की जो मांग है उसको मान सकते हैं। लेकिन उपसभापति महोदय, यह देखने को मिलता है कि हिन्दुस्तान के अंदर जो सीमेंट के कारखाने हैं उन कारखानों के अंदर करीब जो 54 कारखाने हैं, उसमें से 40 कारखाने ऐसे हैं जिनके मालिक हिन्दुस्तान के 3 बड़े बड़े पूंजीपति हैं—एसोसी है, साहू जैन है और डालमिया है—और मोनोपोलिस्टिक कंट्रोल सीमेंट पर होता है और अब हम सभी इसी बात को जानते हैं कि सीमेंट की कीमत सरकार द्वारा तय है और खुले बाजार में बेचने का अधिकार हिन्दुस्तान के जो बड़े बड़े पूंजीपति हैं, जो सीमेंट पैदा करते हैं, उनको है। सीमेंट की दर है 11 रु० बोरा जब कि सीमेंट खुले आम बाजार में 20 रु० बोरा मिलता है। तो ऐसा लगता है कि जो सीमेंट कारखाने के मालिक हैं वे हिन्दुस्तान की आम जनता से सीमेंट का ब्लैक करके ज्यादा पैसा ले रहे हैं और दूसरी तरफ जब मजदूरों को पैसा देने की बात आती है तो उनकी ओर से कहा जाता कि हमारे पास मजदूरों को ज्यादा वेतन देने के लिए पैसा नहीं है।

सीमेंट कारखाने में काम करने वाले मजदूरों की यह मांग है कि जिस तरह से स्टील में काम करने वाले मजदूरों को 254 रु० तनखाह मिलती है वही तनखाह उनको भी

मिलनी चाहिये। एक मांग तो उनकी यह है।

उनकी दूसरी मांग यह है कि स्टील में काम करने वाले जो मजदूर हैं, उनके कास्ट आफ लिविंग का जो इंडेक्स है, जब वह एक प्वाइन्ट बढ़ जाता है, तो उन्हें 1 रु० 40 पैसा महंगाई के रूप में मिलता है और सीमेंट कारखाने में काम करने वाले जो मजदूर हैं उन्हें केवल 70 पैसा ही एक प्वाइन्ट इंडेक्स बढ़ने पर मिलता है। इसलिए उसकी मांग है कि जिस तरह से स्टील के कारखानों में मजदूरों को एक प्वाइन्ट इंडेक्स बढ़ने पर मिलता है, उतना ही उनको भी मिलना चाहिये।

उनको तीसरी मांग यह है कि कास्ट आफ लिविंग जुलाई 1971 से लागू होनी चाहिये। अब सवाल उठता है कि क्या सीमेंट के कारखाने के मजदूर स्टील के कारखाने में काम करने वाले मजदूरों के बराबर आ सकते हैं। इसमें शक नहीं कि उनकी जो मांग है वह सही है और वह पूरी होनी चाहिये। इसलिये पूरी होनी चाहिये क्योंकि सीमेंट के कारखानों में जो मजदूर काम करते हैं उनकी वर्किंग कंडिशन स्टील के कारखाने के मजदूरों से भी खराब है। सीमेंट के कारखाने में धूल उड़ती रहती है जिससे मजदूरों के फेफड़े खराब हो जाते हैं और इस तरह से उन लोगों को बीमारी से सफर करना पड़ता है। इस चीज की वजह से उनकी हालत बहुत खराब है। वे इस तरह के खराब वातावरण में काम करते हैं और इस वजह से कोई कारण नहीं है कि स्टील के कारखाने में जो मजदूर काम करते हैं उनकी तरह मजदूरी सीमेंट के कारखानों में काम करने वाले मजदूरों को क्यों न दी जाय ?

इसी तरह से सीमेंट में काम करने वाले मजदूरों को जो मजदूरी मिलती है वह जूट में काम करने वाले मजदूरों से कम है। जूट में काम करने वाले मजदूरों को 235 रु० मिलता है जबकि सीमेंट के कारखाने में काम करने वाले मजदूरों को केवल 184 रु० मिलता है। इसलिए हमारा कहना यह है कि स्टील के

कारखानों में मजदूरों को जो मजदूरी मिलती है, वही मजदूरी इन्हें भी मिलनी चाहिये।

इसके साथ ही साथ मैं यह भी निवेदन करना चाहता हूँ कि सीमेंट के मजदूरों को 20 रु० इंटरिम रिलीफ देने की बात स्वीकार की गई है जो कि गलत है। उनकी मांग यह है कि उन्हें 70 रु० इंटरिम रिलीफ मिलना चाहिये। हमारा सरकार के ऊपर यह आरोप है कि जिस समय मजदूरों की तनख्वाह के संबंध में बातचीत चल रही थी, तो उसी समय मंहगाई भत्ते के संबंध में भी बातचीत तय हो जानी चाहिये थी, लेकिन सरकार की ओर से कारखाने वालों के ऊपर किसी तरह का कोई दबाव नहीं डाला गया। सरकार ने खुले आम सीमेंट मालिकों का पक्ष लिया और उन्हीं के पक्ष में सरकार आज बात बोल रही है। आप देख रहे हैं कि कहां 20 रु० और कहां 70 रु०, इन दोनों में कितना अन्तर है? वे लोग 254 रु० माहवारी तनख्वाह की मांग कर रहे हैं जो कि स्टील के मजदूरों को मिलती है। साथ ही साथ वे डी० ए० की भी ज्यादा मांग कर रहे हैं। इसलिए हमारी सरकार से मांग है कि क्या वह सीमेंट के मजदूरों की मांग पूरा करने के लिए तैयार है और इस चीज के लिए क्या वह कारखानों के मालिकों के ऊपर दबाव डालने के लिए तैयार है?

श्री बाल गोविन्द बर्मा : श्रीमन्, सदस्य महोदय ने कई बातों का यहां पर जिक्र किया है। मैं दो एक बातों को साफ कर देना चाहता हूँ। पहली एक गलती उनके दिमाग में यह है कि 54 कारखाने हैं। 54 नहीं 50 कारखाने हैं। उसके बाद जहां तक 1 रु० 40 पैसा प्रति प्वाइंट की बात उन्होंने कही कि वे इतना इंक्रीज मांग रहे हैं अपने वेजेज में, तो वह 1.40 नहीं, 1.30 है। जहां तक वेजेज की बात है हम सभी लोग इच्छुक हैं कि बाइलेटूल निगो-शियेशन के द्वारा यह मामला तय हो जाय। इस सम्बन्ध में जिस प्रकार से हो सकता है हम पूरी सहायता दे रहे हैं। इसी लिए हमने एक कमेटी बना दी है आज सबरे भी हम लोग उन के बीच में थे, उनके साथ डिस्कशन हुआ और

उनके मतभेद बहुत कुछ कम हो गये हैं। हम उम्मीद करते हैं कि जल्दी ही कोई सल्युशन निकल आयेगा। हमने एक फार्मूला रखा है। थोड़े बहुत मतभेद इधर उधर हैं। उन पर कार्य हो रहा है। हम आज साढ़े तीन बजे फिर बैठ रहे हैं। हमें उम्मीद है कि जो कुछ मतभेद उनमें आपस में हैं वे खत्म हो जायेंगे और कोई न कोई सल्युशन निकल आयेगा और स्ट्राइक खत्म हो जायेगा।

श्री सूरज प्रसाद : जो वार्ता आज हुई उसमें आप कहां तक पहुंचे, यह मैं जानना चाहता हूँ।

श्री बाल गोविन्द बर्मा : वार्ता बहुत कुशल स्टेज में चल रही है और पब्लिक इन्ट्रस्ट में उसको बताना मुनासिब नहीं है।

SHRI K. P. SUBRAMANIA MENON (Kerala) ; Sir, workers in the cement industry have gone on a strike because the management of the cement factories have refused to concede even their minimum demands. Sir, even though the cement industry is one of the most hazardous industries in the sense that health problems are involved and even though it is one of the most profit-making industries, the wages earned by the cement workers are one of the lowest, even as compared to the wages of textile workers. They get only Rs. 185 per month, whereas a textile worker in Bombay or Ahmedabad gets about Rs. 250 to Rs. 275 per month. Even in Kanpur they have recently agreed to give an increase of about Rs. 30 in wages. Even in comparable chemical industries, the wages are higher than in the cement industry. And mind you, the cement industry is one of the industries which have been making unconscionable profit by black marketing and by fleecing the consumer. Therefore, I do not understand why the Government is so apologetic about the management of the cement industry, when the workers are demanding an interim increase in wages. The main dispute now is that the workers are demanding an interim increase from the 1st January, 1972, whereas the management is not willing to concede an interim relief. This is because the management wants that a strike should take place in the industry and it should be prolonged so that they can force the Government to an increase in the controlled price of cement. Even an increase of five

[Shri K. P. Subramania Menon] rupees in a tonne of cement means Rs. 9 crores extra for the management. This is the tactics of the management. By forcing the workers to go on a strike, they want to pressurise the Government to increase the price of cement and get a big sum into their pocket. Therefore, I do not understand why the Government is so apologetic about it. The Government should come forward and force the management to concede the demand of the workers immediately, i. e. the demand for an interim increase from January 1, 1972. They have demanded Rs. 70. It is for the industry and the workers to negotiate and come to a reasonable settlement, but it cannot be on Rs. 20.

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA : Sir, it is most unfair on the part of the hon. Member to accuse the Government of siding with the management. Our views are well known to the hon. Members. We are always with the labour and we take up their cause. They are demanding some increase. We are not concerned with it. The Tariff Commission is seized of the matter. They will decide it as per their rules. So far as interim relief and other things are concerned, the matter is being talked over between the representatives of the management and the labour and the talks are proceeding smoothly. Although there are differences, those deferences have been narrowed down. So far as giving higher wages to the labour is concerned, we are not opposed to it. We also want that the consumers' interests must be taken into consideration. And the labour is quite sympathetic to them. In this spirit the talks are going on and I am sure the talks will succeed very shortly.

SHRI PRANAB KUMAR MUKHERJEE (West Bengal) : The honourable Minister stated that he is very much sympathetic to the labour. I do not doubt it. That should be the attitude of the Minister. The statement he made was on the 1st July a strike notice was issued. On the 17th August the strike actually started. And the Government has failed—I must say the Government has miserably failed—to bring the management of the cement factories to a rational approach to the whole problem. The strike is on and a few days have already elapsed ; a few crores of rupees have been lost, production has stopped in all the cement factories for a number of days. All the trade union organisations, very solid organisations,

including the INTUC, the AITUC, almost all the distinguished trade union organisations, are taking part in this strike. And now the Minister comes and tells the House that he expects to reach some agreement in this meeting. What prevented the Government from taking a firm stand even before the strike actually took place ? May I know from the honourable Minister what prevented him from pointing out to the management in a straight forward way, "If you do not see reason, if you do not come to an agreement, all these cement factories will be taken over by the Government of India." ? Cement is vital for development projects in the entire country, and everybody knows how in this country the entire construction programme is being hampered for want of cement. And he is talking about consumers' interests. Does he not know that not a single project, not even the Government, is in a position to purchase even a single bag of cement at the controlled price ? I have my experience in West Bengal where they had to purchase cement at the cost of Rs. 20 per bag for their development project. There are other reasons also. There is shortage of wagons. He is now talking of consumers interests and he says he is looking into it. If you are looking into it, then definitely tell us what prevented you from arriving at an agreement at a much earlier stage. If you had taken action at the earliest stage itself, the strikers would not have gone on strike for so many days and production would not have come to a stop. In view of that, I would like to know from the honourable Minister whether he will assure the House that in future, on all occasions, the Government will take a firm stand, and where the entire development project of the country is seriously concerned, the Government will not allow the trade unions to go on strike and will not allow the management to take a rigid attitude. I should like to have a categorical assurance from the Minister.

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA : I think being a labour leader the honourable Member is well aware that in all these matters the Government does not take a unilateral decision ; all these things are decided by way of tripartite negotiations. Of late some tendency has developed among the labour that the Government should not interfere and that they should decide the issues bilaterally. So we are also favouring this attitude. We are not coming into it.

It was decided that we put the labour and the management together and try to see that they come to some sort of an agreement. But they could not. Then, he has talked about blackmarketing. So far as black marketing is concerned, we put this question to the management as to why the prices are increasing, whether they have got some hand in that or not. They categorically deny having got any hand in it . . .

SHRI PRANAB KUMAR MUKHER-JEE : And you are accepting their explanation ? The management is saying that it has no hand in it and you are accepting it. What an answer it is !

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA : They say that they have disposed of all the cement at the controlled price and it is after the cement leaves their hands that the prices start going up. The Government is looking into it. And that is what they say and we have to accept it.

What is the alternative left to us ?

SHRI D. THENGARI (Uttar Pradesh) : What is the precise extent of loss incurred on account of this strike till to day ? Secondly, the Minister has talked about consumers' interests. All right, prices should not be raised. But the employers are not prepared to run the industry without raising the prices. That is also granted. Now on behalf of the workers at least in some of the units, we want to offer that if employers are not prepared to run the factories without raising the prices, workers themselves are prepared to run them without raising prices. Will the Government facilitate workers' running the factories if employers are adamant ?

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA : The hon. Member wants to know the extent of loss the industry has incurred or is incurring. The loss comes to about 40,000 tonnes a day. As regards the other question of Government helping the workers to run the factories, it is a policy matter on which I cannot say anything at this stage.

SHRI N. H. KUMBHARE (Maharashtra) : Government will agree that workers must get progressive increase in their wage rates so that they may get their wages in terms of the recommendations of the Wage Board. The principal question for consideration is the capacity of the industry to pay. The very fact that cement is sold in the black market at much higher prices indicates that consumers have

the capacity to pay higher prices. Has the Government examined and found out whether the industry has capacity to pay higher wages to the workers as demanded by them ? In order to pay them higher wages, how much should be the increase in price of cement per bag ? Has this been worked out ? The hon. Minister, we are told, has suggested interim relief. May I know what are the principles that govern this suggestion ?

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA : So far as the capacity of the industry to pay is concerned, we had talks with the management and they say they have no such capacity. But I may tell you that the Ministry of Industrial Development which is concerned with this issue is looking into the matter. The hon. member said that the consumers have the capacity to pay more and therefore the price of cement should be increased in order to pay to the workers. I do not think it is a fair or proper proposition. If consumers pay high price it does not mean that they have the capacity. The remedy for that is that Government should do something and Government will do it.

कुमारी सरोज पुरुषोत्तम खापर्डे (महाराष्ट्र) : श्रीमन्, मैं माननीय मन्त्री जी से जानना चाहती हूँ कि इन वर्कर्स की मांगों के समाधान के लिए यदि तीसरा वेजबोर्ड बनाया जाय तो स्ट्राइक को टाला जा सकता है। यदि ऐसा है तो वेजबोर्ड के निर्माण में देरी करके सरकार स्थिति को पेचीदा क्यों कर रही है ?

श्री बाल गोविन्द वर्मा : जैसा कि मैंने अभी बताया कि सेकिंड वेजबोर्ड को रेकमंडेशन 13 फरवरी, 1973 तक के लिए हैं। 13 फरवरी, 1973 के बाद ही थर्ड वेजबोर्ड के बारे में सोचा जा सकता है। इस बीच में वर्कर्स ने अपनी मांगें रखीं और उस बिना पर मैनेजमेंट और वर्कर्स के रेप्रेजेंटेटिव्स में बात चीत चल रही है और जैसा कि स्टील इंडस्ट्री में हुआ वैसा ही यहां कोई समझौता होने जा रहा है।

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Yes, Mr. Bhatt.

SHRI NAND KISHORE BHATT (Madhya Pradesh) : Mr. Deputy Chairman Sir, at no time have we doubted the sincerity of the Government. But, after hearing the

[Shri Nand Kishore Bhatt] statement of the honourable Minister, we come to the conclusion that in this particular case probably the Ministry has been led away by the employers, because the employers did want this strike to take place since they have been demanding an increase in the price of cement and then alone they had expressed their willingness to concede to the demands of the workers.

Sir, in this case, I want to make it clear that the consumers are highly taxed and the price of cement should not be increased. The workers must be given interim relief at least to cope with the increasing cost of living. Although the notice of strike was given in March and for almost three months the matter was being negotiated upon. I should say that the spirit in which the entire negotiation took place was nothing short of a farce. Sir, according to the established practices in all matters of bipartite negotiations, there is a convention on the basis of which the representatives of the workers are called for negotiations. In this case what happened was that the organisation or organisations irrespective of their representative character had all been brought together and the management worked on this conspiracy because they knew that if there would be more representatives of the workers, there would be more representatives of the employers also and in this way they could delay the matters and somehow or other bring pressure upon the Government to agree to an increase in the price of cement. I want an assurance, a categorical assurance, from the honourable Minister that no further increase in the price of cement will be agreed to and at the same time, the earliest steps will be taken to see that the legitimate demands of the workers are granted.

Sir, we know it very well that since the 17th August 1972 because of the strike, the whole country is suffering and the production of cement has been affected and every day we are incurring a loss of a crore of rupees. I would request the honourable Minister to take note of all these facts and not be led away by the organised employers who want somehow or other to bring pressure upon the Ministry of Labour and also the Ministry of Industrial Development to see that a rise in the price of cement is granted as then alone they would come forward to a negotiated settlement. I would like the Minister to show the greatest urgency in this matter and see that before the issue is settled adequate interim

relief is granted at the earliest and that no further loss is allowed to incur by continuance of the strike.

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA : Sir, the honourable Member is a leader in the field of trade union movement and he is fully conversant with the views of the Government. I can assure the honourable Member that the Government cannot be pressurised by the management in any way. So far as the rise in the price of cement is concerned, we are not thinking in terms of increasing the price of cement. Although they say that they are not in a position to pay, that their paying capacity is not much and they plead in this way, we also fully realise that they have got the paying capacity and that they can pay and that is why we are not coming into the picture. We are putting the labour and the management together and they are at the negotiating table and I am sure results will be coming forward, good progress is being achieved and I am sure that very soon some settlement would be arrived at.

SHRI NAND KISHORE BHATT :

Sir, we would like to know as to what has come in the way of the Government in prevailing upon the employers to pay at least interim relief so that the present catastrophe is averted ?

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA : As the honourable Member is aware, the talks are going on and we have given some suggestions and have said that this may be paid to the labour. In case some good settlement is arrived at, we will not stand in the way and we will be happy if some good settlement is arrived at.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Yes, Mr. Shahi. I would like to remind you that you should send your name much earlier than this. Sending the name at the last end upsets the time factor.

श्री नागेश्वर प्रसाद शाही (उत्तर प्रदेश) :

उपसभापति महोदय, आपकी कृपा से मैं मन्त्री महोदय से जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या मन्त्री जो इस बात को मानते हैं कि सोमेंट का दाम बढ़ाना नहीं चाहिए ? क्या मन्त्री जो इस बात को भी स्वीकार करते हैं कि सोमेंट मालिकों की क्षमता वर्तमान ढाँचे में ऐसी है कि वे कर्मचारियों का वेतन और उनका महंगाई भत्ता

बढ़ा सकते हैं। ऐसी दशा में, और यह भी जानते हुए कि सीमेंट मिल मालिक सीमेंट के दाम के अलावा अपनी आमदनी का एक और स्रोत बनाए हुए हैं—यह स्रोत है डिस्ट्रिब्यूशन एजेंसी, सरकार ने कोई डिस्ट्रिब्यूशन एजेंसी नहीं बनाई है—सीमेंट मिल मालिक अपने ही लोगों को रीजन-वाइज डिस्ट्रिब्यूशन एजेंसी दिए हुए हैं, अपने ही लोगों को होलसेलर्स भी एपॉइन्ट किए हुए हैं, इन डिस्ट्रिब्यूशन एजेंसीज के माध्यम से और होलसेलर्स के माध्यम से वे सही दाम पर, निश्चित दाम पर, सीमेंट बिकने नहीं देते और सीमेंट को, जबकि 11 रु० बोरा भाव है 20 रु० बोरा भाव पर बिकवाते हैं, और यहां तक हालत है कि सरकार को भी अपने निर्माण कार्य के लिए, डेवलपमेंट वर्क्स के लिये, रुपया होते हुए भी सीमेंट की कमी के कारण काम नहीं होने देते, ऐसी परिस्थिति में क्या यह सच है कि सरकार और सत्ता दल इन सीमेंट मिल मालिकों से, साहू जैन डालमिया वगैरह से, अपने चुनाव फंड में जो रुपया लेती है उसके कारण आज उन्हें अपने मजदूरों को उचित वेतन देने के लिए मजबूर नहीं कर रही है ?

श्री बाल गोविन्द वर्मा : श्रीमन्, माननीय सदस्य ने बाद में जो प्रश्न किया उसको मैं पहले लेना चाहता हूँ और जो प्रश्न पहले किए हैं उनको बाद में लूंगा। मेरा ख्याल है, अगर सदस्य महोदय चुनाव फंड की चर्चा न करते तो यह आज जो डिसकशन हो रहा है वह अधूरा रह जाता। कई दफा यहां पर कहा जा चुका है कि कांग्रेस पार्टी ने कभी इतिफाक से भी चंदा नहीं लिया है और उसके बावजूद भी, इसलिए कि बाहर हमको पब्लिसिटी मिल जाए, उनके लिए चंदा का जिक्र करना जरूरी है और हमारी पार्टी के ऊपर लांछन लगाना जरूरी है। इसलिए कम से कम अगर सदस्य महोदय यह न कहते तो ज्यादा अच्छा होता। उसमें उनकी गरिमा बढ़ती।

जहां तक आमदनी के स्रोत के बारे में है—डिस्ट्रिब्यूशन एजेंसी के बारे में—आप जानते हैं महंगाई बढ़ी है और उससे सरकार चिंतित है

और सरकार ने वायदा किया है कि प्राइसेज को नीचे लाएंगे। उसके बारे में भी वह कार्य-वाही कर रही है और हमें इसके बारे में ज्यादा कहने की जरूरत नहीं है। जहां तक डिस्ट्रिब्यूशन एजेंसी के बारे में शिकायत है कि सीमेंट के दाम बढ़ाए गए हैं, हमको इसका पता नहीं है और अगर ऐसा है तो गवर्नमेन्ट शीघ्र ही उसकी भी व्यवस्था करने जा रही है।

STATEMENT *RE.* MARKET BORROWINGS

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI K. R. GANESH) : Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a statement (in English and Hindi) on Market Borrowings. [Placed in Library. See No. LT—3447/72.]

STATEMENT *RE.* FLOOD SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY

THE MINISTER OF IRRIGATION AND POWER (DR. K. L. RAO) : Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a supplementary statement (in English and Hindi) on the flood situation in the country. [Placed in Library. See No. LT—3445/72.]

STATEMENT *RE.* SUBMISSION OF FOUR INTERIM REPORTS BY THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ANNASAHAB SHINDE) : Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a statement regarding the submission of four Interim Reports by the National Commission on Agriculture. [Placed in Library. See No. LT—3446/72.]

REPORT OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSES ON THE GENERAL INSURANCE BUSINESS (NATIONAL ALIATION) BILL, 1972

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA (West Bengal): Sir, on a point of order. Sir, before the Report is laid on the Table of the House, I would request you not to permit it to be laid on the Table of the House today, because we have information, in the first instance,