

NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT COMMISSION

*514. SHRI RAJENDRA PRA-
TAP SINHA :

SHRI KRISHAN KANT† :

Will the Minister of LABOUR AND REHABILITATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to establish a permanent National Employment Commission to review and propose measures for expansion of employment opportunities for the unemployed and under-employed persons in the country; and

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

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR, EMPLOYMENT AND REHABILITATION (SHRI S. C. JAMIR) : (a) No.

(b) Does not arise.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT : May I know whether their attention has been drawn to the Economic Panel Report of the AICC where they have recommended that a National Employment Commission should be created? As you know, Mr. Chairman, from a question last Friday we have seen that the Planning Commission has completely failed even to evaluate the unemployment problem up till now. What alternative method the Government proposes where they can have an overall picture of the unemployment position and under-employment position and also review the position which needs to be gone into? Have they got any alternative plan for that?

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD : It is true that the Economic Policy Panel had recommended such a thing, but it is equally true that the Bombay session of the AICC did not say about this when the resolution was passed by the Congress. But it does not mean that we want to undermine the importance of unemployment problem in the country. An Employment Commission will never solve the problem. But as I said last time, we have taken various measures and the Fourth Five Year Plan

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

which is in the offing and where the allotment had been increased in different sectors will generate further employment. It is also true that when there is an increase in the present growth rate, we will have more employment in the country.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT : May I know from the Government whether it is not a fact that in the first Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee it was mentioned that the average annual income of agricultural labour was Rs. 107 and that in the second Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee it has come down to Rs. 100? That shows the intensity of under-employment that has increased in the rural areas and that also shows the reasons for the tensions which have grown up. May I know whether the Government of India is proposing to appoint an Agricultural Enquiry Committee to give the latest position on the green revolution and on agricultural labour and secondly, may I also know whether the Minimum Wages Act would be applied to the rural sector also; and if it is not being properly applied, will it be enforced so that the rural population also gets minimum living wages?

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD : Mr. Chairman, it is a fact that along with unemployment there is the question of under-employment specially in the rural areas where the farmers are not getting their work all the year round. About the Agricultural Committee, I cannot reply to that, I have also read in the papers. Possibly the Agriculture Ministry can say whether they want to appoint it. About the Minimum Wages Act, I agree with him that it should be strictly applied. But as it is known, this is under the different State Governments and we from the Union Government are trying from time to time to tell them that agricultural labour should also get the minimum wage which has been prescribed by the different State Governments under the Minimum Wages Act.

SHRI GULAM NABI UNTOO : May I know whether the Government is aware that the Planning Commission in 1968 had appointed a Sub-Committee to go into the question of unemployment in the country and, if so, whether any Report has been submitted? Secondly, may I also know whether the Government is aware that at the end of the

three Annual Plans—1966 to 1969—there was a backlog of unemployment up to 22 to 23 millions, that the new entrants to the labour force at the end of those three Annual Plans—1966 to 1969—were 13.8 millions and that the jobs created in this period, that is from 1966 to 1969, were only 1.4 millions? May I know whether the Government is aware of it and in view of this fact, does the Government still shut its eyes to the colossal problem of unemployment which is before it?

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD :

Yes, Mr. Chairman; it is a fact that in August 1968 a Committee under the Chairmanship of Prof. Dantwala was appointed and it was due to the fact that doubts were expressed both inside the House and outside that we are having different figures in the different Plans and we should try to work out the correct methodology of it. And the Dantwala Committee was appointed to report on it. In the summary and conclusions which they have submitted, they have said as follows :

"We appreciate the desire on the part of lay public for precise estimates on such vital problems of employment and unemployment. It should, however, be made clear that in the nature of our socio-economic sphere such precision is not possible."

According to the Committee—

"The character of our economy and consequently that of the labour force, employment and unemployment, is too heterogeneous to justify aggregation into single dimensional magnitudes."

Therefore, this Committee itself has said that it is not possible.

I would like to add that as a result of a Resolution in the Lok Sabha, we have agreed that an Expert Committee be set up which will go into the magnitude of the unemployment problem and also suggest remedial measures.

SHRI D. SANJIVAYYA : I would like to add to what my colleague has already stated. The hon. Member who put the question was giving to this House certain estimates which were calculated by the Planning Commission before. According to earlier estimates of the Planning Commission, the back-

log of unemployment at the end of the Third Five Year Plan was 9-10 millions. And in the Draft outline of the Fourth Plan in the open market the labour force increase would be to the tune of 23 millions. So, during the earlier Fourth Plan period it was necessary to find out employment for 33 million people, but the employment potential which was to be generated as estimated by the Planning Commission then was 18-19 millions. Therefore, they said that at the end of the Fourth Plan period, the backlog would be about 15 millions.

SHRI PHOOL SINGH : The Minister has said that the appointment of a National Employment Commission will not solve the problem. But if the Commission is appointed that might make recommendations which might be difficult for the Government to implement. Is that the reason for not appointing that Commission?

Secondly, regarding the enforcement of the Minimum Wages Act, in the rural areas 40 per cent of the cultivators have holdings of less than two acres. They are mostly illiterate. How do the Government expect to enforce that Act there because they will not be able to maintain any account?

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD : Mr. Chairman, as we have said, Government have no intention of appointing a permanent National Employment Commission. But I have already said that the Government have agreed to have an Expert Committee to assess the magnitude of the unemployment problem and also to suggest remedial measures. Therefore, we do not want to escape from that. Then, as is known, minimum wages are prescribed under the different State Governments and they have the machinery to see that its implementation is there. No doubt it is a difficult problem. And from time to time we from the Union Government are insisting upon the State Governments that this should be acted upon.

SHRI G. A. APPAN : May I know from the Government about the composition of the permanent National Employment Commission? May I also know from the hon. Minister if he would promise to the House that he would have the Commission appointed immediately and submit a Report to the Government within at least six months? I

have known of cases, Mr. Chairman, where they have had Commissions appointed; they give reports after four or five years when the whole problem is over. So, may I also know from him whether he would appoint completely qualified people, eminent people, and also Members of both House of Parliament? Rather than appointing a Commission consisting of a favoured few, may I know if he would immediately convene a conference of all the people involved in this to know the magnitude of the problem and then chalk out the programmes for their effective implementation?

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD :

If the hon. Member means a permanent Employment Commission, I have replied in the main answer that we have no such proposal. If he means the Expert Committee being set up as a result of the Resolution in the Lok Sabha in the last session, then we are in touch with the State Governments. Ultimately it is they who will have to be brought in to implement this and therefore, in consultation with the State Governments, we will appoint that Committee and we propose to take some Members of Parliament as well.

SHRI K. P. SUBRAMANIA MEENON : Apparently, the Government's declared policies are in the contradiction to their actual practice. In the Budget itself it has been said that the Government is trying to implement certain labour-intensive schemes in order to alleviate the problem of unemployment. But in the same Budget, provision has been made for the tractorisation of agriculture. At the same time the Government allows the private companies as also the Government agencies like the LIC to go ahead with the so-called automation, rationalisation, etc. which obviously increase the possibility of unemployment among the educated middle class. Therefore, may I know from the Government whether in view of the absolute necessity of increasing the possibility of educated workers being employment in the different fields as also the necessity of avoiding or reducing the amount of unemployment in the rural areas, the Government will stop going ahead with their policy of rationalisation and automation in the industries as well as in mechanising agriculture?

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD :

Mr. Chairman, it is a fact that the Government do emphasise on labour-intensive schemes. But Government do not propose to have a blanket ban on utilising the modern techniques that we have. So far, as automation is concerned, we have said that we shall not adopt this where it reduces the future or coming prospect of employment and for that we have got a Committee under the Chairmanship of Mr. Venkataraman, Planning Commission Member, to see how best we can have the dovetailing of the labour-intensive schemes as well as the benefit of modern techniques. We cannot deny both and therefore there is no contradiction in the Government's policy.

SHRI S. D. MISRA : May I know whether it is not a fact that the Planning Commission as stated by the Minister also, has already given certain figures regarding the unemployment backlog and also the figures that will be there at the end of the Fourth Plan? Now the Government has again set up a Committee, what is called the Dantwala Committee. That Committee is to give certain norms. And an interim Report, I understand, has come from that Committee giving some norms. I may be right or may be wrong.

Now a third committee is being appointed which is called an expert committee to assess the problems of unemployment. Sir, I take it that the Planning Commission's figures which are generally accepted by this Government, may be they are wrong or they are right by 10 to 20 per cent. But one fact is clear that there is backlog of unemployment to the tune of minimum of 15 million. What is there to hold up the schemes which the Government wants to implement by the creation of one Commission, a second Commission and a third Commission? Why should so many Commissions be necessary to waste time?

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD :

Mr. Chairman, as I told the House in an earlier reply, it is true that at the end of each Plan we find a certain backlog of unemployment. As it is known to the House, in the Planning Commission itself we had certain difficulties about these reports and, therefore, the Prof. Dantwala Committee was appointed to find the methodology of how to assess

it. They have already given a summary and conclusions of their report to us. In fact they have said that it is not possible to go into one dimension, and this Committee which I referred to was a result of the Lok Sabha asking us to have an expert committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Bhargava.

SHRI KALYAN ROY : On a point of order, Sir, there is a Calling Attention today on the same question of Mr. Bhargava.

MR. CHAIRMAN : That is right Mr. Bhargava I would not allow supplementaries because there is a Calling Attention.

SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA : Sir, I have a submission to make. Since you are not allowing any supplementary I should be allowed to put questions after the Calling Attention. I put my question No. 515.

INCREASE IN THE SELLING PRICE OF VANASPATI GHEE

*515. SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA : Will the Minister of FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government allowed an increase in the selling price of Vanaspati Ghee in the month of December, 1969;

(b) whether the Vanaspati Industry had represented to Government to allow such an increase;

(c) whether the Vanaspati Industry indicated any reasons for the increase in prices; and

(d) whether the Vanaspati Industry donated a large sum of money after the price rise was agreed to?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION (SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE) : (a) An increase of 25 paise per kg. in the price of vanaspati was allowed in the West zone on the 25th December, 1969; no increase was allowed in any other zone.

(b) and (c) The increase was allowed on account of the rise in the cost of

raw oils used in the manufacture of vanaspati.

(d) Government has no information.

GRATUITY SCHEME FOR COAL MINERS

*516. SHRI KALYAN ROY : Will the Minister of Labour and Rehabilitation be pleased to refer to the answer to Starred Question No. 132 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 27th February, 1970, and state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the discontentment among the coal miners because of delay in the introduction of the gratuity scheme for employees in the coal-mining industry as agreed to in the Industrial Committee meeting held on the 6th November, 1969 at New Delhi;

(b) if so, by when Government is likely to bring in appropriate bill in this regard for legislation; and

(c) whether it is a fact that the delay in the introduction of the scheme is due to opposition of the coal-mine owners; and if so, what are their points for opposition?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR, EMPLOYMENT AND REHABILITATION (SHRI S. C. JAMIR) : (a) Yes.

(b) The matter is being processed in consultation with the Ministries/Departments concerned. Every effort is being made to introduce legislation at an early date.

(c) The colliery owners are not opposed to the Gratuity Scheme in principle.

SHRI KALYAN ROY : Because Mr. Sanjivayya is here, I would appreciate if he kindly answers this question. Sir, in the coal-mines, as you know, 5,000 people were killed, and according to the Government statistics 10,000 workers were permanently disabled in the last ten years. Such a large number of people are not involved in any accident put together on the Railways and Airways etc. A study group on the working of coal-mines was appointed under the chairmanship of Dr. Chedi Lal, now Adviser to the Planning Commission, consisting of Shri A. S. R. Chari, Coal-mining Adviser in the Ministry, and others. They observed