

[Dr. Raghbir Singh.] or anybody else can sit and advise the experts and tell them as to what the processes are. I am afraid I know more than my friend knows. There is already a debate in his Department between the American school and the English school. The Madras Records Office completely differs from the method followed by the National Archives in New Delhi. So, it is not for me to tell him all these things. But my suggestion was for the appointment of a Committee for finding out ways and means for solving these difficulties. Sir, much of the speech of my friend dealt with what the National Archives is doing, which was not very relevant at all.

Then, Sir, I have got to say one word about Prof. Humayun Kabir. I am glad he is here to hear what I have to say. In this connection, Sir, there is an English proverb, namely, 'Power corrupts'. So, it seems that his association with bureaucracy has had some effect on his outlook. Sir, I had hoped that he would be able to see my point of view. | What I want to press is this. When I ask for a Parliamentary Committee for this purpose, I want only to strengthen the hands of the Ministry. There is no doubt that efforts are being made but no actual move results therefrom. Therefore, some steps are needed to make things move. For instance, I know the difficulty which the Education Ministry has with the Finance Ministry. Now, Sir, if there is a body consisting of Members of Parliament who back all these proposals, I am sure the Finance Ministry will have to agree. So, I am only trying to help him, and I am only trying to support him. I am not at all criticising him. My pleading is that things should move a little faster. They are moving extraordinarily slowly. We want you to be more efficient and we want you to work with more vigour. And that is why I thought that a body consisting of Members of Parliament would be quite helpful.

Now, Sir, it may be asked: What will a Parliamentary body do in the matter of weeding of records? Prof. Humayun Kabir asks that question. In this connection, I have got to tell him that in England, there is the Public Records Office Act which provides that destruction lists of the Records Office have got to be placed on the Table of both the Houses, and only if no objection is

taken to any of the items there, those records are destroyed. Now, at this stage I am not asking for anything like that. I am simply suggesting, let the Members of Parliament assist in laying down the rules.

Finally, Sir, I knew already what the fate of this Resolution was going to be. I was not completely unprepared for that. But I felt it my duty to raise this question before this House, so that it may be recorded that there were some Members who knew what ought to be done, and who actually did offer their hand of co-operation. Now, it is for the hon. Minister to accept or not to accept the Resolution. But let it be known that we tried to help them. It is their choice to accept it or not to accept it. Posterity will pass whatever judgment it wants to pass and historians will have the last word, later, not now.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: What about your Resolution?

DR. RAGHUBIR SINH: Since the Minister said that he would not accept it, the only alternative for me is to withdraw it.

The Resolution was, by leave, withdrawn.

RESOLUTION RE. APPOINTMENT OF A WAGE COMMISSION

SHRI SATYAPRIYA BANERJEE
(West Bengal): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I have the honour to move the Resolution that stands in my name, viz :—

"This House is of opinion that Government should immediately appoint a Wage Commission to enquire into the wage structure of industrial and agricultural workers in the country and to recommend adequate wages for them."

My resolution is very simple, and I hope and trust that the Government will not find any difficulty in accepting this innocuous Resolution of mine. My Resolution seeks to appoint a Wage Commission, a thing which, has never been done in the long history of the Government of India, both British and indigenous. That Wage Commission has to enquire into the wage structure of

industrial and agricultural workers and recommend adequate wages for them. I have advisedly used the term 'adequate', because we have in our country, unfortunately, three types of wages—minimum wage, fair wage and living wage. I have advisedly and scrupulously avoided these three categories of wages. What I have intended is that the Commission should recommend an adequate wage. Wage, Sir, occupies in matters relating to labour the pride of place. The following facts stand out in bold relief : (i) the basic wage level in most Indian industries is extremely low ; (ii) little or nothing has been done by the principal industries of the country to revise the wages in an upward direction. Whenever there has been an increase, it has been as a result of a long-drawn struggle waged by the impoverished, famished workers; (iii) wages again are the major sources of friction between the employers and the workers. Therefore, wage is the pivot on which the whole question of labour hinges. What is true of industrial labour is more true of agricultural labour. Before I proceed further, let me give you some facts and figures. If we look into the trends of employment, productivity and wages and if we take 1939 to be the base year we will find that the figures are:

It will be seen from the above figures that while there has been no appreciable increase in employment since 1950—in fact there has been a slight decrease—industrial production

Year	Employment	Production	Productivity
1940	103·7	108·1	104·2
1947	136·8	99·1	72·5
1948	141·4	112·3	79·4
1949	143·3	108·4	75·6
1950	136·0	107·2	78·8
1951	135·7	120·4	88·7
1952	136·7	133·2	97·4
1953	133·1	140·8	105·8
1954	135·9	153·6	113·0

has increased from 107·2 to 153·6, productivity from 78·8 to 113·0. Let me give you some

figures about wages. Let me begin from 1940, the base year again being 1939.

Year	Index of earnings	All India Consumer Price Index	Index of real earnings
1940	105·3	97·0	108·6
1941	111·0	107·0	103·7
1947	253·2	323·0	78·4
1948	304·0	360·0	84·4
1949	341·3	371·0	91·7
1950	334·2	371·0	90·1
1951	356·8	387·0	92·2
1952	385·7	379·0	101·8
1953	384·6	385·0	99·9
1954	381·2	371·0	102·7

If we study these figures, it reveals a very peculiar state of affairs. The index of real earnings in 1940, 1941, 1952 and 1954 was above the pre-war level. Even though the index of real earnings is slightly above the pre-war level in 1954, it did not climb up to the level in 1940, which was 108·6. The rise in productivity has been of the order of 43 per cent, in the space of five years or at an average annual rate of 86 per cent., while the rise in the index of real earnings has been of the order of only 14 per cent, at an average annual rate of 2·8 per cent. I will not be giving you a complete picture if I do not give at the same time the picture relating to profits. I will give the figures regarding jute, cotton, tea, sugar, paper, iron and steel, coal and cement. The basic year is again 1939.

	1947	1948
Jute	313·2	361·2
Cotton	317·7	548·1
Tea	216·3	127·9
Sugar	171·5	381·3
Paper	167·6	257·0
Iron and Steel
Coal	171·8	201·0
Cement	142·5	252·6

[Shri Satyapriya Banerjee.] 3

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I come to 1951. That give a colossal figures; so far as jute is concerned it is 679-1. Cotton is 551 •!. Sugar is 420-8. I will not trouble you further with quoting figures. This is the picture that we have ; and what is it that I want to do ? I want the Government to institute a Wage Commission which will scientifically go into the whole matter and then come to a decision with regard to the wage that is due to the industrial and agricultural labourers. I have dealt with industrial labour so long. Let me give you something about agricultural labour. It was estimated that the daily factory wage was, on an average, about three times the daily wage of the agricultural labour, the corresponding figures being annas 54'5 and annas 17'5 respectively. I will not take up your time by quoting figures.

Let me come to the crux of the whole matter. In fact the Planning Commission has indirectly recommended the appointment of a Wage Commission. I will quote from para. 23 page 579:

"There are two more aspects of wage policy which require to be examined further. The first concerns the laying down of principles to bring wages into conformity with the expectations of the working class in the future pattern of society; the second, the settlement of wage disputes in the interim period. In regard to the former, a view has been expressed (in fact the view that I have been expressing just now) that a Wage Commission should be appointed in order to examine the relevant material and to lay down principles for defining the respective roles of wages, profits and prices, taking into account the declared social objective *at* the community. (That is the socialist pattern of society)."

Now they say 'We cannot accept it.' Why ? Carefully listen to what follows :

"It has to be recognised however, that a commission of the type suggested, if appointed forthwith, will be considerably handicapped for want of data and any conclusions that it might reach on insufficient facts will not provide a suitable basis for a long-term policy. Urgent steps are therefore, needed to undertake a wage census."

The reason, Sir, is not convincing. The appointment of a Wage Commission, to my mind, will facilitate the collection of the much-desired data. I don't say that wage census is not important. It is an important thing but it is no substitute for a Wage Commission. Let me lend weight to my view by quoting what the General Secretary of the Indian National Trade Union Congress said with regard to wage census. I say this because his opinion might carry some weight with the Government and the Labour Minister. I am quoting from the proceedings of Committee 'D' on the Second Five Year Plan, over which my esteemed friend over there, Mr. Dasappa, presided, dated the 27th May 1956. Mr. Tripathi says: "To my mind merely a wage census would not be sufficient. It would be necessary to have more extensive investigations into the cost structure of each industry." He referred to what all the Members of the Labour Panel, I mean, the Labour Members of the Labour Panel, suggested before the Commission. They suggested in the Labour Panel that investigation into the economic structure of each industry should be undertaken rightaway. It is, in other words, the appointment of a Wage Commission which will go into the whole thing. Wage Board, truly speaking, is to follow the Wage Commission, not precede it. It is like putting the cart before the horse. The wage boards will have to function after the principles relating to the fixation of wages have been determined by the Wage Commission and the decision of the Wage Commission would have to be implemented by the wage board. The purpose of the wage board has been given in page 580 of the Second Five Year Plan, paragraph 25 :

"The existing machinery for the settlement of disputes, namely the Industrial Tribunals, has not given -full satisfaction to the parties concerned. A more acceptable machinery for settling wage disputes will be one which gives the parties themselves a more responsible role in reaching decisions. An authority like a tripartite wage board, consisting of equal representatives of employers and workers and an independent chairman will probably ensure more acceptable decisions. Such wage boards should be instituted for individual industries in different areas."

And you will see, Sir, that the wage boards, as envisaged here, have a very

limited scope. From what I have said it has been made abundantly clear that wage boards are no substitutes for a Wage Commission. Therefore, really it is in the fitness of things that the Government should, without any prejudice to their prestige, immediately appoint a Wage Commission. My friend Shri Abid Ali is a veteran in labour matters and I hope and trust that he will see the justice of my Resolution and see his way also to accept it. The General Council of the A.I.T.U.C. which sat only a few days back in Calcutta said with regard to the appointment of a Wage Commission as follows. This is the quotation:

"The Council in its resolution on the Wage Commission said : 'One of the factors in a planned economy is a planned wage structure which guarantees the worker and his family the minimum requirements of a civilized life. In the absence of basic principles that govern the wage structure, setting up of wage boards for different industries alone would not help in fixation of wages on a scientific basis. Wages are not to be determined by marginal units. But workers should be assured of a progressively rising standard of living and a fair share in the benefits arising out of increased productivity.' "

Wages are not to be determined by marginal units—this is the view of the A.I.T.U.C. General Council and I may remind my friend Shri Abid Ali that that is also the view of the General Secretary of the I.N.T.U.C, the view he expressed in that same sub-committee from the proceedings of which I have quoted to you just now. Let me quote also what he said in regard to that :

"This question"—

that is to say, the question of wages to be determined by the marginal units—

"was raised by me before the panel of the Planning Commission and I am glad to say that the employers were there then, and they also agreed that so far as wage fixation was concerned, it should be done on the average of the economic units and the marginal and uneconomic units should be the special concern of the State."

I am happy to find I stand on the same ground as the I.N.T.U.C. spokesman of the labour movement does; and I shall

be happier if the Government here accepts the views of their spokesman outside.

• Let me next come to another matter and there I have again to come back to the Planning Commission. The Commission says :

"A wage policy which aims at a structure with rising real wages requires to be evolved. Workers' right to a fair wage has been recognised, but in practice it has been found difficult to quantify."

But if you recognise the workers' right to a fair wage, what stands in the way of your implementing that ? I do not know. Further they say :

"In spite of their best efforts, industrial tribunals have been unable to evolve a consistent formula."

If it is a fact that the industrial tribunals have been unable to evolve a consistent formula, then there is a stronger case for the appointment of a Wage Commission. Appoint a Wage Commission and ask them to evolve the principles which should govern the fixation of the wages and implement those principles. You will be spared the trouble of going to the tribunals and having their awards. They say further:

"A major difficulty experienced in the fuller implementation of the principle of fair wage is the 'drag' exercised by marginal units in determining the wage structure."

But as I said just now, wages should not be determined by the marginal units. They should be determined by the representative units, if I may use the language of the late Professor Marshall of Cambridge. Further the Planning Commission says :

"While the financial position of average units in a centre requires to be made the basis of wage fixation, if progress towards fair wages is to be accelerated, the conflicting considerations of closure of marginal units and its effect on unemployment also becomes pertinent in the context of planning."

Sir, it has been a peculiar virtue of the present Government to find out the smallest excuse that comes to their aid like the straw that comes to the drowning man; they grasp at it and place it before the public so that they could be

[Shri Satyapriya Banerjee.] hoodwinked and lulled into the belief that the Government was doing the right thing.

Then I come to productivity. Sir, productivity is certainly a factor in the determination of wages. But an equitable balance has to be struck between an adequate wage and minimum profit. Let me come again to the factors that go to determine wage. I am again quoting from the Resolution passed by the A.I.T.U.C. The Resolution demanded that:

"the difference in wages should be on the basis of skill, experience, efficiency and length of service and cost of living should be fully neutralised."

Sir, wage boards are no substitute for a Wage Commission. Wage census is no substitute for a Wage Commission: Wage Commission is the only thing required in the present circumstances and in the present state of things, to achieve the ideal which the Government has set before the people, namely, the socialist pattern of society. The only thing that the Government can do to ensure a fairly civilised living standard to the workers is to appoint a Wage Commission which will evolve and enunciate the principles which should go to determine the wages of workers in different industries.

I do not understand what is meant by minimum wage. Nor do I understand what is meant by a fair wage. But I understand what is meant by an adequate wage, a wage that will enable a worker and his family to live like human beings, a wage what the Germans call "kultur-lohn", a wage that will enable the worker to live a cultured life. That is the wage that you should give and that is the wage for which I am pleading through the appointment of the Wage Commission.

Many Commissions have been appointed before. The Whitely Commission of 1931 was there and that was the only Royal Commission on labour which went into the whole question and it came to certain conclusions which were very good in those days but they have become antiquated now. Then came the Labour Investigation Committee, the Rege Enquiry Committee appointed by the Government of India in 1944 or 1945. They also produced a very ably written report. Then came

the Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee. And then there was another Committee, the Fair Wages Committee, and I am sorry to say, but I have to say it, Sir, you will be astonished that not a single copy of the Fair Wages Enquiry Committee's Report was available at the Parliament Library, not a single copy. I ran after it for the last three days, but it evaded my grasp. I was told it was in the Ministry of Labour's Library. It was phoned for, but nothing came up. I was told at about two o'clock that they had sent a special messenger there to get a copy of it. But I do not know whether that copy has come. Even if it has come, it has come not to be of any use to me now.

Sir, I again appeal to all Members of the House that if they have really a Welfare State in their minds, if they really want to have a society based on the socialist pattern, if they want to have the inequalities removed, then the best thing, the most primary thing, the most immediate thing that is needed is to appoint a Wage Commission to enquire into the wage structure and to evolve certain principles for the fixation of wages which will go a great way in raising the standard of life of the worker.

MR. Deputy Chairman, I have done.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Resolution moved:

"This House is of opinion that Government should immediately appoint a Wage Commission to enquire into the wage structure of industrial and agricultural workers in the country to recommend adequate wages for them."

SHRI B. K. MUKERJEE: (Uttar Pradesh): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, before I speak anything on the Resolution that has been moved just now by my hon. friend, Mr. Satyapriya Banerjee, I want to correct him in one respect. He was quoting an extract from the speech of Mr. K. P. Tripathi, General Secretary of the Indian National Trade Union Congress. He stated that the hon. Deputy Minister, Mr. Abid Ali will have no objection to accepting what his own spokesman said.

SHRI SATYAPRIYA BANERJEE :

I Spokesman outside.

SHRI B. K. MUKERJEE: Mr. Tri-j pathi is not the spokesman of the Government of India ; he is only the spokes-

man of the working class of India and I claim that Mr. Tripathi represents the working class population of India today and not the Government of India.

SHRI J. V. K. VALLABHARAO (Andhra): You accept it with a minor amendment. After all, he belongs to the same party.

SHRI B. K. MUKERIEE : It makes a lot of difference. If he is the spokesman of the Government, then the Deputy Minister will be bound by it, but as Mr. Tripathi is not the spokesman of the Government, I do not know what will be the attitude of Government as regards this Resolution.

I welcome the idea contained in this Resolution though I feel that the Resolution does not go as far as it should go. My hon. friend's Resolution tries to distinguish between a wage board and a Wage Commission. Therefore, I get the idea from him that he has closed from the purview of the wage board or pay enquiry the bulk of the wage earners in the public sector, that is the Government. The whole structure of wages has got to be considered in view of the present conditions obtaining in our society. We are aiming at the establishment of a socialist pattern of society and in a socialist pattern of society, the standard of living of the people has got to be improved and has got to be raised. The standard of living of a working class man, whether he be in a private industry or in a Government undertaking is very very low. Therefore, it has got to be raised. The number of workers employed under Government cannot be said to be very insignificant if it is compared with the private industrial workers. In my opinion, the Resolution does not go as far as the mover of the Resolution probably intended it to go. The existing economic structure of the society may not permit us to achieve the desired result within a very short time; nevertheless, we have to mould and fashion the structure of the society in such a way that will contribute effectively to the realisation of our objective which is a socialist pattern of society. It may be argued that the condition of the workers either in the industries or in the fields cannot be raised overnight. While I agree with that, we cannot forget that we have got to take steps in the right direction so that we achieve the result in the near future. I also agree that a socialist society is built not solely on monetary incentives but on ideals

of service to society and the willingness of society to recognise that service. Today, however, society does not recognise the services rendered by the workers of this country. Though the workers are really the builders and producers of wealth, our society depends on those people who have got plenty of money. It refuses to recognise the wealth produced by the workers and then it denies the workers any right to participate in the wealth produced by them. If we take up the last Five Year Plan, we will find that it visualised an increase of 11 per cent., in the *per capita* national income ; after the completion of the Plan period, we find that the workers had put their energy and strength to the wheel and have increased the production and the *per capita* income by 18 per cent, instead of 11 per cent. The second Five Year Plan aims at increasing the *per capita* national income by 25 per cent. All these increases in the production and wealth are due to the workers but what is the position today in the country ? The workers are denied the right to take something out of their own production, to get something out of the national income. Unless we can break this monopoly, we cannot raise the standard of living.

The present economic structure of our society is an indication of the advancement of the society to take the shape of a socialist pattern and, therefore, we have got to mould the society in such a way that our objective, that is the socialist pattern of society, may be nearer. For that purpose we have got to give an incentive to the workers to produce more, to put in more strength and efficiency as they have got to produce more wealth for the country. To give them added incentive we have got to provide them with something out of this profit which the nation has secured during the First Five Year Plan. About this Wage Commission, the hon. mover means it for the industries in the private sector. I want that it should be equally applicable to the public sector and to those who are employed by the Government, to give them more incentive wherever they are working. Whether in the public sector or in the private sector the workers are equally responsible to achieve this target, to achieve this production and to increase the national wealth. Therefore, our suggestion had been and my suggestion here

[Shri B. K. Mukerjee.] too is to give the workers, wherever they are employed today, an *ad hoc* increase of 25 per cent, of their present wages, which can thereafter be adjusted according to the recommendation of the Wage Commission or Pay Commission the Government hereafter may appoint. This is my concrete suggestion, but the Resolution of my friend, Shri Satyapriya Banerjee, does not go so far and I am doubtful, even if this Resolution is accepted by the Government, whether we can achieve the desired result. I do not think that you will obtain the desired result and we cannot exclude from the purview of this increase, whether 25 per cent, or 50 per cent., in the present scales of remuneration, the workers in the Government service. To do so it will be doing a great injustice to this bulk of the workers.

SHRI SATYAPRIYA BANERJEE: 25 per cent, increase in the wages is the universal demand of the entire working class of India under all the Central trade union organisations.

SHRI B. K. MUKERJEE : While he was explaining his own Resolution he was comparing the wage board and the Wage Commission. He was citing my General Secretary, Mr. Tripathi. I cite here for his information our Resolution, that of the Indian National Trade Union Congress, at the Surat session. The Resolution runs thus:

"The I.N.T.U.C. takes note of the fact that the Government contemplate to appoint wage boards for major industries and urges upon the Government to appoint a pay commission also for the public sector."

We did not confine our demand to the wage boards or Wage Commission alone. We went one step further and demanded the appointment of a Pay Commission for the people in the public sector, in Government employ.

SHRI SATYAPRIYA BANERJEE: Public sector is not also excluded from my Resolution.

SHRI B. K. MUKERJEE : I think he will agree with us that we have demanded much more. My demand here again is that when the workers have produced more wealth and they are going to produce more during these five years, we have to give them an *ad hoc* increase of 25 per cent, on the present

scales of wages of remuneration that is being paid to the workers, either in Government employ or in private employ and thereafter to adjust that *ad hoc* 25 per cent, increase according to the recommendations made by the Pay Commission or the Wage Commission that will hereafter be appointed by the Government.

Thank you, Sir.

SHRI PERATH NARAYANAN NAIR (Madras): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I rise to support the Resolution the case for which has so ably been put forward by the mover. The speaker who has just preceded me has sought to make out that this demand for a Wage Commission runs counter to the demand for wage boards. That is not the case. I have listened to the mover of the Resolution and he made his idea quite clear. The point he made out was that neither the wage census nor the wage board is any substitute for the Wage Commission. He contemplates that this Wage Commission alone is fitted to go into the various aspects of the wage structure in this country and lay down broad principles and for that the most effective machinery is the Wage Commission. I do emphasise this point that there is common agreement amongst the various sections of workers in India for an immediate wage increase. Shri Tripathi may not be the spokesman of the Government of India but we all acknowledge that he, as the spokesman of the workers, has put forward the case for a substantial immediate increase in the wages of the workers, that is, 25 per cent, but we press this demand for a Wage Commission not merely for an immediate increase in wage.

I shall just acquaint the House with the conditions of the problem in the various parts of India, particularly, in regard to the position of the agricultural labourers, and then the need for a proper enquiry and investigation and the need for laying down the general principles will be brought home to the Members. During the last four or five years, especially in the south, there has been a deep ferment among the lowliest of the lowly classes, the agricultural workers, workers in the primary sector of production. We speak here of minimum wage and living wage and fair wage, but if we take into account the real condition of the vast masses of the people there, the agriculturists, in their case anything is a wage, in cash or in kind.

Nothing by way of a wage structure exists for them. Their conditions are even worse than those of serfs or near-serfs. That is the position. Over vast areas in Tamil Nad, in the Tanjore and Tinneveli districts, and in parts of Madu-rai, and over vast areas in Malabar in Palghat taluk, Chirakal taluk, and in other places in Malabar and in Kuttanad in Travancore-Cochin State a new urge has seized these vast masses of people. Instinctively and vaguely they feel that changes are coming over in this country and they have a right to a better life and they organise themselves in thousands. Women are in the forefront and they demand now that they have a right to be heard. Now the troubles arise and there are strikes because there are no broad principles laid down for fixation of their wages and other amenities and the officials who are obliged to tackle these problems are feeling great difficulties in the absence of such broad principles. Recently when the struggle of the agricultural labourers was there in Kollankode we had occasion to approach the Madras Government. Their officials, the tahsildars and the labour officers, came there but this problem of agricultural labourers and their wages is quite new to them. There was absolutely nothing to guide them, no broad principles and other things, and when we presented a memorandum to the Government, the Government of Madras said: "Well, the Government of India are enquiring into this problem. For the time being we can only make mediation efforts." Mediation efforts are made with no basic principles, general principles, to guide them. Sometimes after protracted negotiations some sort of a voluntary agreement is reached, but because there is no weight of a statutory nature behind these agreements, these agreements are more honoured in the breach than in observance. So, here these vast masses of people are feeling vaguely and instinctively that a change has come and that they have a right to better living conditions. They look to this House, they look to the Government of India that their claim for a better wage must be heard.

In regard to industrial workers there has been justification as the mover of the Resolution has himself pointed out. The production has increased and profits have also increased and it is only fair that a portion of this profit, a portion of this benefit must go to the workers. That principle has been accepted by everybody. Every party has accepted it.

and the workers organisations have also accepted it. But the difficulty is when you go to the rural areas you see so many things, the miserable condition of the workers. Even officials, when they go there, are in the dark. They have absolutely no principles to guide them. That is all the more reason why the Wage Commission should go into this problem in all its various aspects with particular reference to agricultural workers whose fate has been left in the hands of the feudal landlords. From that point of view anybody today will be thrilled by this new urge which has seized these vast masses of the population in our country, who today dream of a better life. They are already on the move. Thousands of people, men and women, are already on the move and it is only fair that we in this House must respond to them if we are serious about the democratic principles in our country; if we are serious about the socialist pattern of society the lowliest of the lowly of these agricultural workers and industrial workers must be guaranteed a better share of the production. Over all these things, there is absolutely no controversy. Mr. Tripathi, General Secretary of the Indian National Trade Union Congress and the General Secretary of the Congress Party, they are all agreed. The only point is how best to enforce it. For that proper investigation is required and proper investigation can best be brought about through the appointment of a Wage Commission. The difficulty which the Planning Commission has pointed out is that such a Commission cannot be appointed because of lack of data. But I beg to submit that the appointment of the Commission will itself hasten the process of collection of data. The problem will be before the public in all its urgency and more efforts will be made to collect this data. Anybody will be thrilled by the sight of these thousands of people, especially, in Kollangode and other areas, where I have seen with my own eyes these agricultural workers, who have been so very backward, coming forward and standing up for their rights and claiming a better life for them. When that is the condition throughout India, we will be failing in our duty if we do not give them a fair deal. Even for the matter of collection of data the appointment of a Wage Commission will be the best way. With these words, I support the resolution.

SHRI LALCHAND HIRACHAND
DOSHI (Bombay): Sir, I am in general

[Shri Lalchand Hirachand Doshi.] agreement with the principle of the resolution. The mover has suggested that the Wage Commission should precede the wage Boards and I think it is a wise suggestion. The function of the Wage Commission will be to lay down certain ideas, certain standards for fixing the wages and on the basis of these ideas the wage boards established in different regions will function and apply those ideas to different industries and different categories of labour. This is, to my mind, a very good suggestion.

We find that for want of such an idea there is considerable strife in industrial relations between management and labour. Particularly on the question of bonus different ideas are being propounded and different demands are being made, and this one subject has become much more controversial than the subject of wages itself. The industrial tribunals have from time to time given different judgments with regard to the question of bonus and from State to State the ideas have differed with the result that nobody knows on what principle, on what basic idea the bonus is to be awarded and there has been constant dispute between labour and management on this one issue. If we want to avoid strife, the one thing we must establish is the basis on which wages should be fixed. I can assure you, Sir, that modern management will not hesitate now under a national Government to pay fair wages to labour. My hon. friend in his remarks said that he wanted living wage to be paid to labour; I would go a step further and say, not a living wage but a comfortable wage should be given to workers and that is what is being done today in other countries.

SHRI SATYAPRIYA BANERJEE: Show the way, Mr. Doshi.

SHRI LALCHAND HIRACHAND DOSHI: That way can only be shown provided labour comes forward with co-operation for production. That is what exactly is lacking today in the labour leaders. The labour is all right It is prepared to co-operate but the main difficulty arises with the leadership of labour.

SHRI S. N. MAZUMDAR (West Bengal) : Because they fight for their demands you say.....

SHRI LALCHAND HIRACHAND DOSHI : It is power politics, I know but ultimately what will determine the wages ? It is not demands and strikes that will determine the wages. After all it is the productivity of labour which is dependent on the methods that are applied in production. If we are going to obstruct progress, rationalisation and better methods of production and if we say, "No we will continue with the antiquated ideas of production," certainly, you cannot expect to have higher wages and better standards of living.

SHRI S. N. MAZUMDAR: You cannot have antiquated ideas about profits, also.

SHRI LALCHAND HIRACHAND DOSHI: Antiquated ideas of profits are rapidly going out of fashion. Nobody is working on those antiquated ideas of profits. Modern management is certainly working for profit and will continue to work for profit as long as private enterprise is there. Let there be no doubt about it. But the modern management wants less profit per unit but more profit by increased production, so that a large number of people will be benefited by the increased production. Let the labour leaders understand this. A higher wage or a fair wage or a living wage or a comfortable wage will only come into operation, if we accept the modern ideas of production which are being followed in the Western countries, including Russia, and are being adopted wholesale. I had an occasion to visit Russia. Sir, I think, usually an illustration from Russia convinces my friends on the other side. There, I was humorously asked by one of the leaders of the Russian industry: "Lalchand, what do you think of the production in that textile mill ? How many looms does that worker manage ?" Well, we used to ask the people there how many looms they managed, and they said, "36". A man manages 36 looms in that country. How many does a man manage in this country ? Two, three or four....

SHRI S. N. MAZUMDAR : Have you compared their emoluments ?

SHRI LALCHAND HIRACHAND DOSHI: My friend wants to know the evolution and development. Well, that is exactly the point that I am making. If you obstruct development and evolution do not expect higher wages, higher

standards and a living wage. We will have to live in those old and antiquated times, if we do not move forward and make progress in our economic ideas. And, therefore, Sir, when we talk of Wages, whether for the industrial labour or the agricultural labour, we have got to bear in mind this thing that unless the productivity of labour has increased by modern methods of production, it will be impossible to give higher wages to anybody, whatever the Government there is. Even Russia could not give higher wages under the Communist regime. What were the wages that were being paid to the Russian workers ? 400 roubles against 40,000 roubles. And when compared to the cost of living, that is not at all better than what is being paid in India. Sir, Why is America able to give such high wages ? Do you mean to say that there are no capitalists there ? It is the land of capitalists. And yet labour believes in private enterprise there, because both labour and management have realised and have agreed that more modern methods and more rationalised methods of production are in the interest of labour and management, and the management is in a position to give higher wages to the labour there. And yet they produce goods which can be supplied to others also. This is the modern basis of production. And, what are we doing now ? We say, "No, we will not allow the modern methods to be adopted in this country." So far as agriculture is concerned, we say, "10 acres or 15 acres of land will be made available to a cultivator." And that also dry land. In that case, what is he going to produce, and what is he going to pay to his labour, and what is he going to take for himself ? (*Interruption.*) But it is no way of improvement. We have got to accept the modern methods, if we want to make any progress in our economic life in a general way. And so far as the wages are concerned, that is the only way to get improvement.

Sir, the Government are making efforts to give higher wages. But as I mentioned here, unless we accept the fundamental ideas that higher wages are mainly dependent on higher productivity of labour, arising out of nationalisation and other modern and efficient methods, nothing is going to happen, in spite of any rigorous rules and regulations applied by the Government. You can impose higher taxation. But higher taxation will not take you far. Unless there is more 3—5 R. S./56.

and more production, everybody will remain a beggar and a poor man. And that is not what a Socialist State or a welfare State wants. A really welfare State wants a higher standard of living for all, and not a beggar's living for everybody. If that is their idea, let them have it. But I do not think my Government wants it.

Therefore, Sir, what I say is that modern management is not afraid of higher wages. It is rather keen that higher wages should be paid to the workers and the income of the people should go up, so that they will have more and more purchasing power, which in turn will help the increased production and lower costs. These are the methods for creating employment and improving the standard of living and the living wages. Therefore, Sir, it is important that before any wage boards are brought into existence, or, before they begin to function, certain basic idea should be laid down for fixing wages in different areas and for different people, so that the present confusion leading to strikes may be avoided. A lot of energy is today wasted in understanding the various labour laws. And if we simplify them and lay down certain principles, I am quite sure that all this energy that is wasted would be usefully utilised. In that way, we can increase the production of the country, which is the most important requirement for our progress. I, therefore, in general, support the principle of this Resolution, and I hope that the Government will be in a position to benefit by the basic and fundamental idea underlying the Resolution.

SHRI N. C. SEKHAR (Travancore-Cochin)
Sir, I rise to support the Resolution moved by my esteemed friend, Shri Satyapriya Banerjee. Now, Sir, there are certain points which have been raised by our friend, the representative of the capitalists. Mr. Doshi, in his shortest speech, has hit in two directions, namely, against taxation and against an increase in the wages of workers. He has very cleverly done that. He has said that the spirit in which the Resolution is moved is very good, and they are prepared not only to give more wages, but comfortable wages to the workers. But there is a proviso, namely, provided that the workers go on increasing production without asking for any wage increase in the, m.e.an.-time.

[Shri N. C. Sekhar.]

That has been the altitude of these gentlemen ever since the workers started to raise their voice for an increase in their present day wages. Particularly, during the last five years, when there has been an increase in industrial production, the working classes belonging to all trade union organisations have raised their voice for a 25 per cent., increase in their wages. It has become the common demand of all the workers, particularly, industrial workers, whose number, I think, is something like 45 lakhs. The mover of this Resolution has quoted figures for the present-day wage level and also for the increase in profits and the rise in the cost of living indices to show the necessity for a wage increase. In the meanwhile the Government, on their side, have launched a propaganda along with their propaganda for the second Five Year Plan, that the Government is going to appoint wage boards on a regional basis. A labour representative, Mr. Mukerjee, said that this Resolution had not gone to the extent it should have gone and that the Government had already proposed to start wage boards. In view of that fact, he asked, "Why this Wage Commission?" Mr. Narayanan Nair has already replied to that point. He said that the demand for a Wage Commission, as Mr. Doshi has suggested, was to lay down certain principles on which the wage boards should work out a wage structure corresponding to the different situations in different regions. Before laying down certain principles to fix wages, what is the fun of appointing wage boards? For instance, minimum wages have now been fixed for certain workers including estate labour. Under the instructions of the Government of India, certain State Governments have taken steps to fix minimum wages for certain categories of labour of which one is estate labour. In Travancore-Cochin, estate labour employed in tea, coffee and rubber plantations are given fixed minimum wages. A male worker gets Rs. 1-9-6 per day; a female worker gets Rs. 1-6-6. The male and female workers do the same kind of work. The female workers pluck the same amount of tea leaves as the male workers. Perhaps the female workers pluck more. Yet, the female workers get Rs. 1-6-6 per day, while the male workers get Rs. 1-9-6. Why is this difference? Wynnad and Nilgiris are contiguous to Travancore-Cochin. Yet in Tamil Nad a plantation worker is given Rs. 1-7-0,

per day, whereas it is Rs. 1-9-6 in the case of a male and Rs. 1-6-6 in the case of a female in Travancore-Cochin. Why is this two anna difference? In fact, the living conditions and the price levels are the same. Still, this benign Government has fixed these differential wages. That is why we suggest that, before giving any discretion to the various industrialists and to the various State Governments, the Central Government should take steps to appoint a Wage Commission to go into this question in the light of the increase in the production of the workers and the increase in the cost of living, and determine what quantum of wages should be offered to the workers. For that, a Wage Commission is necessary. Without doing this preliminary work, the appointment of wage boards is purposeless. Again, a *bidi* worker in Travancore-Cochin gets Rs. 2-4-0 for making 1,000 *bidi*s. One wage-fixing officer came and fixed in at Rs. 1-14-0. Is it possible for any employer or Government to implement this? The Government of Travancore-Cochin found it very difficult to implement it. That is why we demand that the Central Government should take immediate steps, simultaneously with their carrying out the second Five Year Plan, to study the wage structure and lay down certain principles firstly to fix a minimum wage and also an increase in proportion to every unit of increase in production.

The representative of industry here took it for granted that a minimum profit is highly necessary for capital. Agreed, but is it 6 per cent, or 4 per cent, or 25 per cent, or 225 per cent? That is our question. He does not answer it. They are not prepared to answer that question. I recently happened to be in Calcutta to enquire into the working conditions in certain factories, in which I take some interest, to understand their problems. The workers and certain responsible officers there told me that the particular monopoly industry was unlike the European or British industries. The wage levels in factories run by British or European interests in India are higher than those given by Indian monopolists. That is also our experience. In Kerala also we have certain factories run by pure and simple British managers. They give higher wages to their workers than the Indian Managers give to their workers of the same category of industry. Their explanation is that

these European industrialists get greater profits. At the same time, they give some portion of that profit to their workers in order, first, to satisfy them and then to exploit them. Here we have monopolists who are resisting wage increases, who are resisting certain amenities to their workers in the name of rationalisation, in the name of modernisation. The meaning of modern management is cutthroat management, in my language. This big management says, "We resist the wage increase". Particularly this management gets huge contracts from the Indian Government for its second Five Year Plan. They get much profits out of the contracts, they get a higher profit by quoting a higher rate and instead of giving a small increase to the workers, instead of giving bonus to the workers, this management reinvests in the same factory and multiply their capital and again reap more profits but at the same time evading taxes and refusing wage increases. That is the tactics of these people. They say that our country must be speedily industrialised by rationalisation. We agree to it but they have unashamedly cited the conditions prevailing in the Soviet Union as an illustration. It is of no use unless he is prepared to take the same method of treating the workers as is done in the Soviet Union. He does not like that. Let us leave it at that.

Regarding rationalisation, we are for it, we are for utilising all sorts of modern machinery both in industry and in agriculture, but how and when? Not by throwing the workers on the streets to starve and die and leaving their families to meet the same fate. You must take that step slowly—not all of a sudden leaving lakhs of workers in the streets to die. But here these gentlemen in India get cheap labour because of the large unemployment. So they refuse to give some amenities to the workers who work in their factories for years. Because, whenever workers demand more amenities or more wages, they neck them out. The unemployed labour is at the gate and they get them at cheaper rates in which the Government also help them. Instead of that, let them give workers their dues and amenities and create good working conditions. Certainly, the workers are prepared to increase production. Our Indian labour is patriotic and it knows what they should do in the interest of the public and in the interest of the country and to develop our economy and increase the national wealth. So, the workers are

prepared to increase production but the capitalists and the Government should take steps to see that workers' wage is increased and also other amenities are allowed. Before this Wage Commission is appointed to go into that question, the Government should certainly take steps to increase the wages of workers by at least 25 per cent. With these words, I commend this Resolution.

DR. SHRIMATI SEETA PARMA-NAND (Madhya Pradesh): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I am glad that this Resolution has come before the House as it gives the House a chance to express its opinion on an important question, namely, the wage structure in the country, and as the Resolution says, both in the industrial and agricultural spheres. Only because the Resolution deals with an important problem we cannot say that it deals with a suggestion that is practicable. If the Resolution had dealt with only the wage of workers in industry to begin with, as I think at the present time nearly 80 per cent, of our workers are in the agricultural sphere, it would have been a workable proposition. Sir, I speak with some experience of the result of these Wage Commissions because only recently in the colliery disputes, the Minimum Wage Award has been given and we know very well what havoc has been caused during the last one month. The price of coal had to be raised by Rs. 3 or Rs. 4 and the employers were expected to give every pie of it towards raising the wage of the workers. But the experience has been that there is no way of finding that this is done and already there is so much discontent that there has been, in the Pench Valley Coalfield with which I am connected, violence resulting in section 144 being promulgated. What happens is that the expectations raised, when such Commissions are appointed, are such that the result, as a rule, not being commensurate with the expectations raised, leads to complete dissatisfaction and if a way can be found by which a minimum wage can be guaranteed in all industries which should not be not only a subsistence wage, but a bearable wage, a wage comparable with that of any other work, even in the clerical line, it will be better. The minimum wages demanded in the colliery case was Rs. 125 but what did we get? Rs. 59; and even then, it has not been possible for the All-India Industrial Tribunal (Colliery Disputes) to fix a wage which would be

[Dr. Shrimati Seeta Parmanand.] satisfactory to everybody and in some cases, as a result of the wage they have fixed, some of the workers are actually going to get less and that is why there is such a discontent. We know what the requirements of the workers are. We know what difficulties in the industries are and we know how difficult it is to make the employers come out with their real profit and loss registers. In the colliery wage case only one or two employers brought their statements of accounts and even there for cross-examination, when a thing was to be questioned on the basis of cost accounting, nobody came, and, as a result, it was difficult for the Tribunal to arrive at any solution because the demand of the workers was Rs. 125 and it was not possible to give even Rs. 70. The position of industry at present is such that the employers, who are the owners of 90 per cent, of the industry, will not come forward to co-operate and until the Government brings in legislation where the workers are given a share, as half the industries are now State-owned, I think it would be very difficult for any Commission that would be appointed to make any practicable suggestion which will concede the expectations raised in the minds of the workers. As such I feel that this Resolution which not only thinks that it can fix the minimum wages for industrial workers but also for agricultural workers is not a practicable one. I would like here to give an example of Madhya Pradesh. As far as I know, the minimum wage in the agricultural sector has been fixed, but what happens? It is only observed in the breach because all these questions are really solved according to the supply and demand and even if supposing somebody were not to give the minimum wage that is laid down according to law, where is the machinery to take care of the people? Therefore, there are these breaches. I for one would have very much liked it if such a Wage Commission could do away with the distinction in the wages in the case of men and in the case of women. That at least would have been a justification for the appointment of a Wage Commission. But I know that in spite of my best efforts in the colliery disputes and in spite of my pleadings I could not succeed. I said that women came forward to work in places like the collieries only if they had a family to support or only when there was dire necessity, that they did not come for the love of

working in the collieries, that was not something enjoyable. Of course, they have gone up on appeal on that and other points. But what the tribunal said was that the food requirement of a woman was less than that of a man—she was, supposed to eat less—and the number of dependants on the woman was smaller and so the wage given to the woman should be 25 per cent, less than that given to the man. So I say that distinction between the wage paid to the man and that paid to the woman should be done away with if such a Wage Commission is appointed. That is something with which I agree. The income of the industries has gone up by 40 per cent, and the cost of living has gone up three times, the wage structure has gone up only by 15 per cent. I am giving the disparity as shown by the figures given by the Government. It is all well-known to the Government. The solution of the problem that has been brought before us lies in something in between. The Government themselves should have permanent wage boards where complaints could come. The representatives of the workers are always there. These things cannot be dealt with on an all-India basis, because conditions differ from place to place. So they will have to be solved on a regional basis according to the conditions existing there.

The problem of the minimum wage in the agricultural sector is even more difficult than that in the industrial sector. For a long time it would be difficult to impose any minimum wage in the agricultural sector and if we try to do so now, the result would be very disastrous to those who are doing cultivation, even to a small extent, not directly by their own hands, I mean the middle-class people. They even now know how such lands lie fallow for want of labour, especially where there are industries like (W<-making or where these are collieries nearby in the district. So, if we want to see that the utmost is produced in all sectors, in the agricultural and in the industrial sectors, the best thing would be to have in the new socialist pattern of society as fair a wage as possible for everyone. This idea should be put through, through the State Governments and labour organisations. And then after we have many more State-owned enterprises, as I have said earlier, and after our standard of living had gone up, only then can we insist on this kind of a demand.

Lastly, I would like to say that we are now trying to give every agricultural labourer his own land. In Bombay—I heard it on the radio the other day—about thirty lakhs of labourers will be getting land within the next month or so. When that is to be the state of affairs more and more in the agricultural sector, I think it would be necessary to wait for some time before such a Wage Commission is appointed. Personally, I have a dread of these Commissions. For one thing a lot of money is wasted for which the tax-payer has to pay. And then hopes are raised which are not realised and the time taken over it all is very long. And so the disease remains uncurcd and people feel more bitter about it and the Commissions get a bad name.

For these reasons, Sir, although I feel much sympathy and feel that everything should be done for raising the standard of life which would mean agricultural wages also automatically going up, I feel that the time has not yet come to appoint such a Wage Commission because other ways could be found in which this problem could be solved.

SHRIMATI LILAVATI MUNSHI (Bombay) : Sir, Shri Satyapriya Banerjee is to be congratulated for bringing forward such a thought-provoking Resolution. In his sweet and sonorous voice, he has read out many passages from the speeches of the Ministers and from various Reports including that of the Planning Commission. And he has also quoted some of the Resolutions of the I.N.T.U.C. He has pleaded for the appointment of a Wage Commission in order that the worker may get a fair wage. He also enlightened us on the difference between a minimum wage and the living wage and the fair wage and an adequate wage and to that Mr. Doshi has added today another—a comfortable wage.

SHRI J. V. K. VALLABHARAO:
Comfortable to him.

SHRIMATI LILAVATI MUNSHI: There are subtle differences and distinctions in these things which lay people like us do not appreciate very much. Sir, so far as this idea is concerned, that every human being—and labour is included—should get an adequate wage or earning, nobody disputes that. But the

question is how to do it and how to achieve this objective. In order to pay an adequate wage, the earnings of the industry have to increase and wealth has to be produced or created. Of course, it can be said that no industry should exist if it did not pay an adequate wage. That is true, but there are I various reasons for the existence of the industry. For instance, an industry creates employment. At least it does that. It also produces some goods and to that extent we are free from foreign imports. It creates wealth in that way. So these are some of the reasons for the existence of the industry. Whether it pays fair or adequate wages or not, still these reasons are there, and creating employment at least in the present circumstances, is really a very good reason for allowing an industry to exist.

Labour, certainly, has a big hand in producing wealth, but without capital and management which are needed for running the industry, only labour cannot do anything. It is like a man's body without the head. The body cannot exist without the head. Both have to exist side by side and together.

What is a fair wage or an adequate wage ? I would like our workers also, like those in advanced countries like America, Russia and other countries to have a home of their own, a radio-set and if possible a car. Nobody would disagree with that. In our heart of hearts, we would like them to have these.

SHRI J. V. K. VALLABHARAO:
At least give a morsel of food for every member of the family.

SHRIMATI LILAVATI MUNSHI: There is no question as to the desirability of having certain comforts.

In America, they say, even the coolies and labourers go about in cars but we have not come to that level yet. So far as the ideal is concerned, we are all agreed that every human being, whether he be a labourer or a workman or an agriculturist, should have minimum I comforts and that he should have certain amenities in life, but there is a difference between our wishes and that of Shri Satyapriya Banerjee and that is, industry should have the capacity to pay.

[Shrimati Lilavati Munshi.]

Unless that capacity is there, our saying all this is not going to get us fair wages. There should be a rise in production and particularly the labourer should also co-operate in that production. These various strikes in the various places really retard production. Who are the sufferers ? It is really the labourers because to that extent our production becomes less and the capacity to pay also becomes less. Shrimati Seeta Parmanand just now quoted the example of the collieries. I do not know the history about it but I saw in the papers that there has been a sudden rise in the price of coal and why, because the wages of the labourers were increased. Now, it is not the producers who are affected by it; it is really the common man who is affected by this rise because the producers are passing on the increase to the common man who is the buyer and going to pay just because he is going to use that coal and this has created a hue and cry. So, the rise in the wages affects not the industrialists but the common man who is the buyer and whose condition is not better than many of the labourers. There should certainly be fair wages but they should be co-ordinated all round, that is, cost of living and cost of production should be co-ordinated.

Then comes the question of bonus. This was raised by Mr. Lalchand. This is a very difficult question. Sometimes a month's pay is asked as bonus while at other times it is the pay of two or even three months. I know of a small concern which went to ruin because of the go-slow practice and asking for huge bonuses. If a concern has the necessary capacity to pay, then the labourers should certainly get the bonus. The capitalist should get his fair return, six per cent, or whatever it is, but then the increase in the prices all-round and the consequent inflation come in the way of solving this question. If the production is less and if the cost of production is more, then that cost is passed on to the consumer, to the person who buys that commodity. So it is really a question of raising the general level of the whole society as well as the earning capacity of the people. If that is done, I am sure labour will get its due and there is no doubt about it. No single Member will stand in the way of labour getting its due. I would also urge upon hon. Members that labour should co-operate in the production. These fre-

quent strikes put out of gear the production in industries in many places. I do not know how many strikes took place in the last year.

THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR LABOUR
(SHRI ABID ALI) : It is less now.

SHRIMATI LILAVATI MUNSHI: I am glad, but during the last five years, we must have lost many working days. Take Russia. Do you think they would allow any strike, even for a single day, in a workers' society, a society run by workers ? Some of our Members who had gone there asked them, "Have you any strikes ?" They were puzzled; they said, "Strike against whom?" It is a crime there. So, that factor also has to be taken into consideration.

Our Government is following the socialistic pattern of society and is very keen to raise the standard of living of the labourers as well as of every individual. Government is alive to this question and shall do as much as could be done in this matter. A socialistic pattern of society cannot be created merely by saying or raising slogans about it but by working for it and not by talking about it. Commissions are creating more confusions than could really be solved. That is what we have seen in this Report of the States Reorganisation Commission, the confusion that has been created in the whole of the country. That has not ended yet—it is still going on—and for us to ask for another Commission at present is something which is not comprehensible. I have every sympathy with the idea underlying this Resolution but we must cut our coat according to the cloth that we have at our disposal. Thank you, Sir.

SHRI J. V. K. VALLABHARAO: Mr. Deputy Chairman, I am glad that many hon. Members agreed with the principle underlying this Resolution. However, I am surprised at the way in which they purposely or without knowing it confused the issues. I heard with rapt attention the speech of my hon. friend, Shri Doshi.

KAZI KARIMUDDIN (Madhya Pradesh) :
He is sitting there now.

SHRI S. N. MAZUMDAR: Perhaps he has been converted.

SHRI J. V. K. VALLABHARAO: He brought in the question of bonus and put it in opposition to this measure. He knows fully well that bonus is demanded only when there is greater production and increase in profits. Here the question is only an increase of 25 per cent, in the wages whereas he knows fully well that there has been a 43 per cent, increase in productivity as the figures now stand and as the Planning Commission itself admits it. The increase in the wages asked for is much less. In this connection, I may inform Shrimati Lilavati Munshi also that this has been done with very little improvement in the machinery. I may also tell my hon. friends who are opposed to this Resolution that the reports of almost all expert committees or experts are that the Indian worker never lags behind any worker in any country in matters of efficiency. Two days back, I read in the papers a report from the steel experts at Bhilai that the Indian steel workers are far better in technical knowledge than others. Surprisingly enough, they say that the worker must develop the art of increasing production. They do not say "increasing the profits", a funny word "production". A worker is interested in increasing production and that is why today you find that during the first Five Year Plan, there was a 43 per cent, increase in production. At the same time he is interested in the upkeep of his family; he is interested in his wages. That is why he demands, if not a corresponding increase, at least 25 per cent, increase in his wages. My hon. friend and the Secretary of the Indian National Trade Union Congress, Shri Tripathi, argued at length at the meetings of the Labour Panel and also in the committee and I have before me his report at the Surat session and also the Resolution of the I.N.T.U.C. I do not want to take the credit but I cannot but remind her that the I.N.T.U.C. passed the Resolution for an increase of 25 per cent, in the wages in September 1955 and in the last session of the A.I.C.C. which was held in May, 1956 they have accepted it and then they worked out the statistics and their three issues of the 'Economic Review' which my hon. friend Shrimati Lilavati Munshi, might have cared to read, carried the statistical information, and in fact Mr. Tripathi himself wrote an article showing the justification of the workers' demand. So I think it is not taking the conditions in Russia or the philosophy of the Bolsheviks elsewhere. It is just taking the conditions in India,

taking the production figures here and taking into account the fabulous profits made by my friends, that we claim a minimum wage for the workers. The present wage may be a comfortable wage according to my friend over there. We claim a minimum wage increase of 25 per cent. Well, coming to the Resolution, as such there is nothing in this Resolution, nothing in the form of a certain increase in wages. What all we wanted was the principles that are enunciated in the Five Year Plan. We say just this. Let them go into the wage structure of the various industries, the jute industry, the textile industry. Take also the industries in the public sector, the wages there. Compare it with the production figures; compare it with the investment; compare it with the profits and then arrive at your own conclusions. Appoint a Commission. Let the hon. Mr. Abid Ali be there, I have no objection. Let any of the officers be there, but let them go into it and study the position and we are quite confident that they will be convinced that the workers have "got a just claim for an increase in their wages. Nothing more than that.

Then there are some arguments my hon. friend, Dr. Seeta Parmanand, raised. I am surprised at the argument coming from her, that women workers can be paid less. I thought all these days she was championing the cause of women, equality for women with men. The I.L.O. accepted it and said : Equal pay for equal work. That has been accepted at many conventions of the representatives -of the Indian National Trade Union Congress of which the hon. Member is a prominent leader also. I am surprised she now says that women can be paid less. I think she is not true to her own principles.

SHRIMATI LAKSHMI MENON (Bihar) :
She did not say that.

SHRI P. D. HIMATSINGKA (West Bengal): She said they should be paid equally. She was referring to the tribunal's arguments.

SHRI J. V. K. VALLABHARAO: She said: "I accept it also". If she has not said it I am sorry.

Then I take up the question of land reform, and one Member has suggested—I think the hon. Member, Mr. Doshi, said it—"What can you get from ten

[Shri J. V. K. Vallabharao.]

acres of land ?" Well, it has been debated at length in many meetings of his own party and' at many meetings his leaders have expressed the opinion in favour of it. I have no objection if land is not divided and a man is allowed to own even a hundred acres of land provided he pays a living wage to the agricultural labourer he employs and the Government is prepared to statutorily enforce it also. Well, let them own it, but let them guarantee a living wage. Let them guarantee better living conditions to the agricultural labourer and let them also pay some taxation. In that case we are prepared, but immediately we want a Commission to go into the wage structure of the agricultural labourers. One friend was suggesting that it may vary from province to province-. Yes, agreed. In provinces where there is a greater amount of wet lands, where commercial crops are grown, it may be more, but let the Commission go into it. Why should you fight shy of the Commission ? Well, we want the Commission to go into the whole wage structure with this intention because, ever since our country became independent, many changes have taken place, in the field of industry, in the field of agriculture; the methods adopted in industrialisation and the profits made, and the methods of fleecing the workers adopted by the industrialists have also undergone a change; and I think it is time the Government thought of remodelling the entire social structure. Let them have an idea as to how the workers are paid who, according to us, are the pivots of this revolution or, as you say, evolution of a socialist society. So we demand a Wage Commission and it is not our demand. That demand is the demand of the entire working class. It is the demand of Mr. Tripathi, the demand of Hind Mazdoor Sabha, the demand of A.I.T.U.C., the demand of U.T. U.C. and the demand of every progressive Indian "including the Prime Minister at one time and we are not convinced with the arguments advanced against it. So we would appeal to all Members to accept this Resolution unanimously because it does not run counter to the accepted principles.

With these words, Sir, I conclude.

SHRI ABID ALI: Sir, I am in entire agreement with the views expressed here so far as a fair deal to the workers is concerned, not only in the field or fac-

tory but also the workers in transport, mines, plantations, everywhere. There is no dispute about that.

In" the hon. Members opposite I was very glad to find a welcome change. So far they were quoting Russia and Stalin. Now they have started quoting Tripathi and I.N.T.U.C. That is very good; I like it.

SHRI S. N. MAZUMDAR: It has been done before also.

SHRI ABID ALI: I like it because I.N.T.U.C. all these years was taboo. It was called an organisation of capitalists, but now it is giving the lead, as it was entitled to give the lead always, to the entire working class and their organisations in this country. How hon. Members opposite understand things is evident from what the last speaker said with regard to the statement by the hon. lady Member, Dr. Seeta Parmanand. She is very much angry that women in the coalfields have been given a little less than the male workers. I do not know why she is angry with me. I did not give the award. All the same she is angry with me also on that account. She has submitted an appeal before the Labour Appellate Tribunal. I do not know whether it will be accepted or not but that is another thing. So I would request hon. Members opposite to have a little broader mind and understand things in their proper perspective.

If we had said that we were appointing a Wage Commission, they would have surely opposed that. They would have said, "Appoint wage boards. Do not appoint a Wage Commission." They will put forward so many reasons and out of them one will be that it would take a long time as there would be one Wage Commission for the entire country. Fortunately, ours is a big country and we have got a large number of industries, factories and so many other things and there are thousands of categories of workers.

Now, this Coal Adjudication Board was appointed in the month of February 1954. It took a little more than two years—I think it took two years and two months to give the award. Every body was impatient here and asking when the award was coming. And even

now all the collieries have not implemented the award fully. There are differences. We have established a regular machinery because.....

SHRI S. N. MAZUMDAR: The employers have boycotted the Conciliation Boards.

SHRI ABID ALI: They had not boycotted; they were present. I do not know from where these hon. Members get their information. Even in bazars such gossip is not heard.

SHRI S. N. MAZUMDAR: They were not authorised to say anything.

SHRI ABID ALI: All right; let them be happy with the information they get.

SHRI RATANLAL KISHORILAL MALVIYA (Madhya Pradesh) : They were not present on the 16th June at Dhanbad after.....

, (Interruptions).

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order order.

SHRI ABID ALI: So, I was submitting that because of the categorisation which had been agreed between the workers representatives and the employers, to a great extent the work had become smoother but still it is not very satisfactory because for some of the categories the tribunal has given its own award and with regard to implementation there is so much trouble going on. Of course we should be helpful to avoid strikes and dissensions and to bring about smooth working of the industry not only in coal but in all cases. But the delay of several years is bound to take place if the Wage Commission is appointed and particularly when we have no data available anywhere with regard to the items which have been suggested for the consideration of the Wage Commission.

SHRI PERATH NARAYANAN NAIR: How long did the Whitley Commission take ?

SHRI ABID ALI: The Whitley Commission people went with England. Of course some good things are there Iron, which hon. Members are quoting always. But there are certain things which we are not accepting and which we should not accept. Hon. Members would not like us to accept the Whitley Commission Report *in toto*.

So what we propose to do is to appoint several, not one, wage boards for particular important industries.

SHRI S. N. MAZUMDAR: May I know what will be the function of those wage boards ?

SHRI ABID ALI: I am coming to that. So we should not be very much concerned with the word as to whether it should be a board or a Commission; it is immaterial. Hon. Members should pay more attention so far as the terms of reference are concerned, so far as its function is concerned. Of course, we do not want to satisfy hon. Members opposite simply by appointing a Commission and then postponing this matter for a large number of years. That we do not want to do. We want that not only we should keep pace with the increased cost of living and increased productivity but also everyone should get his due share in the general prosperity also.

SHRI H. P. SAKSENA (Uttar Pradesh) : Prosperity ?

(Interruptions.)

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order. order.

SHRI ABID ALI: I was, therefore, saying that we should be more concerned with the terms of reference and functions and not with the name—whether it is a Commission or a board—and I am sure when the terms of reference will be announced, hon. Members who are reasonable would be satisfied. Of course, you cannot satisfy a person who does not want to be reasonable.

SHRI S. N. MAZUMDAR: He is trying to say by implication that some Members are unreasonable.

SHRI ABID ALI: It is not the monopoly of some.

(Interruptions.)

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It is only to such Members who are unreasonable he is referring. If the cap fits you, you have to wear it.

SHRI ABID ALI: What I was submitting was, one can be reasonable to a reasonably-minded person. All such persons will be satisfied so far as the

[Shri Abid Ali.] function of the boards is concerned, so far as its number is concerned and so far as the industries that would be covered by them are concerned.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA (West Bengal) May I know from the hon. Minister if the Government has decided upon the terms of reference and if not whether the Government would consult the leaders of organised trade union movement before settling the terms of reference ?

SHRI ABID ALI: That is exactly the difficulty. This item also was discussed in the Labour Panel of the Planning Commission where their representatives were present also.

SHRIMATI PARVATHI KRISHNAN (Madras) : They were in jail.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: The Communist Party did not have any representative there as far as I know.

SHRI ABID ALI: In the Planning Commission Panel there was Mr. Dange, when this item was discussed. I was there and Mr. Dange was also there. If he is not a Communist, if he is disowned, I have no quarrel with hon. Members opposite. They can do it; it is their pleasure. Let them be happy about it. All these important items were discussed not only in the Standing Labour Committee and in the Industrial Committees concerned but also in the Labour Conference. And in the Labour Conferences the representatives of all sections, employers, workers, representatives of I.N.T.U.C., A.I.T.U.C., Hind Mazdoor Sabha are all present and they participate there as full-fledged members. Therefore, these matters have been discussed from time to time and generally in these Committees and Conferences we come to unanimous decisions and these are implemented with all seriousness and earnestness. That is what I was telling my friends in the lobby also; how is it that they are aware of what is happening in different parts of the world but they are not aware of what is being done here ?

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I would like to make the position clear. I know I am quite informed of what happened in the Labour Panel but as far as I know- I hope the hon. Minister will

correct me—there was no unanimous decision with regard to the terms of reference which should be given to the boards when they are appointed and at certain stages Mr. Dange was not in a position, as the representative of the All India Trade Union Congress, to attend the Panel because the Government would not release him from detention in Nasik Jail.

SHRI ABID ALI: That is later. He is talking of a different Conference; I am talking of a different Conference. That is the difficulty.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: You said Labour Panel.

SHRI ABID ALI: The hon. Member has been in confusion and I do not want to discuss this point further. What I am submitting is that the suggestion for the appointment of a Wage Commission did not come from the A.I.T.U.C. As it is well-known, it came first from the I.N.T.U.C. in January 1955. In its memorandum to the Planning Commission on the second Five Year Plan also the Indian National Trade Union Congress suggested the appointment of a Wage Commission and this discussion went on at different levels in different conferences and ultimately the Sub-Committee on Wages, Productivity and Rationalisation set up by the Labour Panel of the Planning Commission recommended that in view of the dearth of data, the Wage Commission might be set up if necessary only in the later years of the second Plan period. It further * suggested that in the intervening period wage boards should be set up for important industries and that they should be guided by the recommendations of the Fair Wage Committee on Profit Sharing and the settlements reached by the Joint Consultative Board. Simultaneously, a wage census should be undertaken forthwith. The Sub-Committee also suggested that the Planning Commission should set up a small unit for evaluating from time to time the extent to which wages had improved due to the impact of the first and second Plans and that in this regard the unit should keep in mind the accepted goal of planning, namely, the establishment of a socialist pattern of society. In the chapter on labour policy and programme in the second Five Year Plan, which is based on the recommendations of the Sub-Committee of the

Labour Panel, it is recognised that a commission, if appointed forthwith, would considerably be handicapped for want of data, and any conclusions that might be reached on insufficient facts would not provide suitable basis for a long term policy.....

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I think you will take some more time?

SHRI ABID ALI: Yes, Sir.

Mfc. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You may continue on the next non-official day.

The House stands adjourned till 11 A.M. on Monday, the 6th August 1956.

The House then adjourned at five of the clock till eleven of the clock on Monday, the 6th August 1956.