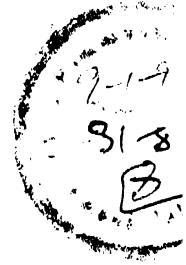
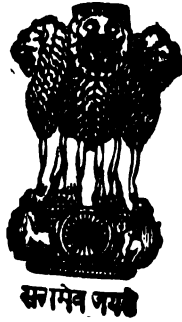


Tuesday, 17th April, 1951



# PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(Part I—Questions and Answers)

OFFICIAL REPORT

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VOLUME VII, 1951

(2nd April to 16th May, 1951)

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Third Session (Second Part)

of the

PARLIAMENT OF INDIA

1951

## CONTENTS

*Volume VII—From 2nd April to 16th May, 1951*

	<i>Columns</i>
<b>Monday, 2nd April, 1951—</b>	
Oral Answers to Questions . . . . .	2751—2795
Written Answers to Questions . . . . .	2795—2814
<b>Tuesday, 3rd April, 1951—</b>	
Oral Answers to Questions . . . . .	2815—2842
Written Answers to Questions . . . . .	2842—2848
<b>Wednesday, 4th April, 1951—</b>	
Oral Answers to Questions . . . . .	2849—2878
Written Answers to Questions . . . . .	2878—2894
<b>Friday, 6th April, 1951—</b>	
Oral Answers to Questions . . . . .	2895—2928
Written Answers to Questions . . . . .	2928—2944
<b>Saturday, 7th April, 1951—</b>	
Oral Answers to Questions . . . . .	2945—2971
Written Answers to Questions . . . . .	2971—2986
<b>Monday, 9th April, 1951—</b>	
Oral Answers to Questions . . . . .	2987—3012
Written Answers to Questions . . . . .	3013—3030
<b>Tuesday, 10th April, 1951—</b>	
Oral Answers to Questions . . . . .	3031—3061
Written Answers to Questions . . . . .	3061—3072
<b>Wednesday, 11th April, 1951—</b>	
Oral Answers to Questions . . . . .	3079—3108
Written Answers to Questions . . . . .	3109—3132
<b>Thursday, 12th April, 1951—</b>	
Oral Answers to Questions . . . . .	3133—3162
Written Answers to Questions . . . . .	3162—3172
<b>Saturday, 14th April, 1951—</b>	
Oral Answers to Questions . . . . .	3173—3204
Written Answers to Questions . . . . .	3204—3212
<b>Monday, 16th April, 1951—</b>	
Oral Answers to Questions . . . . .	3213—3242
Written Answers to Questions . . . . .	3242—3254
<b>Tuesday, 17th April, 1951—</b>	
Oral Answers to Questions . . . . .	3255—3286
Written Answers to Questions . . . . .	3287—3300
<b>Wednesday, 18th April, 1951—</b>	
Oral Answers to Questions . . . . .	3301—3330
Written Answers to Questions . . . . .	3330—3344

<b>Thursday, 19th April, 1951—</b>		
Oral Answers to Questions . . . . .		3345—3372
Written Answers to Questions . . . . .		3372—3380
<b>Friday, 20th April, 1951—</b>		
Oral Answers to Questions . . . . .		3381—3408
Written Answers to Questions . . . . .		3408—3412
<b>Saturday, 21st April, 1951—</b>		
Oral Answers to Questions . . . . .		3413—3446
Written Answers to Questions . . . . .		3447—3452
<b>Monday, 23rd April, 1951—</b>		
Oral Answers to Questions . . . . .		3453—3481
Written Answers to Questions . . . . .		3481—3502
<b>Tuesday, 24th April, 1951—</b>		
Oral Answers to Questions . . . . .		3503—3532
Written Answers to Questions . . . . .		3532—3546
<b>Thursday, 26th April, 1951—</b>		
Oral Answers to Questions . . . . .		3587—3615
Written Answers to Questions . . . . .		3615—3636
<b>Friday, 27th April, 1951—</b>		
Oral Answers to Questions . . . . .		3637—3666
Written Answers to Questions . . . . .		3666—3670
<b>Saturday, 28th April, 1951—</b>		
Oral Answers to Questions . . . . .		3671—3702
Written Answers to Questions . . . . .		3702—3704
<b>Monday, 30th April, 1951—</b>		
Oral Answers to Questions . . . . .		3705—3733
Written Answers to Questions . . . . .		3733—3750
<b>Tuesday, 1st May, 1951—</b>		
Oral Answers to Questions . . . . .		3751—3782
Written Answers to Questions . . . . .		3782—3794
<b>Wednesday, 2nd May, 1951—</b>		
Oral Answers to Questions . . . . .		3795—3826
Written Answers to Questions . . . . .		3826—3840
<b>Friday, 4th May, 1951—</b>		
Oral Answers to Questions . . . . .		3895—3926
Written Answers to Questions . . . . .		3926—3930
<b>Saturday, 5th May, 1951—</b>		
Oral Answers to Questions . . . . .		3931—3964
Written Answers to Questions . . . . .		3965—3970
<b>Monday, 7th May, 1951—</b>		
Oral Answers to Questions . . . . .		3971—4007
Written Answers to Questions . . . . .		4007—4020
<b>Wednesday, 9th May, 1951—</b>		
Oral Answers to Questions . . . . .		4061—4093
Written Answers to Questions . . . . .		4093—4102

<b>Thursday, 10th May, 1951—</b>	
Oral Answers to Questions . . . . .	4103—4132
Written Answers to Questions . . . . .	4132—4140
<b>Friday, 11th May, 1951—</b>	
Oral Answers to Questions . . . . .	4141—4170
Written Answers to Questions . . . . .	4170—4180
<b>Saturday, 12th May, 1951—</b>	
Oral Answers to Questions . . . . .	4181—4212
Written Answers to Questions . . . . .	4212—4216
<b>Monday, 14th May, 1951—</b>	
Oral Answers to Questions . . . . .	4217—4245
Written Answers to Questions . . . . .	4245—4254
<b>Tuesday, 15th May, 1951—</b>	
Oral Answers to Questions . . . . .	4255—4285
Written Answers to Questions . . . . .	4285—4292
<b>Wednesday, 16th May, 1951—</b>	
Oral Answers to Questions . . . . .	4293—4320
Written Answers to Questions . . . . .	4320—4328

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13. No. 26, dated the 3rd May 1951,—

Col. 3881 for the existing line 17 from bottom *substitute* "and Supply (Shri Gadgil):(a) 105".

14. No. 27, dated the 4th May, 1951,—

Col. 3925, line 25 from bottom for "fireman" read "firman".

15. No. 30, dated the 8th May 1951,—

(i) Col. 4041, for the existing line 15 from bottom *substitute* "(c) No, as none is considered neces-".

(ii) Col. 4042, line 31 *insert* "such" before the word "circums-".

16. No. 31, dated the 9th May, 1951,—

Col. 4087, line 21 for "Rama" read "Rana".

17. No. 32, dated the 10th May, 1951,—

(i) Col. 4124, line 20 from bottom for "member" read "number".

(ii) Col. 4129, line 21 for the words "having come" read "coming out of", lines 6 & 8 from bottom for the figure "1.4.51" read "15.4.51", and for "15.4.51" read "1.4.51" respectively.

- (iii) कालम ४१३३, पंक्ति १२ "नियम" के स्थान पर "नियंत्रणों" पढ़ें ।

18. No. 33, dated the 11th May, 1951,—

(i) Col. 4150, line 10 from bottom for "of" read "to".

(ii) Col. 4161, line 17 for the figure "85" read "185".

(iii) Col. 4162, line 24 for "in view of" read "in lieu of".

19. No. 36, dated the 15th May, 1951,—

(i) Col. 4270, line 30 for "pait-mixture" read "paint-mixture"

(ii) कालम ४२८८, पंक्ति २८, "\*२९५" के स्थान पर "२९५" पढ़ें ।

(iii) कालम ४२८९, नीचे से पंक्ति १९, "बद्य" के स्थान पर "लाद्य" पढ़ें ।

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PARLIAMENT OF INDIA

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*The-Speaker*

The Honourable Shri G. V. Mavalankar.

*The Deputy-Speaker*

Shri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar.

*Panel of Chairmen*

Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava.

Shrimati G. Durgabai.

Shri Prabhu Dayal Himatsingka.

Sardar Hukam Singh.

Shri Manilal Chaturbhai Shah.

*Secretary*

Shri M. N. Kaul, Barrister-at-Law.

*Assistants of the Secretary*

Shri A. J. M. Atkinson.

Shri N. C. Nandi.

Shri D. N. Majumdar.

Shri C. V. Narayana Rao.

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## GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

### *Members of the Cabinet*

- Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs—The Honourable Shri Jawaharlal Nehru.**  
**Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs and the States—The Honourable Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.**  
**Minister of Education—The Honourable Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.**  
**Minister Without Portfolio—The Honourable Shri C. Rajagopalachari.**  
**Minister of Defence—The Honourable Sardar Baldev Singh.**  
**Minister of Labour—The Honourable Shri Jagjivan Ram.**  
**Minister of Communications—The Honourable Shri Rafi Ahmad Kidwai.**  
**Minister of Health—The Honourable Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.**  
**Minister of Law—The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.**  
**Minister of Works, Mines and Power—The Honourable Shri N. V. Gadgil.**  
**Minister of Transport and Railways—The Honourable Shri N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar.**  
**Minister of Industry and Supply—The Honourable Shri Hare Krishna Mahtab.**  
**Minister of Food and Agriculture—The Honourable Shri K. M. Munshi.**  
**Minister of Commerce—The Honourable Shri Sri Prakasa.**  
**Minister of Finance—The Honourable Shri Chintaman Dwarkanath Deshmukh.**

### *Ministers not in the Cabinet.*

- Minister for the purposes of agreement between the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan of the 8th April, 1950—The Honourable Shri C. C. Biswas.**  
**Minister of State for Transport and Railways—The Honourable Shri K. Santhanam.**  
**Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting—The Honourable Shri R. R. Diwakar.**  
**Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs—The Honourable Shri Satyanarayan Sinha.**  
**Minister of State for Rehabilitation—The Honourable Shri Ajit Prasad Jain.**  
**Deputy Minister of Communications—Shri Khurshed Lal.**  
**Deputy Minister of External Affairs—Dr. B. V. Keekar.**  
**Deputy Minister of Commerce—Shri Dattatraya Parasahuram Karmarkar.**  
**Deputy Minister of Defence—Major General Himatsinghji.**  
**Deputy Minister of Works, Mines and Power—Shri S. N. Buragohain.**  
**Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture—Shri M. Thirumala Rao.**



**THE**  
**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**  
**(Part I—Questions and Answers)**  
**OFFICIAL REPORT**

3255

3256

**PARLIAMENT OF INDIA**

Tuesday, 17th April, 1951.

*The House met at a Quarter to Eleven  
of the Clock.*

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

**ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

**LOADING, UNLOADING AND STORING OF  
CEREALS**

\*3181. **Shri Sidhva:** (a) Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to refer to the answer given to my Starred Question No. 939 on the 15th December, 1950, and state whether the tenders invited for the purpose of loading, unloading and storing cereals were the lowest in each case where the contracts were made?

(b) Is the function of these contractors while loading and unloading to see that the exact quantity of cereals as landed is delivered at the godowns?

**The Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Thirumala Rao):** (a) The tenders accepted were lowest in all cases except two. In one case the party who quoted the lowest rates was considered unsuitable for the work involved on account of lack of experience and the next higher tender was accepted. In the second case the two lowest tenders could not be accepted as the first did not quote for all services and there were complaints against the second. The third lowest tender was accepted.

(b) Grain landed from the ships at the docks is not unloaded or loaded at the Docks by Food Ministry's loading and unloading contractors. Only a small portion of the grain landed is sent to Central Government godowns and the Food Ministry's loading and unloading contractors carry out the loading and unloading of foodgrains bags from trucks or wagons only in 37 P.S.D.

respect of foodgrains received at or despatched from Government godowns.

**Shri Sidhva:** May I know what were the rates quoted by the two firms whose tenders were rejected?

**Shri Thirumala Rao:** It is considered not advisable in public interest to divulge the names of these contractors. I have already read out the grounds of rejection.

**Shri Sidhva:** I do not want the names. I want to know the rates.

**Shri Thirumala Rao:** I require notice.

**Shri Sidhva:** My question was very clear and surely the hon. Minister should have come prepared with the rates. 'Lowest' means that some figures must be available with him to show that the rate accepted was the lowest.

**Mr. Speaker:** "Some figures", yes, but not necessarily the rates. The whole thing must have been calculated and the last one was perhaps accepted.

**Shri Thirumala Rao:** I am prepared to give what I have got. The rate of the lowest tenderer was only two annas less.....

**Mr. Speaker:** I think such details must be enquired outside this House.

**Shri Sidhva:** If you will excuse me, Sir, the object in my asking this question is this. I have some information but it is subject to correction. Therefore, I have asked this question. My information is that the lowest tender which was a *bona fide* tender was not accepted because the other man had some influence. Therefore, I want to know whether this information of mine is correct.

**Mr. Speaker:** I have also got some experience of asking for tenders and I am not prepared to say that the lowest is the best.

**Shri Sidhva:** I do not say that.

**Mr. Speaker:** Therefore in all such cases the best course would be not to

agitate the matter by way of question and answer in the House, but the information might be obtained privately outside the House; and if there is a strong ground for suspecting that there is something wrong, then only a question should be tabled; otherwise, we are taking up the time of the House unnecessarily.

**Shri Sidhva:** In pursuance of the answer given to my Starred Question No. 939 on 15th December, I asked Mr. Munshi privately. He had replied that it would not be in the public interest to disclose the rates. When I asked him subsequently, he asked me to table a question. I have tabled a question and again the answer is given that it is not in the public interest to disclose the rates. So, you must understand my position.

**Shri Thirumala Rao:** I shall try to enlighten the hon. Member as much as possible. The lowest tender was only two annas less than the others and in view of the fact that the lowest tenderer had no previous experience that tender was rejected. With regard to the second case, one of the lowest tenderers did not quote for all the items required and the other lowest tenderer was a discharged servant of the Rationing Department for bad conduct. Thus, the two lowest ones were rejected.

**Shri Sidhva:** May I know whether the tenderer who quoted two annas less was a firm that was on the Government approved list? What made the Government think that it was not a firm of experienced contractors?

**Shri Thirumala Rao:** I want notice for giving all the details about the history of this contract.

**Mr. Speaker:** We may now go to the next question.

#### OFFICERS ON E.P. RAILWAY

\*3182. **Shri Sidhva:** (a) Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state what was the total length of North Western Railway before partition?

(b) How many officers were employed before partition on this Railway?

(c) What is the length of the E.P. Railway after partition?

(d) How many officers are now employed on the E.P. Railway?

**The Minister of States, Transport and Railways (Shri Gopaldaswami):** (a) and (c). The route mileage of the North Western Railway before partition and the route mileage of the

Eastern Punjab Railway on 31st March, 1951 were 6,881.27 and 1,889.08 miles respectively.

(b) and (d). The number of officers employed on the North Western Railway before partition was 366 and the number of officers employed on the Eastern Punjab Railway now is 142.

**Shri T. Husain:** Is the number of officers of E.P. Railway now *pro rata* the same as was the case in the old N.W. Railway?

**Shri Gopaldaswami:** When the old N.W. Railway was in existence the E.P. Railway was not in existence. The N.W. Railway included the E.P. Railway, but of course the number of officers now retained or employed on the E.P. Railway cannot be the same as was the case in that section of the old N.W. Railway, because we have now got to have a separate headquarters.

**Kaka Bhagwant Roy:** What is the total number of Class II officers?

**Shri Gopaldaswami:** I am afraid I have not got the number separately for Class I and Class II. The information I have lumps the officers together.

**Shri Husain Imam:** Is it a fact that the proportion of the E.P. Railway is about a quarter, while the number of its officers is nearly 40 per cent. of the old N.W. Railway?

**Shri Gopaldaswami:** The percentage of route mileage is 27 and the percentage of gazetted posts is about 39.

**Sardar Hukam Singh:** Have such officers as have not been employed on the E.P. Railway been taken on other Railways or have they been thrown out after the partition?

**Shri Gopaldaswami:** Some of the E.P. Railway officers have been transferred to other Railways. There were also officers from other Railways who have been transferred to the E.P. Railway, but they are very few.

**Shri Sidhva:** Out of the 142 officers who are there now, are any of them surplus and are they being kept on because they belong to the Central Railway Service and have been transferred from Pakistan?

**Shri Gopaldaswami:** I do not think that we regard any of the number at present employed on the E.P. Railway as surplus.

#### SORGHUM FROM U.S.A.

\*3183. **Dr. Ram Subhag Singh:** Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state the quantity of Sorghum imported from the United States of America?

**The Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Thirumala Rao):** Imports of Sorghum from United States of America during 1950 amounted to 344,000 tons.

**Dr. Ram Subhag Singh:** Is it a fact that the Government of India had approached the Government of the United States to sell Sorghum to it at a cheaper rate and if so whether that request was acceded to?

**Shri Thirumala Rao:** The total purchases effected in 1950 amounted to 680,000 tons, of which 344,000 tons were received in 1950. The rest is being received this year and the price is Rs. 10-8-0 per maund.

**Dr. Ram Subhag Singh:** May I know the total quantity of Sorghum which we had asked for in 1950-51?

**Shri Thirumala Rao:** It is not a question of our asking for it. We purchased to the tune of 680,000 tons. All that was available in the quality that was required was purchased.

**Shri T. Husain:** What was the landed cost of Sorghum per ton and how does it compare with the price of wheat?

**Shri Thirumala Rao:** I want time and notice for mathematical calculation.

**Shri Chaliha:** What is the quantity we asked for in 1950-51?

**Shri Thirumala Rao:** As I said, it is not a question of our asking for it. We go into the market and buy our requirements.

#### SUPERANNUATED STAFF

\*3184. **Shri Sidhva:** Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

(a) the number and categories of staff superannuated but still in service in the offices under his control; and

(b) the reasons for retaining them?

**The Minister of Communications (Shri Kidwai):** (a) I lay on the Table of the House a statement showing the number and categories of superannuated persons retained in service in the Posts and Telegraphs Department. [See Appendix XXII, annexure No. 8.] There are no superannuated persons employed in any other organisation under my control.

(b) Out of the 19 Superannuated persons retained in Service, eight have been retained on account of their technical experience, and three on account of disciplinary proceedings

pending against them. The remaining eight, who are ex-State officials, were granted extension of service prior to their being taken over by the Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department. Their cases are being examined.

**Shri Sidhva:** Of the nineteen superannuated officers, the hon. Minister stated that eight are technically experienced men. May I know whether these officers have been retained because officers to replace them are not available?

**Shri Kidwai:** One of them has been recently re-employed in our newly opened training institute for the postal services. He is a retired P.M.G. It is an additional post which has been recently created and if we had sent another P.M.G. on service, it would have cost us more and we would have been short of officers. The others are technicians. On account of partition and the option given to officers there is an acute shortage of technical personnel like mistries. Therefore the services of a few superannuated persons have been retained.

**Shri Sidhva:** In view of the definite policy of Government and the Home Ministry's Resolution that except in extraordinary circumstances, no superannuated officer should be employed, have any special grounds been made out for the retention of these officials?

**Shri Kidwai:** The hon. member will know it from the statement supplied to him.

**Shri Sidhva:** There is nothing in the statement excepting the number of such officers. Have they been retained because officers to replace them are not available and if so is there any noting to that effect on the file?

**Mr. Speaker:** That is a matter of routine.

**Shri Sidhva:** It is the confirmed policy of Government that no officer would be given extension or re-employed, unless there are extraordinary reasons for it. Is there anything to that effect on the file in writing, or is it oral?

**Mr. Speaker:** That question need not be answered.

**Shri Kesava Rao:** May I know whether Government is training any technical personnel to take up these posts after these superannuated officers leave service?

**Shri Kidwai:** They are officials like mistries in the different exchanges. Since no one was available they have been retained. Eight of them are in

the States where they were already on extension before we took them over. Their cases are being examined.

#### ROADS MAINTENANCE (EXPENDITURE)

\*3185. **Pandit M. B. Bhargava:** (a) Will the Minister of Transport be pleased to state whether the road connecting Kotah with Ajmer and the road connecting Ajmer with Jodhpur are in charge of the Central P.W.D.?

(b) If so, when were these roads last re-metalled?

(c) What expenses, if any, have been incurred by the Government of India on these roads during the last five years?

(d) Is it a fact that the condition of these roads have deteriorated considerably during the last five years?

(e) If so, what steps are being taken to reconstruct them?

(f) By which date is the reconstruction work likely to commence?

**The Minister of States, Transport and Railways (Shri Gopaldaswami):** (a) Only 75½ miles of the first road and 37 miles of the second road, both from the Ajmer end, are in charge of the Central Public Works Department.

(b) Remetalling or re-painting of some miles is done every year.

(c) The total expenditure during the five years ending 1949-50 was as follows:

Ajmer-Kotah (75½ miles)—Rs. 5.5 lakhs,

Ajmer-Jodhpur (37 miles)—Rs. 2.36 lakhs.

(d) Some miles of both roads are not in good condition at present but the roads as a whole have not deteriorated.

(e) and (f). The metalled surfaces of the miles that have deteriorated are programmed for renewal during the next rains. Repairs to the black-topped miles that are defective, including widening, are in hand and will be completed by May, 1951.

**Pandit M. B. Bhargava:** May I know who are the authorities in charge of the remaining portion of the road?

**Shri Gopaldaswami:** The State concerned: I believe, mostly Rajasthan.

**Shri Hussain Imam:** May I know whether it is a national highway and if so why are the States dealing with it and not the C.P.W.D.?

**Mr. Speaker:** I think this was answered before.

**Shri Hussain Imam:** It is said that part of it is maintained by the C.P.W.D.

**Shri Gopaldaswami:** The national highway portions of the road are repaired and maintained at the cost of the Centre.

**Shri Hussain Imam:** Is the whole road a national highway or only a portion of it; you cannot have a portion of a road as national highway.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, order; it need not be answered.

#### TOLL TAX

\*3186. **Pandit M. B. Bhargava:** Will the Minister of Transport be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Municipality of Ajmer has recently imposed a toll tax on every bus, car, truck, load lorry, entering or passing through the city of Ajmer;

(b) if so, what is the income to the Municipality from this toll tax; and

(c) whether similar tax is being imposed by other municipalities and Local Boards in the Centrally Administered Areas in the country?

**The Minister of States, Transport and Railways (Shri Gopaldaswami):** (a) Such tolls have been levied since 1933 except on certain classes of private cars. Since 1949, all motor vehicles have to pay these tolls.

(b) Annual average for three years ending 1948-49—Rs. 9,000.

For 1949-50—Rs. 30,000.

For 1950-51 (estimated)—Rs. 42,000.

(c) Yes. Some Municipalities and Local Boards, as far as can be ascertained, have imposed similar taxes, but complete information is not available.

**Pandit M. B. Bhargava:** What is the policy of Government: do they allow all Municipalities and Local Boards to levy these taxes?

**Shri Gopaldaswami:** That depends upon the laws in force in those areas. So far as Ajmer is concerned, for Ajmer Municipality, the levy is made under a resolution of the municipal council in 1933. But the district board levy was authorised by the Chief Commissioner under the Indian Tolls Act.

**Pandit M. B. Bhargava:** I want to know the policy of Government to regulate the imposition of such toll taxes by the Municipalities and Local Boards: is it to give them unfettered discretion to impose such taxes?

**Shri Gopaldaswami:** So far as the Centre is concerned, we are interested only in the highways and our policy is not to allow the levy of any new tolls of this description; also, to take off such tolls that existed previously, if they continue to exist. Only certain tolls on bridges and ferries which were in force originally for the purpose of servicing the loans taken for capital expenditure have been allowed to remain.

**Shri Hussain Imam:** May I know from the hon. Minister whether under the present Constitution it is right for the Municipalities and Local Boards to impose such taxes?

**Mr. Speaker:** That is a matter of opinion.

**Shri Sidhva:** May I know whether it is a fact that some of the States which were levying toll taxes have abolished them, because it is considered an abnoxious tax?

**Shri Gopaldaswami:** Such a recommendation was made to all States four or five years ago and many of them have accepted the recommendation.

श्री भट्ट : क्या माननीय मंत्री जी बतावेंगे कि यह टोल टैक्स हर एक प्रकार के वाहनों पर लिया जाता है या सिर्फ मोटर बस वगैरह के ऊपर ?

[**Shri Bhatt:** Will the hon. Minister please state whether this toll tax is imposed on every sort of conveyance or on motors, buses, etc., alone?]

**Mr. Speaker:** It is a matter of detail for the local administration.

श्री भट्ट : बैलगाड़ी वगैरह के ऊपर भी लगाया जाता है या नहीं ?

[**Shri Bhatt:** Is it also imposed on bullock-carts etc., or not?]

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, order.

#### RATES AND TONNAGE OF COASTAL SHIPPING

\*3187. **Shri B. R. Bhagat:** Will the Minister of Transport be pleased to state:

(a) how the control over rates and tonnage of coastal shipping is exercised;

(b) whether the system of control hitherto prevailing has come to an end and if so, when; and

(c) whether and when, the new system of control will come into force?

**The Minister of States, Transport and Railways (Shri Gopaldaswami):** (a) The control over tonnage of coastal shipping is exercised by means of the powers vested in Government under the Control of Shipping Act, 1947, as amended by the Control of Shipping (Amendment) Acts of 1948 and 1950. Government policy of licensing under the Act has been to give the fullest scope to the tonnage of Indian companies which desire to operate on the coast.

Government have powers under the Act to fix shipping rates in respect of any ship engaged in the coasting trade, but the rates have generally been left to be fixed by the Indian Coastal Conference and unless the rates appear to be unduly excessive, Government do not ordinarily seek to fetter the discretion of the Coastal Conference in this matter.

(b) and (c). No, Sir. The system of control hitherto prevailing still continues to be in force in the best interests of Indian Shipping.

**Shri B. R. Bhagat:** May I know how far progress has been made in the policy of the Government which was announced last year that the coastal shipping will be reserved for Indian ships?

**Shri Gopaldaswami:** I cannot say that we have reached the end of the measures that we propose to take in that direction. But certainly we are trying to fill up the gap. A shortage in Indian tonnage exists now, and as it gets filled up this policy will get implemented more and more successfully.

**Shri B. R. Bhagat:** May I know what is the total tonnage of coastal shipping and how much of it is licensed foreign ships?

**Shri Gopaldaswami:** At present Indian shipping companies have 205,699 G.R.T. of owned ships and 30,082 G.R.T. of chartered ships employed in the coastal and near trades, including Burma, Ceylon and Pakistan trades. The total owned tonnage of Indian shipping, including those engaged in the overseas trade is at present 94 ships of 3,72,378 G.R.T.

**Shri B. R. Bhagat:** What percentage of the total volume of coastal trade is done by Indian ships?

**Shri Gopaldaswami:** I must have notice of that question.

**Dr. Ram Subhag Singh:** Is it a fact that the steamer freight charged from Bombay to Calcutta is more than the steamer freight charged from Bombay to New York?

**Shri Gopaldaswami:** I am not in a position to say yes or no to that. But I am quite aware of the fact that some of the freights between one port of India and another are higher than the freight from a port in India to a port in the West, in Great Britain and countries of that description.

**Shri Sidhva:** May I know whether the hon. Minister of State for Transport while giving a reply to a similar question only a fortnight ago stated that the entire coastal tonnage will, from the 1st May, 1952, be confined to Indian shipping and that all the foreign companies will be eliminated, and may I know whether that stands or not?

**Shri Gopaldaswami:** That is certainly what we hope to achieve.

**Shri Sidhva:** He made a definite statement.

**Shri Hussain Imam:** The hon. Minister stated that if they are unreasonable he will intercede. Has he examined the rates? Last time it was pointed out that the rate from Calcutta to Bombay is higher than that from Bombay to New York and things of that nature.

**Shri Gopaldaswami:** I think this matter has been continually examined several times and it has not been possible so far to reduce our rates owing to causes which I think ship-owners in this country will readily appreciate.

#### CONTRACTS

\*3190. **Prof. K. T. Shah:** Will the Minister of Transport be pleased to state:

(a) how many different forms of contracts have been in use in the Ministry since 15th August, 1947—

- (i) for carrying out constructional work;
- (ii) supply of stores and provisions;
- (iii) operating canteens;
- (iv) conveyance of mails or Government Stores; and
- (v) for contract appointments;

(b) how many contracts involving a sum of Rs. 5 lakhs or more have had to be—

- (i) cancelled or rescinded because of disputes with contractors, or for other reasons;
- (ii) revised in material particulars during the currency of the contract, by mutual consent, for or against Government;

(iii) disputed, and referred to arbitration; and

(iv) disputed, and taken to court for adjudication, or appeal from 15th August 1947, to 31st March, 1950; and

(c) whether any attempts have been made to co-ordinate the terms and conditions of such Contracts, in the several departments or branches of the Ministry?

**The Minister of States, Transport and Railways (Shri Gopaldaswami):** (a) A statement giving the information asked for is laid on the Table of the House. [See Appendix XXII, annexure No. 9.]

(b) Nil.

(c) For purposes of construction, standard forms prescribed under the Central Public Works Department Code are being adopted as far as possible. The terms and conditions of contracts are drawn up with due regard to the desirability for coordination and standardisation.

**Prof. K. T. Shah:** In the statement supplied to me the various forms of contracts are referred to by so many initials and cabalistic signs. May I request that the text of these forms or copies may be supplied to me?

**Shri Gopaldaswami:** Sir, I have got the book here. I will send him copies of these forms.

**Shri Hussain Imam:** Is it a fact that the rates of the C.P.W.D. were higher than those of the Railway Department and the Estimates Committee recommended the Central Public Works Department to copy the railway system?

**Mr. Speaker:** It does not arise.

**Shri Hussain Imam:** It relates to the contract.

**Mr. Speaker:** The word 'contract' is there, but that does not mean all the information that the hon. Member is asking.

#### CANCELLATION CHARGES OF RAILWAY TICKETS

\*3191. **Prof. K. T. Shah:** Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a cancellation charge of 10 per cent. of the value of the ticket is levied by the Railways in India in regard to any cancellation of a ticket or reservation for a railway journey, by an intending passenger, whether intimation of such cancellation is given by the intending

passenger, or on his behalf, before the train actually departs on the journey, or after the departure of that train; and

(b) if so, the amount of receipts on account of such cancellation charges in 1947-48 (Post partition), 1948-49, and 1949-50?

**The Minister of States, Transport and Railways (Shri Gopaldaswami):** (a) The correct position is that while refunding fares in the case of advance reservation of berths in First and Second classes when journey tickets are surrendered not less than three days before the departure of the train, five per cent. thereof is deducted and when tickets are surrendered less than three days before the departure of the train, ten per cent. is so deducted. In the case of Inter and Third class tickets, on which seats are reserved in advance, refunds are permitted after retaining a clerage of annas two per ticket only, provided the ticket is surrendered either before or within two hours after the departure of the train. When tickets are surrendered after the lapse of two hours of the departure of the train, refunds, in all cases, are allowed in special circumstances only, subject to a deduction of ten per cent. of the fare refundable.

(b) The approximate amounts of receipts on all the Indian Railways on account of cancellation of tickets are as under:

1947-48 (Post-partition period)—	
	Rs. 1,38,534.
1948-49—	Rs. 2,57,999.
1949-50—	Rs. 2,59,277.

**Prof. K. T. Shah:** May I know whether any discrimination is shown as regards the reasons for cancellation due to changes particularly in the programme of public business, apart from private reasons of individuals?

**Shri Gopaldaswami:** Yes, there is a small concession shown in the case of Government servants and Members of Parliament. If they are able to show that they were unable to take the train in which reservation had been made on account of public business—whether it is official work or, in the other case, having to continue to attend sessions of Parliament or of Parliamentary Committees—then the railway authority concerned is empowered to refund the whole amount without any deduction.

**Prof. K. T. Shah:** Since when may I ask is the concession to Members of Parliament being shown?

**Shri Gopaldaswami:** I am afraid I have not got the date here, but it has been in force for some time.

**Prof. K. T. Shah:** There was no such concession, may I say until the end of last year at any rate, and I had myself to write and bring this point to the notice of the hon. Minister.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, order. He may put his question and not give information.

**Dr. Deshmukh:** Is the hon. Minister aware that even in the case of the air services, within twentyfour hours there is no penalty attached to the cancellation of the tickets? What are the special difficulties in the case of the railways that the period of cancellation should be so much as three days?

**Shri Gopaldaswami:** The assumption that the hon. Member has made has to be confirmed by my hon. colleague.

**Mr. Speaker:** We will go to the next question.

#### INLAND LETTERS

\*3192. **Dr. Deshmukh:** (a) Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state the date on which the inland letters were introduced at one and half annas each?

(b) What is the number sold up to the end of January, 1951?

**The Minister of Communications (Shri Kidwai):** (a) 2nd October, 1950.

(b) About 67 lakhs.

**Dr. Deshmukh:** Has the introduction of the inland letters reduced the ordinary letters of two annas postage as well as the postcards in numbers?

**Shri Kidwai:** Some diversion is natural both from the postcards and the letters.

**Dr. Deshmukh:** Is there any calculation which will show what additional revenue has been derived by the introduction of these inland letters?

**Shri Kidwai:** It will be available at the time of enumeration which take place every August and February.

**Dr. Deshmukh:** May I know what is the cost of printing these inland letters per thousand?

**Shri Kidwai:** I have not got the information because the hon. Member had only asked for numbers.

**Mr. Speaker:** It is all right.

श्री द्विवेदी: इनलैंड लैटर्स में जो घाटा बाया है, उस को पूरा करने के लिये क्या सरकार यह सोच रही है कि एक जाने

वाले कोकल एनवल्पस् खत्म करिये  
चाय ?

[Shri Dwivedi: Do the Government propose discontinuing the one anna local envelopes with a view to make good the loss incurred on account of inland letters?]

श्री किदवाई : इनलेट लैटर्स में कोई  
बाटा नहीं आया है और ऐसा ख्याल  
करना गलत है, लेकिन यह लैटर्स खत्म  
हो चुके, यह सही ख्याल है।

[Shri Kidwai: It is wrong to presume that any loss has been incurred on account of inland letters; but it is correct that these letters have been discontinued.]

#### DETERIORATION OF WHEAT IN VINDHYA PRADESH

\*3193. Shrimati Jayashri: Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of bags of wheat are taken charge of by orders of the District Commissioner at Satna in Vindhya Pradesh and are in weevil-ridden condition; and

(b) if so, what action has been taken by Government or intended to be taken to save the grain from further deterioration, and from becoming useless for human consumption?

The Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Thirumala Rao): (a) In order to meet the difficult food position in Satna district in October and November, 1950 as a result of damage to kharif crops, the Deputy Commissioner, Satna, Vindhya Pradesh, froze the stocks of foodgrains with the Mahajans. These frozen stocks also included certain quantities of old wheat belonging to the 1949 crop.

(b) Arrangements were made for the proper cleaning and screening of the old stocks and their issue for local consumption.

Shrimati Jayashri: May I know what is the total loss?

Shri Thirumala Rao: The frozen stocks included a quantity of about 4,500 maunds of old wheat with two merchants which belonged to the 1949 crop and that was taken hold of and it was cleaned and screened and most of it was used. I have not got any estimate of the loss involved in it.

Shri Dwivedi: I want to know if some merchants in Satna were arrested

for having sold wheat at one seer and a quarter for a rupee?

Shri Thirumala Rao: I am not aware of any such information.

Pandit Krishna Chandra Sharma: May I know whether the wheat was examined by doctors for ration purposes?

Shri Thirumala Rao: The wheat was subjected to the usual examination by our officers whether it is fit for consumption or not and then issued.

Shri Dwivedi: May I know whether the wheat available at Satna was sent to Sidhi where persons are dying of hunger.....

Mr. Speaker: Order, order.

#### FOOD PRODUCTION (ESTIMATE)

\*3194. Shri Kishorimohan Tripathi: (a) Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state the latest estimate of foodgrains produced in India from the Rabi crops this year?

(b) How does the above figure compare with the corresponding figure of the last year?

The Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Thirumala Rao): (a) Estimates of production of Rabi food crops for the current year 1950-51 are not yet available as the harvest has just started in the various States. A statement indicating the condition of the crops as reported by the various State Governments is, however, laid on the Table of the House. [See Appendix XXII, annexure No. 10.]

(b) The production of Rabi foodgrains (wheat and barley) during 1949-50 is estimated at 8.5 million tons. Since corresponding figures for the current year are not available, no comparison can be instituted.

Shri Kishorimohan Tripathi: May I know if the Ministry of Agriculture has issued any forecast in respect of this production and if so, what is the latest?

Shri Thirumala Rao: We are awaiting reports from all the States.

Mr. Speaker: Has the Ministry issued any forecast?

Shri Thirumala Rao: I am not aware of any such forecast being issued.

Shri R. C. Upadhyaya: I find that Rajasthan has not been included in the figures given in the statement.

Shri Thirumala Rao: We have laid on the Table of the House the information that has been received from all



the States. For instance, Madras is also not included in the statement because we have not received a reply from them.

**Shri B. C. Upadhyaya:** Has Government got any estimate to show the probable loss in Rabi crop as a result of locusts and untimely rains and hailstorms?

**Shri Thirumala Rao:** The statement is laid on the Table of the House. If the hon. Member wants me to read from that I can read about the general condition of the crops in all the Provinces.

**Mr. Speaker:** No, no. It is not necessary.

**Shri Thirumala Rao:** I can refer my hon. friend to the statement laid on the Table of the House.

**Shri T. N. Singh:** The hon. Minister has stated in answer to part (b) of the question that he is not in a position to give the corresponding figures. May I know whether he has not in his possession the figures relating to previous years' rabi crops?

**Shri Thirumala Rao:** I have got them here for the whole country. I can give them.

**Shri Sidhva:** In view of the importance of this matter, will the hon. Minister give us the total figure to see whether there is any adverse effect of the rabi crop?

**Mr. Speaker:** I am afraid the very object of putting a detailed statement is defeated if questions are put in for the purpose of eliciting what is written in the statement. The best course will be to study the statement first and put further questions later on.

**Shri Kishorimohan Tripathi:** The statement in question only describes the situation in different parts of the country. It does not include any figure of estimate.

**Mr. Speaker:** He has said in reply that the estimates are awaited.

**Shri Bharati:** Is it not a fact that in order to show the deficit every State submits an estimate of production to the Central Government?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, order. The question is restricted to rabi crop this year.

#### FOOD PRODUCTION (GRANT)

\*3195. **Shri Thimmappa Gowda:** (a) Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state the amount of

grant asked by Mysore Government for increasing her food production in 1949-50 and 1950-51?

(b) What is the amount promised by the Central Government to Mysore for the above 2 years?

(c) What is the amount that has been granted and the amount that has been already paid?

**The Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Thirumala Rao):** (a) and (b). The grants asked for by Mysore Government during 1949-50 and 1950-51 for increasing food production were Rs. 45.63 lakhs and 40.87 lakhs, respectively. The grants sanctioned by the Government of India after discussions with the State Authorities were Rs. 42.63 lakhs and 39.87 lakhs respectively.

(c) The grant for 1949-50 was paid in full. As regards 1950-51, the actual expenditure on G.M.F. grants will not be known for some time.

**Shri Thimmappa Gowda:** May I know when Government proposes to pay the remaining amount?

**Shri Thirumala Rao:** When the actual expenditure incurred on G.M.F. is known, we will pay the balance.

#### AIR CRASH NEAR KOTAGIRI

\*3196. **Shri Sanjivayya:** Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the statement alleged to have been given by one of the Judges of the Punjab High Court relating to the air crash near Kotagiri, Coimbatore, saying that the valuables of the victims were not properly protected; and

(b) if so, whether it is a fact?

**The Minister of Communications (Shri Kidwai):** (a) Yes.

(b) It is reported that Police and Forest officials guarded the wreckage from the time it was discovered by the search party. It is difficult to say whether, before the discovery, any article was pilfered. The attention of the Government of Madras has been drawn to these complaints.

**Shri Sanjivayya:** Have Government received any complaints from the near relatives of the victims in regard to this accident?

**Shri Kidwai:** Yes. We have received such complaints.

**Shri Sanjivayya:** Have Government lost in this accident any of their own valuable records?

**Shri Kidwai:** I am not aware of any such loss, but if the hon. Member wants a definite reply, he may put a fresh question.

**Shri Bharati:** Do Government propose to ask the Company to pay compensation to the relatives of the deceased? Is there any suggestion before the Government?

**Shri Kidwai:** If they are entitled to any compensation they will pursue the matter and Government cannot do anything in this matter.

**Pandit Mumishwar Datt Upadhyay:** What is the valuation of the property involved, Sir?

**Shri Kidwai:** It is not known what was the property there.

#### FOOD GRAINS FOR MADRAS AND BOMBAY

\*3197. **Shri Sanjivayya:** Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of food grains asked by the Madras Government and the Bombay Government from the Central Government during the years 1949-50 and 1950-51; and

(b) the quantity granted actually by the Central Government during those years to the two State Governments?

**The Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Thirumala Rao):** (a) The quantities asked for by Bombay and Madras during each of 1949, 1950 and 1951 were as follows:

	(In '000 tons)		
	1949	1950	1951
Bombay	1150	900	1025
Madras	1149	726	1000

(b) Quantities supplied during 1949 and 1950 and the quota for 1951 are:—

	(In '000 tons)		
	1949	1950	1951
Bombay	1074	722	800
Madras	396	588	500

**Shri Sanjivayya:** May I know the principle involved in the allotment of foodgrains by the Centre to the various States?

**Shri Thirumala Rao:** What is known as the basic plan has been evolved all these years with regard to the requirements of the several States. This has been going on for some years with regard to the total production of the State, total capacity for procurement, and the total deficit that has to be made up from the Centre. It is on this basis that allocations are being made from year to year. This year also, the

allocation is based on the previous experience.

**Shri Sanjivayya:** Does it not depend on the allotment asked for by the States?

**Shri Thirumala Rao:** I have explained that it depends on all the factors, not on the single factor of the States' demand.

**Shri Sanjivayya:** In view of the fact that rice is the staple food of Madras, do Government consider the desirability of allotting a major portion of the quota to Madras in the shape of rice?

**Shri Thirumala Rao:** I have more than once said on the floor of the House that out of 500,000 tons allotted, we are giving 300,000 tons in rice.

**Shri Sanjivayya:** Is there any truth in the press report which says that the Government of India have decided to increase the quota to Madras from five lakhs to six lakhs tons?

**Shri Thirumala Rao:** We are trying to increase the quota; we have not issued any press report.

**Shri Sidhva:** What is the total procurement in Bombay in 1950, and may I know whether that procurement is in consonance with the target fixed by the Government?

**Shri Thirumala Rao:** I think they have procured 939,000 tons of rice and 187,000 tons of wheat.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Member is referring to how far the procurement in Bombay has reached the target fixed.

**Shri Thirumala Rao:** I want notice.

**Shri Bharati:** What is the deficit in 1950 and in the current year, according to the Bombay Government and the Madras Government?

**Mr. Speaker:** I think there is no use in pursuing this further. These questions have been discussed on the floor of the House.

**Shri Bharati:** Not these identical questions, Sir. This is a very important question, and it has not been satisfactorily answered.....

**Mr. Speaker:** The point has been discussed on the floor of the House in all its aspects.

**Shri Bharati:** I am only submitting that the hon. Minister has not answered satisfactorily.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, order.

**Shri Thirumala Rao:** I am prepared to answer.....

**Mr. Speaker:** He may be prepared.

**Shri Thirumala Rao:** I only want to submit.....

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Minister need not submit anything.

**Shri Thirumala Rao:** There is no occasion for Mr. Bharati's remark.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, order; he need not reply. Next question.

**CALCUTTA PORT COMMISSIONERS (PORT RAILWAY)**

\*3198. **Shri S. C. Samanta:** (a) Will the Minister of Transport be pleased to state the total track length of Port Railway under Calcutta Port Commissioners?

(b) How many locomotives do the Commissioners own at present?

(c) How many more locomotives are urgently necessary now?

(d) Have any orders been placed?

**The Minister of States, Transport and Railways (Shri Gopaldaswami):** (a) The total track length of the Port Commissioners' Railway is 193.547 miles.

(b) The Port Commissioners have at present 58 locomotives in good running condition.

(c) Six.

(d) Yes. An order for these six locomotives was placed on Hunslet Engine Co., a British firm, in September, 1949 and they are expected to be delivered shortly.

**Shri S. C. Samanta:** May I know whether the track length of the Port Railway was greater before?

**Shri Gopaldaswami:** I must say that I am unaware of that fact, if it was a fact.

**Shri S. C. Samanta:** May I know whether this Railway is connected with the main line of the B.N. Railway?

**Shri Gopaldaswami:** It must be connected; it cannot be disconnected from the main line.

**Shri S. C. Samanta:** I want to know the route through which it is connected.

**Shri Gopaldaswami:** I must ask for notice of that.

**Shri S. C. Samanta:** Is it not a fact that it is connected with the ferry ghat in the Ganges?

**Shri Gopaldaswami:** The hon. Member, I think, is in possession of detailed information. If he wishes to give in-

formation, I shall take it and get it verified.

**Shri S. C. Samanta:** I wanted to point out the difficulties in transport and so I wanted to know.....

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, order; that is not the object of the Question-hour. Next question.

**AGRICULTURAL GRANTS TO BHOPAL**

\*3199. **Thakur Lal Singh:** (a) Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state how much amount was sanctioned by the Government of India to Bhopal during the year, 1950-51 as (i) grants; and (ii) loan, on account of (i) Irrigation Scheme; (ii) Fertilizers; and (iii) *Taccavi* for seeds and bullocks?

(b) What part of these grants and loans have actually been given to (i) cultivators; (ii) *Jagirdars*; and (iii) Government Servants?

**The Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Thirumala Rao):** (a) A statement is laid down on the Table of the House.

(b) The information asked for has been called for and will be placed on the Table of the House when received.

**STATEMENT**

(Figures in Lakhs of Rupees.)

Name of the scheme	Amounts sanctioned	
	Grants	Loans
(i) Irrigation Scheme	18.97	3.90
(ii) Fertilizers (including Sewage and Composting scheme)	3.89	2.72
(iii) <i>Taccavi</i> for Seeds	..	2.02
Bullocks	..	2.00

**Thakur Lal Singh:** How much of this loan was given to the cultivators of sugarcane and how much for bullocks?

**Shri Thirumala Rao:** These loans are mainly intended for irrigation schemes, fertilizers, *taccavi* for seeds and bullocks. Two lakhs of rupees have been given for bullocks.

**Thakur Lal Singh:** How much of the loan has been given to cultivators, who are working on the lands and others?

**Shri Thirumala Rao:** I have not got the break-up of this.

**Thakur Lal Singh:** Is the Government considering the giving of special loans to the cultivators of sugarcane, in view of the fact that there is a sugar factory there, and sufficient sugar is not produced?

**Shri Thirumala Rao:** It all depends on the recommendations made by the administrators there. If it is necessary, we will consider the matter.

**Shri Dwivedi:** May I know if any other State belonging to the Centrally Administered Areas in the Malwa region has been given an equal amount as in the case of Bhopal, and if not, why?

**Mr. Speaker:** How does this question arise? This question is restricted to Bhopal.

**Shri Dwivedi:** Bhopal is a Part C State. All right; I shall ask another question. May I know whether the results of the grants have been achieved in practice: whether any good has come out of these grants or whether the grant has simply lapsed and come back?

**Shri Thirumala Rao:** Additional food production anticipated as a result of the loans is 13,000 tons covering an area of 130,000 acres.

**Mr. Speaker:** Next question: Mr. S. N. Das.

**Shri S. N. Das:** Question No. 3203. Question No. 2206 may also be taken along with this.

**The Minister of Communications (Shri Kidwai):** Yes; I was myself going to suggest that.

**Mr. Speaker:** Yes.

#### DEPARTMENTAL WORKSHOPS (RE-ORGANISATION)

\*3203. **Shri S. N. Das:** (a) Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state whether re-organisation of Departmental Workshops, as advised by the American Engineer Dr. S. Trone, has been completed?

(b) If so, what are the specific points of reforms?

**The Minister of Communications (Shri Kidwai):** (a) and (b). A statement showing the action taken on Dr. Trone's recommendations is placed on the Table of the House. [See Appendix XXII, annexure No. 11.]

#### WORKSHOPS RE-ORGANISATION COMMITTEE

\*3206. **Shri S. N. Das:** Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether the report submitted by the Workshops Re-organisation Com-

mittee has been considered by Government; and

(b) which of the recommendations have been accepted by Government?

**The Minister of Communications (Shri Kidwai):** (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government have generally accepted all the recommendations of the Committee.

**Shri S. N. Das:** With regard to the formation of the Board of management, the Committee recommended that there should be two representatives of the workers. May I know whether the Government accepts that number? The Government has suggested one representative of labour.

**Shri Kidwai:** There is no representative of labour there, as such. But we have appointed as an experimental measure one of the employees in the workshop on the Board of management.

**Shri S. N. Das:** May I know whether the gentleman who is to represent labour has been already appointed?

**Shri Kidwai:** No representative of labour has been appointed. One of the workers has been appointed on the Board of management.

**Shri S. N. Das:** In the recommendations made by Dr. Trone, it was suggested that the buildings at Bombay and Alipore should be abandoned and modern factories built on the outskirts of the city with labour villages hereby. What did the workshops Committee say on this point?

**Shri Kidwai:** We have also under consideration the acquiring of factory buildings or sites to build factories both in Bombay and Calcutta. In Bombay, we are negotiating the purchase of one factory and in Calcutta, the Chief Minister has kindly agreed to select a site for us and get a new building. All that will take time. We have also to see what will be the financial effects of the new proposals.

**Shri S. N. Das:** May I know whether the recommendations made in the Dr. Trone's Report regarding coordination and division of work have been given effect to?

**Shri Kidwai:** It is for that very purpose that the Board has been appointed representing all interests.

#### GHOST RATION CARDS

\*3204. **Shri Sanjivayya:** (a) Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state the number of ghost ration cards discovered during the year 1950?

(b) What is the approximate quantity of foodgrains that has been drawn through these cards?

**The Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Thirumala Rao):** (a) According to the information available, during the drive in 1950, about 3,81,000 ghost ration cards were discovered, in States other than West Bengal and Delhi. As regards West Bengal and Delhi, information is available as to the number of cards cancelled but as to what proportion of these were ghost cards is not known.

(b) It is not possible to give an estimate as it is not known for how long these cards were in existence.

**Shri Sanjivayya:** Is there a special machinery with the Government for detecting these ghost ration cards and for pursuing the matter?

**Shri Thirumala Rao:** There are periodical checks on these cards; and people are also asked to deposit their cards when they leave the station.

**Shri Sonavane:** What effective steps are taken to see that ghost cards once detected and dealt with do not again become ghost cards?

**Shri Thirumala Rao:** All steps are taken to lay the ghost.

#### WHEAT FROM CANADA

\*3205. **Shri Rathnaswamy:** (a) Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the Canadian Government offered wheat to India as a free gift as a part of Canada's contribution towards Colombo Plan and if so, was this offer accepted by India?

(b) What is the total quantity of foodgrains imported from Canada on commercial basis and as a free gift in the last twelve months?

**The Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Thirumala Rao):** (a) It has been proposed by the Canadian Government that India should accept some Canadian wheat as part of Canada's contribution towards the Colombo Plan Pool. Government of India have agreed to accept the proposal. Negotiations are under way.

(b) In October, 1950 India purchased 300,000 tons wheat from Canada. The bulk of this quantity has been shipped. No wheat has been received from Canada as a free gift.

**Shri Rathnaswamy:** Is it a fact that the wheat offered by Canada was of a very low quality?

**Shri Thirumala Rao:** It is no question of an offer from Canada. There are quantities and quantities of wheat of different qualities available in Canada and we can make the choice.

**Shri T. N. Singh:** Is there any truth in the report that the Government of India have turned down the offer of the supply of wheat because it is of an inferior quality?

**Shri Thirumala Rao:** I have just now answered that question by saying that the choice is with us to have the wheat that is suitable to us.

**Shri Sidhva:** Sir, this question of the wheat being of an inferior quality was raised before in this House and Mr. Munshi then, I remember, said that the wheat offered by Canada was not fit for human consumption. But here something else is being said by the Deputy Minister. What is the fact?

**Mr. Speaker:** But where is the contradiction?

**Shri Sidhva:** The Deputy Minister is saying something different, Sir. Mr. Munshi said that the offer was definitely turned down because the wheat given as a free gift was of a very inferior quality. The Deputy Minister says there are different qualities to choose from.

**Mr. Speaker:** Yes, it is quite obvious. There is nothing to be explained.

**Pandit Krishna Chandra Sharma:** What is the cost of Canadian wheat now?

**Shri Thirumala Rao:** I would like to have notice, Sir.

#### JUTE AND COTTON CULTIVATION

\*3207. **Shri S. C. Samanta:** (a) Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state the acreage of land under cultivation of jute, cotton and other money crops separately in the State of West Bengal in the years 1949 and 1950?

(b) Will any additional acreage be utilised in 1951 in the State for expanding the production of jute and cotton and if so, how much?

**The Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Thirumala Rao):** (a) The acreage under cultivation of jute, cotton and other money crops in West

Bengal during 1948-49 and 1949-50 was as under:

	(Figures in thousand acres)	
	1948-49	1949-50
Jute	350	498
Cotton	Negligible	Loss than 500 acres.
Rape and Mustard seeds	138	161
Sesamum	25	18
Linseed	44	61
Tobacco	50	46
Sugarcane	66	57

(b) An additional area of 1,35,000 acres is proposed to be brought under jute in West Bengal during 1951-52, of which 5,000 acres will come from reclamation of waste land, 100,000 by replacement of paddy, and 30,000 acres by double-cropping.

West Bengal is not a significant cotton growing State, since the area under the crop is only about 200 acres. A scheme for the cultivation of cotton in the State in 1951-52 on about 5,000 acres of reclaimed waste land is however under consideration.

**Shri S. C. Samanta:** May I know whether the railway land that was available has been utilised for growing jute and other things?

**Shri Thirumala Rao:** I want notice for that, Sir.

**Shri S. C. Samanta:** May I know why the Minister has omitted to mention the acreage under tea?

**Shri Thirumala Rao:** I do not know the particular definition of a money crop. Tea is separate from jute, cotton and sugarcane.

#### ROAD TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT IN HYDERABAD

\*3209. **Shri K. Vaidya:** (a) Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state whether the Road Transport Department in Hyderabad State, attached to the Nizam's State Railway, has been taken over under the management of the Government of India and if so, why?

(b) What was the total income and expenditure of the Department in the years 1949 and 1950 and has the net revenue been credited to the Hyderabad State or to the Government of India?

**The Minister of States, Transport and Railways (Shri Gopalaswami):** (a) The Government of Hyderabad in consultation with the Government of India decided purely as a temporary arrangement to entrust the management of the Road Transport Department in Hyderabad State on an agency basis to the

Nizam's State Railway on and from 1st April, 1950.

(b) The gross earnings of this Department for the years 1948-49 and 1949-50 were Rs. 107.41 and Rs. 200.35 lakhs, while the expenditure was Rs. 124.70 and 154.60 lakhs respectively. The net revenue for these years was credited to the Hyderabad Government. As these accounts are maintained in terms of financial years, the separate figures for calendar years 1949 and 1950 are not readily available.

**Shri K. Vaidya:** May I know whether the Department of Transport be returned to Hyderabad?

**Shri Gopalaswami:** The Hyderabad State has expressed a wish to that effect. At the same time they have asked us to continue our agency functions for another year from 1st April 1951.

**Shri S. V. Nalk:** Sir, may I know what steps are under contemplation to ensure proper scales of pay and emoluments to the workers of the Department?

**Shri Gopalaswami:** I believe the workers on the transport service are being treated exactly on the same lines as the workers on the Nizam's State Railway, that is to say, I think in most of the categories the C.P.C. scales of pay have been applied. But I should like to make a reservation; it may be that in certain cases that has not been done. That matter will be looked into.

#### FOOD CONTROL BY STATES

\*3211. **Shri Krishnanand Rai:** Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) to what extent State Governments are free to determine in their jurisdiction the extent and the manner of food control;

(b) whether State Governments are free to introduce partial de-rationing or increase or decrease their ration quota or commitments without additional burden to the Government of India;

(c) whether some States have expressed their desire to introduce partial de-rationing, to increase ration quotas or to increase internal procurement prices;

(d) if so, whether permission has been granted to any State for any of the above purpose; and

(e) whether any State has been freed from its obligation of procurement in 1951 and if so, its name?

**The Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Thirumala Rao):** (a) State Governments have to obtain the

prior approval of the Central Government before carrying out any changes in the existing system of procurement and distribution in their jurisdiction.

(b) As indicated under part (a) above, State Governments can carry out such changes only with the prior approval of the Centre.

(c) Yes.

(d) Yes.

(e) No.

**Shri Krishnanand Rai:** Sir, may I know what States are at present in full agreement with the present policy of control and rationing of food grains of the Government of India?

**Shri Thirumala Rao:** No question arises of a State's full agreement. If any State wants slight variations and if the State makes the necessary suggestion it can obtain the permission of the Centre to effect those variations.

**Shri T. N. Singh:** May I know whether the Governments of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have suggested gradual decontrol and de-rationing even in some principal cities of these two States?

**Shri Thirumala Rao:** No, Sir.

**Shri S. N. Das:** May I know whether the State Governments are free to decide the procurement prices of grains?

**Shri Thirumala Rao:** No.

#### Short Notice Question and Answer

#### SUPREME COURT JUDGMENT ON ALL-INDIA INDUSTRIAL (BANK DISPUTES) TRIBUNAL AWARDS.

**Shri Bhatt:** (a) Will the Minister of Labour be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the Supreme Court has declared the final as well as the interim awards made by the All-India Industrial (Bank Disputes) Tribunal, as illegal?

(b) What are the main grounds of such a decision?

(c) Who was responsible for the irregularities?

(d) How many bank employees all over India are affected by the decision?

(e) What steps have Government taken or propose to take, with a view to affording relief to the employees concerned?

**The Minister of Works, Production and Supply (Shri Gadgil):** (a) The final award and 28 out of 34 subsidiary awards have been declared void by the Supreme Court.

(b) The award has been declared void on the ground of lack of jurisdiction of the Tribunal. Jurisdiction was disputed on two grounds, both arising out of the deputation of one of the members of the Tribunal to the Indo-Pakistan Boundary Commission for a period of less than three months out of a total period of adjudication of about 14 months. The Supreme Court held that both when the member first left the Tribunal and when he later on rejoined it, Government should have issued notifications reconstituting the Tribunal in the former case and constituting a new Tribunal in the latter. In the absence of such notifications the Tribunal had no jurisdiction to continue the proceedings.

(c) Government are responsible for the irregularities, but I should like to say that failure to issue the two vital notifications was due not to any default on the part of anybody but to the view then held that in view of section 8(1) of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, it was not necessary to issue any notification.

(d) Government have no accurate figures but it is believed that about 60,000 employees are affected by the decision.

(e) The matter is under consideration.

श्री भट्ट: क्या माननीय मंत्री जी बतायेंगे कि जो इंटैरिम फैसले दिये गये वे वह भी इसी कारण से रद्द किये गये ?

[Shri Bhatt: Will the hon. Minister please state whether the interim awards that were given have also been declared void on the same ground?]

श्री गडगिल: मैं ने जैसा ए० के बचाव में बताया १४ में से २८ इसी कारण खारिज हो गये। बाकी ६ यानी जिनको तीनों ने सुनकर फैसला किया वह ठीक है।

[Shri Gadgil: As I said in reply to part (a) above, 28 out of 34 were declared void on this very ground. The remaining six that were made by all the three members combined still hold good.]

श्री भट्ट: क्या माननीय मंत्री जी यह बतायेंगे कि इस पंच के काम के अन्दर सरकार को कितना खर्चा हुआ ?

[Shri Bhatt: Will the hon. Minister please state the amount of money incurred by the Government on this arbitration?]

श्री गार्गिल : इसके लिए मैं नोटिस चाहता हूँ।

[Shri Gadgil: I require notice for this.]

श्री भट्ट : क्या माननीय मंत्री जी बतायेंगे कि सरकार इस के बारे में जल्दी से जल्दी कब सोचेगी ?

[Shri Bhatt: Will the hon. Minister please state when at the earliest will the Government take this matter into consideration?]

श्री गार्गिल : हर क्षण सोच रही है।

[Shri Gadgil: The Government have been considering the matter ever since.]

Shri Venkataraman: Is it a fact that immediately after the publication of the judgment of the Supreme Court the Indian Bank increased their hours of work and consequently there was a strike in protest in Madras?

Shri Gadgil: I have no information on that point. Perhaps the information of the hon. Member may be correct.

Shri Venkataraman: Are Government aware that by reason of the delay which the Government may make in coming to a decision there may be threat of strike among all the bank employees in that province?

Shri Gadgil: I cannot visualise what will happen but I can assure the hon. Member that the Government are aware of the gravity of the situation; but, at the same time, Government must pay due regard to the decision of the Highest Court in the land.

Shri Venkataraman: May I know whether Government will consider the advisability of validating this award by legislation?

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. It is a suggestion for action.

Prof. K. T. Shah: May I know whether after consideration Government will bring any measure, before this Parliament adjourns or is prorogued?

Shri Gadgil: If as a result of our consideration we come to the conclusion that we must come to the House we shall certainly do it.

Shri Harthar Nath Shastri: How do the Government propose to safeguard the interests of the bank employees during the pendency period, that is during the period they are considering the matter?

Shri Gadgil: I can assure the hon. Member that the consideration will not take considerable time. As I have stated, we are quite conscious of the gravity of the situation.

Shri Harihar Nath Shastri: Have the Government received any proposal in regard to amending the Constitution with a view to banning reference of awards by Industrial Tribunals to the Supreme Court?

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. It is a suggestion for action. If they have received any such suggestion they will consider it.

Shri Kamath: Is it not a fact that it was in accordance with the advice tendered by the Law Ministry and the Legal Advisers to Government that the Labour Ministry did not issue the notification?

Shri Gadgil: The advice tendered to the Labour Ministry was that no such notification was necessary and I may tell the House that at least in this we were endorsed by the views expressed by three Judges.

Shri Kamath: Have any representations been received from the bank employees, individually or from their organisations, in respect of the situation created by the judgment of the Supreme Court?

Shri Gadgil: I require notice.

Prof. K. T. Shah: May I know if the banks (employers) have all reverted to the conditions prevailing before the appointment of the Tribunal and its award?

Shri Gadgil: As I said, I do not know; but if the information of the hon. Member is well founded, it may be correct.

Shri Hussain Imam: May I know if it is a fact that the banks have also approached the Government on this subject?

Shri Gadgil: I do not think so.

Shri Hussain Imam: Do the Government propose to convene any conference of the bankers to come to a settlement, if possible?

Shri Gadgil: If as a matter for consideration a conference of that character is necessary preliminary to arriving at a correct decision, it may be held.



## WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

## REST HOUSES ON NATIONAL HIGHWAYS

\*3188. Seth Govind Das: Will the Minister of Transport be pleased to state the number of rest-houses constructed on the National Highways for the facility of travellers during January, 1949 and during 1950?

The Minister of States, Transport and Railways (Shri Gopalaswami): None.

## TELEPHONE EQUIPMENT (IMPORT AND MANUFACTURE)

\*3200. Shri Balmiki: (a) Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state what is the C.I.F. value of telephone equipment imported into India during 1949-50 and 1950-51?

(b) What is the value of telephone equipment manufactured in India during 1949-50 and 1950-51?

The Minister of Communications (Shri Kidwai): (a) Rs. 44 lakhs during 1949-50 and Rs. 55 lakhs during 1950-51.

(b) About Rs. 1 crore during each of the years 1949-50 and 1950-51.

## STORAGE FOR FOOD GRAINS

\*3201. Shri Balmiki: Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) how much food grains is estimated to be lost during a year on account of bad storage; and

(b) how many stores for food grains on modern lines have been constructed by Government during 1949-50 and 1950-51?

The Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Thirumala Rao): (a) It is not possible to give correct estimate of the quantities of foodgrains lost during a year on account of bad storage as systematic survey has not been carried out. In Indian Council of Agricultural Research bulletin No. 57, however, it has been stated that the insect pests destroy about five percent of the stored grain.

(b) A statement is placed on the Table of the House.

## STATEMENT

Stores for foodgrains on modern lines constructed by Government during 1949-1950 and 1950-1951.

	1949-50	1950-51	Remarks.
Central Government	Nil	Nil	
State Governments			
U. P.	1	..	
Bombay	82	..	
Madras	..	8	
West Bengal	1	1	
Saurashtra	1	0*	*Still under construction
Rajasthan	..	16*	*do
P.E.P.S.U.	7*	..	*during 1949-51.
Hyderabad	75	63	
Jammu and Kashmir	2	7	

N. B.—No godowns were constructed by other State Governments during the two years.

विन्ध्य प्रदेश को अधिक अन्न उपजाओ आन्दोलन सम्बन्धी अनुदान

३३२०२ श्री धार० ऐस० तिवारी :

(क) क्या आज तथा कृषि मंत्री यह बतलाने की कृपा करेंगे कि भारत सरकार ने अब तक विन्ध्य प्रदेश को 'अधिक धन्न उपजाओ' आन्दोलन के निमित्त कितना धन दिया है ?

(ख) यह धन किन किन प्रयोजनार्थ व्यय किया गया है ?

(ग) कितने कृषि सुवधाये गये हैं ?

(घ) कितने बांधों के निमित्त धन दिया गया है ?

(ङ) इस समय शेष धन राशि क्या है ?

'GROW MORE FOOD' GRANT FOR VINDHYA PRADESH

[\*3202. Shri E. S. Tewari: (a) Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state the amount of money so far given to Vindhya Pradesh, by the Government of India for Grow More Food drive?

(b) For what purposes has this money been spent?

(c) How many wells have been sunk?

(d) For how many dams has money been given?

(e) What is the balance of the money at present?

The Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Thirumala Rao): (a) Grants and loans to the extent of Rs. 8.20 lakhs and 23.39 lakhs respectively have been sanctioned for Grow More Food schemes in Vindhya Pradesh.

(b) The break up of the schemes for which grants and loans have been sanctioned is given in the statement which is placed on the Table of the House. [See Appendix XXII, annexure No. 12.]

(c) The well sinking scheme was sanctioned only towards the end of 1950. Two wells have been completed while 153 wells are under construction.

(d) No amount was asked for the construction of dams in the State.

(e) The un-spent balance on the 1st March, 1951 was Rs. 12.21 lakhs.

#### MINISTRIES IN PART B STATES

\*3208. Shri Raj Kanwar: Will the Minister of States be pleased to state whether the appointments of individual Ministers prior to their appointment to the various Ministries in Part B States are contingent on their receiving the approval of the Ministry of States?

The Minister of States, Transport and Railways (Shri Gopaldaswami): We have issued instructions to the Governments of Part B States that changes in the personnel of the Ministries should be made with the approval of the Minister of States.

I.A.R.I.

\*3210. Master Nand Lal: (a) Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state whether Government intend to integrate the Indian Agricultural Research Institute with the Central College of Agriculture?

(b) If so, what will be the effect on (i) the permanent staff whose work remains in the College after integration, (ii) the permanent staff whose work does not remain in the College after integration, and (iii) the temporary staff declared surplus?

The Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Thirumala Rao): (a) Yes.

(b) As the integration will come into force on 1st July, 1951, notices have been given to the surplus staff. The question of the absorption of the surplus staff both permanent as well as temporary in the integrated setup is under examination.

#### हड्डियां पीसने की फैक्टरियां

\*३२१२. श्री खारपडे : (क) क्या खाद्य तथा कृषि मंत्री भारत की हड्डियां पीसने की फैक्टरियों की संख्या बतलाने की कृपा करेंगे तथा उन राज्यों के नाम जहां वे स्थापित हैं ?

(ख) वर्ष १९४८, १९४९ तथा १९५० में कितने टन हड्डियां पीसी गयीं तथा वह पीसी हुई हड्डियों का चूर्ण किस कार्य में प्रयोग किया गया अथवा इस में से कितना विदेशों को निर्यात किया गया ?

(ग) १२ घंटों की अवधि में यह यह मशीनें कितने मन अथवा टन हड्डियां पीसती हैं ?

(घ) क्या यह मशीनें विदेशों से आयात की जाती हैं अथवा हमारे ही देश में बनायी जाती हैं ?

(ङ) क्या विदेशों से भी हड्डियों का चूर्ण आयात किया गया है ?

(च) यदि हां, तो यह किस वर्ष में तथा उन विदेशों के नाम जहां से वह आयात किया गया तथा कितनी मात्रा में आयात किया गया तथा किन किन कार्यों में उस का प्रयोग किया गया ?

#### BONE-CRUSHING FACTORIES

[\*3212. Shri Khaparde: (a) Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state the number of bone crushing factories in India and the names of the States where they are located?

(b) How many tons of bones were crushed during the years 1948, 1949 and 1950 and to what uses this bone powder was put or how much of it was exported to foreign countries?

(c) How many maunds or tons of bones are crushed by these machines in twelve hours?

(d) Are these machines imported from abroad or are manufactured in our country?

(e) Was any quantity of bone powder imported from foreign countries?

(f) If so, what was the year of import, what are the names of countries and what was the quantity and the purpose for which it was utilised?

The Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Thirumala Rao): (a) There are 51 bone-crushing factories in India. A list of their names and their location is placed on the Table of the House. [See Appendix XXII, annexure No. 13.]

(b) From the information available, the quantities of bones crushed in the different years are estimated as follows:

Year	Quantity
1948	55,000 tons
1949	65,000 "
1950	1,10,000 "

The bone powder (Bone-meal) is used for manuring and its export to foreign countries is not allowed.

(c) The quantity of bones crushed in 12 hours depends on the size of the Dis-Integrator and fineness of the product desired. With a machine of 12", 1½ tons can be crushed entirely into bone-meal in 12 hours while a machine of 17" will crush about 2½ tons in about the same time.

(d) The machines used in the factories at present are mostly imported. Recently, however, Indian made crushers have also appeared on the market.

(e) No.

(f) Does not arise.

#### NEW ROADS IN BHOPAL

\*3213. Thakur Lal Singh: (a) Will the Minister of Transport be pleased to state how many miles of new pucca roads were constructed in the State of Bhopal during the years 1948-49, 1949-50 and 1950-51?

(b) How much money was spent thereon?

The Minister of States, Transport and Railways (Shri Gopaldaswami): (a) and (b). A statement containing the information required is laid on the Table of the House.

#### STATEMENT

*New pucca roads constructed and the expenditure incurred thereon in the State of Bhopal during the years 1948-49, 1949-50 and 1950-51.*

The construction of four new pucca roads, aggregating 46 miles in length, was taken up in 1948-49. The progress and expenditure during the years 1948-49, 1949-50, and 1950-51 was as follows:—

Year	No. of miles completed	Expenditure Rs. Lakhs	Remarks
1948-49	Nil	1.32	Survey, investigation, and collection of materials in progress.
1949-50	3	2.57	Collection of materials in progress in other stretches.
1950-51	9	1.79	Work in progress in other stretches.
	12	5.68	

#### NATIONALISATION OF AIRWAYS

\*3214. Shri Biyani: (a) Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state what is exactly the position in regard to the nationalisation of airways in India?

(b) Did the Government of India, at any time, consider seriously the nationalisation of Deccan Airways?

(c) If so, what were the reasons which made Government to give it up?

(d) What were the recommendations of the Air Transport Enquiry Committee in regard to this?

The Minister of Communications (Shri Kidwai): (a) to (c). I draw the attention of the hon. Member to yesterday's discussion in the House when Government's proposals were explained.

(d) A copy of the Report has been supplied to the hon. Member.

#### CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES

\*3215. Thakur Lal Singh: Will the Minister of States be pleased to state:

(a) how many Co-operative Societies exist in the State of Bhopal at the

present time and their authorized capital;

(b) how many are under liquidation;

(c) what amount of such Societies has been accounted for as Bad Debt; and

(d)\* how many new Co-operative Societies were formed in the year 1950 and what is their capital? .

**The Minister of States, Transport and Railways (Shri Gopalaswami):**

(a) There are 1,055 Co-operative Societies in Bhopal at present out of which 280 are working with a capital of Rs. 4,95,000.

(b) 775 Societies are under liquidation.

(c) and (d). Information is being collected and will be placed on the Table of the House as soon as possible.

#### SURPLUS 'GOAR'

\*3216. **Shri Raj Bahadur:** (a) Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state whether any quantity of surplus 'Goar' is lying in Rajasthan?

(b) If so, what is the quantity of such surplus 'Goar'?

(c) For how long has it been so lying as surplus?

(d) Has any quantity of 'Goar' been imported from Pakistan during the last two years and if so, how much?

**The Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Thirumala Rao):** (a) No.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

(d) Figures of imports of 'Goar' from Pakistan are not recorded separately in the trade accounts and hence the required information is not available.

#### MOVEMENT OF PULSES

\*3217. **Shri Raj Bahadur:** (a) Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state whether the movement of pulses is free and un-restricted all over India excepting one State, namely, Rajasthan?

(b) If so, what are the reasons and justification for this policy of making an exception in the case of Rajasthan?

**The Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Thirumala Rao):** (a) No. In Hyderabad State also.

(b) In these two States the ban is allowed to continue because of their difficult food position.

#### DAMAGE TO CROPS

\*3218. **Shri R. C. Upadhyaya:** Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) the area affected by recent rains and hailstorms in Alwar and Bharatpur Districts of Rajasthan;

(b) the damage caused to the standing crops of wheat and barley in this area;

(c) the damage caused to the crops stocked in the barns; and

(d) whether Government propose to give some relief to the hard-pressed cultivators in these districts?

**The Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Thirumala Rao):**

(a) to (c). Preliminary reports received by the Rajasthan Government show that damage has been caused by rains and hailstorms in three Tehsils each of Alwar and Bharatpur Districts. The damage is reported to be particularly heavy in 24 villages of Thana Gazi Tehsil of Alwar and a few villages of Deeg Tehsil of Bharatpur, and varies from 12½ per cent. to 75 per cent. of the crop in different areas.

(d) The relief to be given to the cultivators will be decided by the Rajasthan Government when further details of the damage are received.

#### कपास उत्पादन योजनाएँ

\*३२१९. श्री खार० देव० तिवारी :

(क) क्या कच्चा तथा कुचि मंत्री यह बतलाने की कृपा करेंगे कि चालू वर्ष में विविध कपास उत्पादन योजनाओं के लिए किन्तनी धन राशि निर्याक्ति की गयी है।

(ख) किन किन राज्यों में कपास के उत्पादन में वृद्धि की जा रही है ?

#### COTTON PRODUCTION SCHEMES

[\*3219. **Shri R. S. Tewari:** (a) Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state the amount of money earmarked for various cotton production schemes in the current year?

(b) In which State is the cultivation of cotton being intensified?]

**The Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Thirumala Rao):**

(a) and (b). A statement, giving details of the loans and grants sanctioned for the various States where increased cotton production schemes are to be implemented during 1951-52, is placed on the Table of the House.

## STATEMENT

States	Grants	Loans
	Rs.	Rs.
Punjab	2,17,468	2,00,000
P.E.P.S.U.	69,153	2,40,000
Madras	*	10,00,000
Hyderabad	33,638	12,00,000
Bhopal	52,200	2,90,000
Madhya Bharat	1,33,854	3,60,000
Mysore	25,692	1,00,000
Uttar Pradesh	1,08,778	nil
Bombay	3,11,339	nil
Madhya Pradesh	1,29,344	8,00,000
Saurashtra	48,186	nil
Rajasthan	63,030	nil

\*Not yet available

## ARRESTS IN MANIPUR

\*3220. **Shri R. K. Chaudhuri:** (a) Will the Minister of States be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the General Secretary, ex-President and other executive of the State Congress of Manipur State were recently arrested under orders of Manipur Government and if so, under what circumstances was this action taken?

(b) How many persons have been detained in Manipur under the Preventive Detention Act or any other Ordinance or law on the ground that they belonged to Communist Party of India?

(c) How many of them were associated with criminal and violent activities?

**The Minister of States, Transport and Railways (Shri Gopaldaswami):**

(a) Yes. On March 2, 1951, a group of persons belonging to the State Congress held a meeting on the Gandhi maidan opposite to the Manipur Industrial and Cultural Exhibition organised by the Chief Commissioner and started delivering objectionable speeches. This caused considerable annoyance to the people who came to visit the Exhibition and a breach of the peace was apprehended. The Superintendent of Police went to the Gandhi maidan and asked the people assembled there to disperse. Although most of the people dispersed, the principal organisers refused to do so. The meeting was then declared unlawful and seven persons were arrested and sent up for trial under sections 151 and 290 of the Indian Penal Code.

(b) and (c). The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House as soon as possible.

## NATURAL RESOURCES OF CHILKA LAKE

\*3221. **Shri B. K. Pani:** (a) Will the Minister of Transport be pleased to state whether Government have considered the question of utilising vast natural resources of the great Chilka Lake in the State of Orissa?

(b) Has any enquiry or investigation been conducted in this respect and if so, do Government propose to place the report on the Table of the House?

**The Minister of States, Transport and Railways (Shri Gopaldaswami):** (a) and (b). It is not clear what exactly the hon. Member has in mind. If he is referring to the possibility of utilising Chilka Lake for purposes of inland navigation, the matter is one for the consideration of the Government of Orissa. The Government of India have not, so far, made any inquiry or investigation in this connection.

## INLAND NAVIGATION

\*3222. **Shri B. K. Pani:** Will the Minister of Transport be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to lay on the Table of the House the report of Mr. Otto Popper, an inland navigation expert;

(b) whether Mr. Otto visited the Chilka Lake in the State of Orissa and if not, why not;

(c) whether he had visited the Baitarani and Brahmani Rivers which are important sources of transport in the State of Orissa; and

(d) whether Government have under consideration any specific plan to develop the internal River Transport in the State of Orissa?

**The Minister of States, Transport and Railways (Shri Gopaldaswami):**

(a) Mr. Otto Popper submitted his report to the E.C.A.F.E. who will publish it in due course. Two copies of the report have been placed in the Library of the House.

(b) No. In view of the shortness of Mr. Popper's stay in India, his visits had to be confined to a few of the more important navigational systems in the country.

(c) Mr. Popper paid a brief visit to the lower reaches of the Rivers Brahmani and Baitarani in the course of his visit to the Mahanadi Delta.

(d) Apart from the improvement in navigability of the river Mahanadi as part of the Hirakud Dam project, the Government of India have no other plan under consideration.

## AIR COMPANIES

\*3223. **Dr. Deahmukh:** (a) Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state whether there is any proposal for raising of the fares by air companies?

(b) Is it a fact that the Himalayan Aviation Ltd., have made a good profit and if so, what is the amount of profit made by them since the beginning?

(c) Are there any applications received by Government for night services from any of the air companies and if so, which are those companies who have applied and for what routes?

**The Minister of Communications (Shri Kidwai):** (a) There is no specific proposal for a general increase in air fares, but the matter is under examination by Government.

(b) The financial return submitted by the company for the period 15th October to the 31st December, 1949 shows that they incurred a loss of Rs. 49,137/12/- during the period. The returns for 1950 have not yet been received.

(c) I lay on the Table a statement giving the required information. [See Appendix XXII, annexure No. 14.]

## POSTAL FACILITIES DURING GENERAL ELECTIONS

\*3224. **Shri Kamath:** (a) Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state whether postal facilities are being considered with a view to enabling candidates at the ensuing General Elections to contact, cheaply and quickly, the very large body of electors, through circulars and letters; and

(b) If so, what are the various postal facilities and concessions?

**The Minister of Communications (Shri Kidwai):** (a) Yes.

(b) No decision has yet been reached.

## COCHIN PORT

215. **Shri Sanjivayya:** Will the Minister of Transport be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of India have decided to improve the Cochin port;

(b) if so, at what cost; and

(c) when the work will commence in this respect at that port?

**The Minister of States, Transport and Railways (Shri Gopaldaswami):** (a) Yes. The present plan for the

improvement of the port mainly consists of the construction of the main wharf frontage and a new transit shed.

(b) Rs. 46.41 lakhs approximately.

(c) The work has already commenced and will, it is hoped, be completed early in 1952-53.

## SUPERANNUATED STAFF

216. **Shri Sidhva:** Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) the number and categories of staff who are superannuated but are still in the service of the Ministries of Food and Agriculture; and

(b) the reasons for retaining their services?

**The Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Thirumala Rao):**

(a) Class I—4,

Class III—2,

Total—6.

(b) In the interest of public service.

## RESERVATION OF ACCOMMODATION

217. **Prof. K. T. Shah:** Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state whether there is any system of priority or preference, in reserving accommodation on Railway Trains for (i) Public Servants; (ii) Members of Public Bodies like the Legislatures in India; and (iii) for those like leaders of Railway Employees' Federation travelling on public business in regard to the Railways in India?

**The Minister of States, Transport and Railways (Shri Gopaldaswami):** A limited number of Upper Class berths is set apart on important trains ex-Delhi for Government Officers and their personal attendants travelling on duty at short notice.

Hon. Members of Parliament have the privilege of purchasing tickets and booking accommodation for rail journeys in connection with Sessions of Parliament up to 30 days in advance as against the usual period of 10 days allowed to the public.

No other preference is accorded in reserving accommodation in Railway trains.

## CHARGE FOR CANCELLATION OF AIR RESERVATION AND TICKETS

218. **Prof. K. T. Shah:** (a) Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state whether it is a fact that a charge for cancellation of air reservation and tickets is levied by the

principal Air Transport Lines operating in India, but varying in proportion to the period of notice to the Air line concerned for such cancellation?

(b) If so, what was the amount of receipts derived from this source by the principal Air Transport Services operating in India in 1947-48 (post-partition), 1948-49, and 1949-50?

(c) Is there any system of priority or preference in reserving accommodation by air lines operating in India for (i) Public Servants, (ii) Members of Public Bodies like the Legislatures in

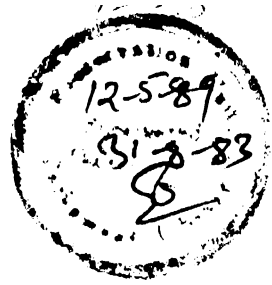
India; or (iii) others travelling on public business?

**The Minister of Communications (Shri Kidwai):** (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) I lay on the Table a statement giving the required information. [See Appendix XXII, annexure No. 15.]

(c) Yes, Sir. Under arrangements with certain Indian Air Transport Companies, a certain number of passages on some of their services are held in reserve for Government bookings up to a specified time.

Tuesday, 17th April, 1951



# PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(Part II—Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

OFFICIAL REPORT

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VOLUME X, 1951

(31st March, 1951 to 20th April, 1951)

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Third Session  
of the  
PARLIAMENT OF INDIA

1950-51



## CONTENTS

*Volume X—from 31st March, 1951 to 30th April, 1951.*

### SATURDAY, 31ST MARCH, 1951—

	<i>Columns</i>
<b>Motion for Adjournment—</b>	
Anglo-American Resolution <i>re</i> Kashmir . . . . .	5504—65
<b>Papers laid on the Table—</b>	
Minutes of Meetings of Estimates Committee . . . . .	5565
<b>Representation of the People (No. 2) Bill—</b>	
Presentation of Report of Select Committee . . . . .	5566
Supply of lists of Notices of Cut motions to Members . . . . .	5566—67
Business of the House . . . . .	5567—68
General Budget—List of Demands . . . . .	5568—5667
Demand No. 1—Ministry of Commerce and Industry. . . . .	5568—5667
Demand No. 2—Industries . . . . .	5568—5667
Demand No. 3—Commercial Intelligence and Statistics . . . . .	5568—5667

### MONDAY, 2ND APRIL, 1951—

<b>Point of Privilege—</b>	
Publication of Ganganath Committee Report on Purchase of Sugar . . . . .	5668
<b>Papers laid on the Table—</b>	
Notifications issued under Central Excises and Salt Act, 1944 . . . . .	5669
<b>Elections to Committees—</b>	
Standing Committees for the Ministries of Rehabilitation, States, Transport (other than Roads) and Works, Production and Supply . . . . .	5669—70
Trade Unions Bill and Labour Relations Bill—Presentation of Reports of Committee on Petitions . . . . .	5671
General Budget—List of Demands . . . . .	5671—5759
Demand No. 1—Ministry of Commerce and Industry . . . . .	5671—5759
Demand No. 2—Industries . . . . .	5671—5759
Demand No. 3—Commercial Intelligence and Statistics . . . . .	5671—5759
Business of the House . . . . .	5759—61

### TUESDAY, 3RD APRIL, 1951—

<b>Motion for Adjournment—</b>	
Restoration of cut in foodgrain ration . . . . .	5762—63
General Budget—List of Demands . . . . .	5763—5877
Demand No. 72—Ministry of States. . . . .	5763—5849
Demand No. 73—Territorial and Political Pensions . . . . .	5763—5849
Demand No. 74—Kutch . . . . .	5763—5849
Demand No. 75—Himachal Pradesh . . . . .	5764—5849
Demand No. 76—Bilaspur . . . . .	5764—5850

**TUESDAY, 3rd APRIL, 1951—Contd.****General Budget—List of Demands—Contd.**

Demand No. 77—Bhopal . . . . .	5764—5850
Demand No. 78—Vindhya Pradesh . . . . .	5764—5850
Demand No. 79—Manipur . . . . .	5764—5850
Demand No. 80—Tripura . . . . .	5764—5850
Demand No. 81—Relations with States . . . . .	5765—5850
Demand No. 82—Ministry of Transport . . . . .	5851—75
Demand No. 83—Ports and Pilotage . . . . .	5851—76
Demand No. 84—Lighthouses and Lightships . . . . .	5851—76
Demand No. 85—Central Road Fund . . . . .	5851—77
Demand No. 86—Communications (including National Highways) . . . . .	5851—77

**WEDNESDAY, 4TH APRIL, 1951—****Elections to Committees—**

Standing Finance Committee and Central Advisory Council for Railways . . . . .	5878—79
Resolution <i>re</i> Elected Legislatures and Popular Ministries in Part C States . . . . .	5879—84
Resolution <i>re</i> measures for increased food production . . . . .	5884—5980
Business of the House . . . . .	5980—81

**THURSDAY, 5TH APRIL, 1951—****Papers laid on the Table—**

Notification No. 30—Income-Tax . . . . .	5980
--	------

**Point of Privilege—**

Publication of Ganganath Committee Report for Purchase of Sugar . . . . .	5980—83
---	---------

Business of the House . . . . .	5984
---------------------------------	------

**General Budget—List of Demands . . . . . 5984—6105**

Demand No. 51 —Ministry of Home Affairs . . . . .	5984—6064
Maintenance of Destitute families of Political Sufferers. . . . .	5990—6062
Scheduled Tribes in Legislatures . . . . .	6015—63
Demand No. 52—Cabinet . . . . .	5984—6064
Demand No. 53—Police . . . . .	5984—6064
Maintenance of Destitute families of Political Sufferers . . . . .	6029—62
Demand No. 54—Census . . . . .	5984—6064
Demand No. 55—Civil Defence . . . . .	5985—6064
Demand No. 56—Delhi . . . . .	5985—6065
Demand No. 57—Ajmer . . . . .	5985—6065
Demand No. 58—Andaman and Nicobar Islands . . . . .	5985—6065
Demand No. 61—Ministry of Labour . . . . .	6065—6105

**FRIDAY, 6TH APRIL, 1951—**

Business of the House . . . . .	6006—6108
---------------------------------	-----------

**Elections to Committees—**

Standing Finance Committee for Railways and Standing Committee for Roads . . . . .	6108
--	------

General Budget—List of Demands . . . . .	6109—37, 6138—6217
Demand No. 40—Ministry of Food and Agriculture . . . . .	6109—6137, 6138—6217
Demand No. 41—Forest . . . . .	6109—6137, 6138—6217
Demand No. 42—Survey of India . . . . .	6109—37, 6138—6217
Demand No. 43—Botanical Survey . . . . .	6109—37, 6138—6217

FRIDAY, 6TH APRIL, 1951—Contd.

## General Budget—List of Demands—Contd.

Demand No. 44—Zoological Survey . . . . .	6138—6217
Demand No. 45—Agriculture . . . . .	6138—6217
Demand No. 46—Civil Veterinary Services . . . . .	6110—37, 6138—6217
Demand No. 47—Indian Dairy Department . . . . .	6138—6217
Demand No. 106—Capital Outlay on Forests . . . . .	6138—6217

## Papers laid on the Table—

Ganganath Committee Report on Purchase of Sugar . . . . .	6138
---	------

SATURDAY, 7TH APRIL, 1951—

## Motion for Adjournment—

Open Blackmarket in Sugar . . . . .	6218—19
Extension Order <i>re</i> Income-Tax Investigation Commission . . . . .	6219—20
Extension of Session and change of time for sittings . . . . .	6220—21
General Budget—List of Demands . . . . .	6221—6333
Demand No. 40—Ministry of Food and Agriculture. Policy . . . . .	6221—6332 6221—6332
Grow More Food Policy . . . . .	6285—6332
Demand No. 41—Forest . . . . .	6221—6332
Demand No. 42—Survey of India . . . . .	6221—6332
Demand No. 43—Botanical Survey . . . . .	6221—6333
Demand No. 44—Zoological Survey . . . . .	6221—6333
Demand No. 45—Agriculture . . . . .	6221—6333
Demand No. 46—Civil Veterinary Services . . . . .	6221—6333
Demand No. 47—Indian Dairy Department . . . . .	6221—6333
Demand No. 106—Capital Outlay on Forest . . . . .	6221—6333

MONDAY, 9TH APRIL, 1951—

## Motions for Adjournment—

Police Firing in Jhansi . . . . .	6334
Crossing the 38th Parallel by U.N. Forces in Korea . . . . .	6335

## Papers laid on the Table—

Amendments to Delhi Motor Vehicles Rules, 1940 . . . . .	6335
Amendments to Coorg Motor Vehicles Rules, 1940 . . . . .	6336
Statement <i>re</i> Jeep Contract . . . . .	6336—40

## Elections to Committees—

Public Accounts Committee and Estimates Committee . . . . .	6341
Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill—Introduced . . . . .	6341
Coal Mines Provident Fund and Bonus Schemes (Amendment) Bill—Intro- duced . . . . .	6342
Cinematograph Bill—Introduced . . . . .	6342

## Business of the House—

Catching the Speaker's eye . . . . .	6342—44
Hours of sitting . . . . .	6345—46
General Budget—List of Demands . . . . .	6346
Demand No. 4—Ministry of Communications . . . . .	6347—6410
Demand No. 5—Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department . . . . .	6347—6410
Demand No. 6—Meteorology . . . . .	6347—6410
Demand No. 7—Overseas communications Service . . . . .	6347—6410

MONDAY, 9TH APRIL, 1951—Contd.

General Budget—List of Demands— Contd.

Demand No. 8—Aviation . . . . .	6347—6410
Demand No. 93—Capital Outlay on Indian Posts and Telegraphs (not met from Revenue) . . . . .	6348—6411
Demand No. 95—Capital Outlay on Civil Aviation . . . . .	6348—6411
Demand No. 59—Ministry of Information and Broadcasting . . . . .	6411—70
Demand No. 60—Broadcasting . . . . .	6411—70
Demand No. 107—Capital Outlay on Broadcasting. . . . .	6411—70

TUESDAY, 10TH APRIL, 1951—

Statement re Income-Tax Investigation Commission . . . . .	6472—75
--	---------

Papers laid on the Table—

Specification of Scheduled Tribes . . . . .	6475
---	------

General Budget—List of Demands . . . . .	6475—6555
Demand No. 21— Ministry of Finance . . . . .	6478—6538
Revaluation of Indian Rupee . . . . .	6484—6537
Financial and Economic Policy . . . . .	6484—6537
Sales tax in Delhi State . . . . .	6484—6537
Failure to revalue the rupee . . . . .	6484—6538
Failure of economy drive . . . . .	6484—6538
Failure to check inflation . . . . .	6484—6538
Condition of middle classes . . . . .	6484—6538
Evasion of Income-tax . . . . .	6485—6538
Policy underlying Audit . . . . .	6485—6538
Sterling Balances. . . . .	6485—6538
Grants-in-aid to States . . . . .	6485—6538
Results of devaluation . . . . .	6485—6538
Demand No. 22—Customs . . . . .	6478—6538
Indian Customs Service . . . . .	6484—6537
Demand No. 23—Union Excise Duties . . . . .	6478—6538
Demand No. 24—Taxes on Income including Corporation Tax . . . . .	6479—6539
Demand No. 25—Opium . . . . .	6479—6539
Demand No. 26—Stamps . . . . .	6479—6539
Demand No. 27—Payments to other Governments, Departments, etc. on account of the administration of Agency subjects and management of Treasuries . . . . .	6479—6539
Demand No. 28—Audit . . . . .	6479—6539
Demand No. 29—Joint Stock Companies . . . . .	6480—6539
Demand No. 30—Miscellaneous Departments . . . . .	6480—6540
Demand No. 31—Currency . . . . .	6480—6540
Demand No. 32—Mint . . . . .	6480—6540
Demand No. 33—Superannuation Allowances and Pensions . . . . .	6480—6540
Demand No. 34—Miscellaneous . . . . .	6481—6540
Demand No. 35—Grants-in-aid to States . . . . .	6481—6540
Grant of Equitable Subvention . . . . .	6484—6537
Demand No. 36—Miscellaneous adjustments between the Union and State Governments . . . . .	6481—6541
Demand No. 37—Resettlement and Development . . . . .	6481—6541
Demand No. 38—Pre-partition Payments . . . . .	6481—6541

TUESDAY, 10TH APRIL, 1951—Contd.

## General Budget—List of Demands—Contd.

Demand No. 39—Extraordinary Payments . . . . .	6482—6541
Demand No. 97—Capital Outlay on the India Security Press . . . . .	6482—6541
Demand No. 98—Capital Outlay on Industrial Development . . . . .	6482—6541
Demand No. 99—Capital Outlay on Currency . . . . .	6482—6542
Demand No. 100—Capital Outlay on Mints . . . . .	6482—6542
Demand No. 101—Commuted Value of Pensions . . . . .	6483—6542
Demand No. 102—Payments to Retrenched Personnel . . . . .	6483—6542
Demand No. 103—Capital Outlay on Schemes of Government Trading . . . . .	6483—6542
Demand No. 104—Capital Outlay on Development . . . . .	6483—6543
Demand No. 105—Loans and Advances by the Central Government . . . . .	6483—6543
Demand No. 62.— Ministry of Law . . . . .	6553— 54
Demand No. 63— Administration of Justice . . . . .	6553— 55
Demand No. 69— Department of Parliamentary Affairs . . . . .	6553— 55
Demand No. 92— Parliament . . . . .	6553— 55

WEDNESDAY, 11TH APRIL, 1951—

Business of the House . . . . .	6556—59
Appropriation (No. 2) Bill—Introduced . . . . .	6559
Finance Bill—Discussion on Motion to refer to Select Committee—Not concluded	6560—6655

THURSDAY, 12TH APRIL, 1951—

## Motion for Adjournment—

Discontent among Bank Employees . . . . .	6656—59
Laying of Adaptation Order on the Table . . . . .	6659—62
Enhancement of Postal Rates . . . . .	6662—64
Suspension of Sub-rule (2) of Rule 22 of Rules of Procedure . . . . .	6664—66
Parliament Library Bill—Introduced . . . . .	6666
Insurance (Amendment) Bill—Introduced . . . . .	6666—67
Rehabilitation Finance Administration (Amendment) Bill—Introduced . . . . .	6667
Indian Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill— Introduced . . . . .	6667
All India Bar Councils Bill—Introduced . . . . .	6667—68
Muslim Wakfs Bill—Introduced . . . . .	6668
Dowry Bill—Introduced . . . . .	6668
Essential Supplies (Temporary Powers) Amendment Bill—Introduced . . . . .	6668
Coffee Market Expansion (Amendment) Bill—Introduced . . . . .	6669
Dowry Restraint Bill (by <i>Shrimati Jayashri</i> )—Introduced . . . . .	6669
Dowry Restraint Bill (by <i>Shrimati Uma Nehru</i> )—Introduced . . . . .	6669
Sea Customs (Amendment) Bill—Introduced . . . . .	6669—70
Food and Drugs Bill—Introduced . . . . .	6670
Muslim Kazis Bill—Introduced . . . . .	6670
Prohibition of Manufacture and Import of Hydrogenated Vegetable Oils Bill—Postponed . . . . .	6670—80
Useful Cattle Preservation Bill—Postponed . . . . .	6680—85
Training and Employment Bill—Motion to refer to Select Committee—Not concluded . . . . .	6685—6733

**SATURDAY, 14TH APRIL, 1951—**

Death of Shri Rasoolkhan Pathan . . . . .	8734
Statement by the Prime Minister re Ruler of Baroda . . . . .	8734—37
Papers laid on the Table—	
Provisional totals of 1951 Census . . . . .	8737
Notification under section 4A of the Indian Tariff Act, 1934 . . . . .	8737
Air Transport Inquiry Committee Report . . . . .	8737
Rajghat Samadhi Bill—Introduced . . . . .	8737
Indian Tariff (Second Amendment) Bill—Introduced . . . . .	8738
Finance Bill—Referred to Select Committee . . . . .	8738—6809

**MONDAY, 16TH APRIL, 1951—**

Statement by Prime Minister re Bihar Food Situation . . . . .	8810—11
Appropriation (No. 2) Bill—Passed . . . . .	8811—13
Motion re Report of Air Transport Inquiry Committee—Discussion on Motion —Concluded . . . . .	8813—87

**TUESDAY, 17TH APRIL, 1951—**

Visva-Bharati Bill—Introduced . . . . .	8888—89
Minimum Wages (Amendment) Bill—Passed, as amended . . . . .	8889—8967
Coal Mines Safety (Stowing) Amendment Bill—Discussion on Motion to con- sider—Not concluded . . . . .	8967—71

**WEDNESDAY, 18TH APRIL, 1951—**

Coal Mines Safety (Stowing) Amendment Bill—Passed, as amended . . . . .	6972—92
Inland Steam-Vessels (Amendment) Bill—Passed, as amended . . . . .	6993—7021
Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill—Discussion on Motion to consider—Not concluded . . . . .	7021—39

**THURSDAY, 19TH APRIL, 1951—**

Employment of Children (Amendment) Bill—Introduced . . . . .	7040
Notaries Bill—Introduced . . . . .	7040
Business of the House—	
Change in hours of sitting . . . . .	7041—42
Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill—Passed, as amended . . . . .	7042—7119
Supreme Court Advocates (Practice in High Courts) Bill—Discussion on Mo- tion to consider—Not concluded . . . . .	7120—25

**FRIDAY, 20TH APRIL, 1951—**

Papers laid on the Table—	
Delhi Road Transport Authority (Audit) Rules . . . . .	7126
Notifications amending Punjab Motor Vehicles Rules . . . . .	7126
Notifications amending Delhi Motor Vehicles Rules . . . . .	7126—27
Election to Committees—	
Standing Committees for Ministries of Commerce and Industry, Home Affairs, and Works, Production and Supply . . . . .	7127—29
Supreme Court Advocates (Practice in High Courts) Bill—Passed, as amended . . . . .	7129—53
Codes of Civil and Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill—Passed, as amended . . . . .	7153—76
Code of Civil Procedure (Second Amendment) Bill—Passed . . . . .	7176—79
Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial Bill—Discussion on Motion to consider— Not concluded . . . . .	7179—97

**THE**  
**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

(Part II—Proceedings other than Questions and Answers.)  
**OFFICIAL REPORT**

6888

6889

**PARLIAMENT OF INDIA**

Tuesday, 17th April, 1951

The House met at a Quarter to Eleven  
of the Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

(See Part I)

11-52 A.M.

**VISVA-BHARATI BILL**

مولانا آزاد - میں تحریر کرتا  
ہوں کہ ایک بل پیش کرنے کی  
اجازت دی جائے۔ اس بل کا مقصد  
یہ ہے کہ وشو بھارتی انسٹیٹیوشن کو  
نیشنل امہارتھس کا ایک انسٹیٹیوشن  
مان لیا جائے اور ایسا انتظام کیا  
جائے کہ وہ ایک یونیورسٹی تہجنگ  
اور ریزیڈنشل یونیورسٹی کی حیثیت  
سے کام کرے۔

[The Minister of Education (Maulana Azad): I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill to declare the institution known as "Visva-Bharati" to be an institution of national importance and to provide for its functioning as a unitary, teaching and residential university.]

Mr. Speaker: The question is:

"That leave granted to introduce a Bill to declare the institution known as 'Visva-Bharati' to

be an institution of national importance and to provide for its functioning as a unitary, teaching and residential university."

The motion was adopted.

مولانا آزاد - میں بل پیش کرتا

ہوں۔

[Maulana Azad: I introduce the Bill.]

**MINIMUM WAGES (AMENDMENT)**  
BILL—Concl'd.

Mr. Speaker: The House will now proceed with the further consideration of the following motion moved by the hon. Shri Jagjivan Ram on the 24th March, 1951:

"That the Bill further to amend the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, be taken into consideration."

Dr. M. M. Das has tabled a motion that the further consideration of the Bill be postponed till the Planning Commission makes its report. Is the hon. Member keen to move the motion?

Dr. M. M. Das (West Bengal): Yes, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: Before I permit his motion I should like to know from him briefly why he wants to postpone consideration of this Bill.

Dr. M. M. Das: My reasons are firstly, that the Labour Ministry itself has referred the matter to the Planning Commission and the report of the Planning Commission on the reference of the Labour Ministry has not yet been published. They have not submitted any report. Secondly, my contention is that unless and until the sale prices of the different agricultural produce in the country are fixed, the fixation of minimum wages for agricultural labour cannot be undertaken. These are the two considerations which have inspired me to table the motion.

**Mr. Speaker:** I will permit the motion.

**Dr. M. M. Das:** I beg to move:

"That the further consideration of the Bill be postponed till the Planning Commission submit their reports."

**Mr. Speaker:** I do not think any further argument is necessary. Does he want to urge any further argument?

**Dr. M. M. Das:** I would like to dilate upon it.

**Mr. Speaker:** The question is:

"That the further consideration of the Bill be postponed till the Planning Commission submit their reports."

The motion was negatived.

**Mr. Speaker:** We will now continue further consideration of the main motion.

12 NOON.

**Shri Venkataraman (Madras):** I am grateful to the House for having taken up this motion for consideration because if this Bill is not now passed in the amended form in which we want it, we feel that all the notifications which are about to be issued by the State Governments fixing minimum wages in respect of Part I of the Schedule will become void and we will have another judgment very similar to the one we have just now had from the Supreme Court. The minimum wage legislation was introduced in 1948 and in some cases minimum wages have been fixed. In some others there are committees which are functioning and which are about to report, as a result of which minimum wages in other industries are also going to be fixed. If at this stage this Bill had been postponed, I am afraid that all the work which we had already undertaken and all the principles for which this House had stood committed to for all these years would have been thrown to the winds. I am again grateful to you, Sir, and to the House for having taken up this Bill for consideration.

The hon. Minister in introducing this Bill made it appear as if he were only asking for the extension of time for the implementation of the minimum wages legislation. But a closer scrutiny of the Bill will disclose that there are four parts to this Bill. The first one asks for extension of time for the fixation of minimum wages in what is known as industrial establishments upto the period of 31st March, 1952.

The second part deals with agriculture. In the second part, instead of asking the House to fix a time within which agricultural wages should be fixed the hon. Minister has suggested in the amendment that the minimum wages for workers in agriculture may be fixed as and when it pleases the State Governments. Then there is another part of this same clause, that is, instead of fixing minimum wages for all classes of occupations and in all parts of the State, power is given to the State Government to fix minimum wages in respect of certain occupations only and in respect of certain areas only. I consider that parts two and three which I have just mentioned abridge the principles embodied in the Minimum Wages Act which we have already passed. The principle which we accepted when we passed the Minimum Wages Act of 1948 was that minimum wages should be fixed in respect of all occupations and in respect of the entire area and not left to the sweet will and pleasure of the State Governments who may fix minimum wages as and when they liked or in respect of certain occupations only or in respect of certain areas only.

[PANDIT THAKUR DAS BHARGAVA in the Chair.]

In this respect, I am afraid the hon. Minister has whittled down the original provisions of the Bill. Now, the fourth part of this Bill deals with those instances in which the State Government will introduce the principle of fixation of minimum wages after the coming into force of the Act of 1948. In this part, the amendment suggested by the Minister is that instead of saying that the appropriate Government will have two years to fix the minimum wages in respect of those notified occupations, the State Governments may be left without any time-limit. I am entirely in support of the last part of this Bill because unless there is some agitation on the part of the employees in the States asking for fixation of minimum wages in employment which is not already included in the Schedule, the State Governments are not likely to act, and if there is an agitation certainly they will act quickly. Therefore, from that point of view, it is unnecessary I think that two years' time limit should be fixed in respect of occupations which are not already included in the schedule.

After having analysed the several provisions of the Bill, I now proceed to point out that this minimum wage legislation has had a chequered history and one begins to doubt whether the Government is really serious about enforcing it. In the first place, the Government has not come forward with



any explanation as to why, notwithstanding the lapse of three years, minimum wages have not been fixed, or no attempt has been made to fix minimum wages, in several States. Section 28 of the present Act gives the power to the Central Government to issue instructions from time to time for the purpose of enforcing this minimum wage legislation, and notwithstanding that, no instructions appear to have been issued and I do not know whether the State Governments have disobeyed the instructions issued by the Central Government or what the real position is. My submission to you is that the Central Government has itself been somewhat lukewarm about this legislation. It has not exercised the powers it possesses under the Act. It has not got the State Governments to go ahead with this piece of legislation, so that the implementation could have been finished within the time prescribed by the Act.

There are a number of fallacies which are being trotted out and one such is the fallacy trotted out by my hon. friend Dr. Mono Mohan Das. The fundamental principle of any minimum wage legislation is that if an industry cannot afford to pay the minimum wages which are required for the barest necessities of life which will keep the body and soul of the worker together, that industry has no right to exist. If you cannot carry on agriculture without paying even the sustenance of the worker, if you cannot carry on agriculture without starving the poor man, if you cannot carry on agriculture without making him die inch by inch, then I have absolutely no hesitation in saying that agriculture may be closed.

**Shri Bharati (Madras):** Are you prepared to increase the price of agricultural products?

**Shri Venkataraman:** The question of price is different from the question of closing the agricultural industry. I know that in 1948 when the main Bill was being discussed my hon. friend Mr. Subramaniam and my hon. friend Mr. Alagesan were two of the people who very warmly supported that Bill in this House and said that at least the Government had come forward with this legislation, because at that time they found a lot of trouble in the Madras province over agricultural wages. (Interruption). I can quote. I know and I state this on full authority, because in the year 1947-48 there was a very great agrarian trouble in the Tanjore district, the richest rice-growing district of our province, and I personally went there in order to mediate and bring about a settlement between the *mirasdars* and the *kisans*.

It was done at the instance of the Congress Committee of Tamil Nad and my hon. friend Mr. Kala Venkatarao was then the Minister for Revenue. All of them know that, but for the interference of the prestige of the Congress and a few individuals, there would have been a conflagration in that district. It is now all right to forget the past and say that we need not fix minimum wages, because there is comparative quiet in that area. The comparative quiet has been achieved, not by your efforts but by the wild promises and by the persuasion of some of the leaders of the trade union movement in that part of the country. We went and told the workers there that they need not agitate and what they wanted to achieve by agitation we could get for them through legislation. We are now told that we can close agriculture instead of fixing minimum wages. This is hardly an attitude to be adopted by any responsible Members of this House. It does not fit them to say that just because the agitation has been smoothened by the efforts of responsible trade union men we need not fix minimum wages for any particular industry or agriculture.

Now, I pass on to another point. It is reported in the newspapers that the Planning Commission said that it would be difficult to fix minimum wages for agriculture at the present stage. Beyond that, the Planning Commission has not said that you should not fix minimum wages for agriculture. In order to meet the objection of the Planning Commission, I understand that the Government has come forward with this clause that the minimum wages may be fixed in respect of certain occupations and in respect of certain areas only. It is only to meet that objection that this amendment has been proposed by the hon. Minister and I therefore submit for your consideration that the very objection alleged to have been made by the Planning Commission has been met. I am also informed by the hon. Minister now in charge of this Bill that the Planning Commission has actually approved of this Bill and that it has given its blessings, so that Government can go ahead with the fixation of minimum wages in agriculture in respect of certain areas and in respect of certain selected occupations. Therefore, I want the House not to be misled into a supposed or imaginary objection alleged to be emanating from such a high authority as the Planning Commission.

**Shri Bharati:** We are not aware of its recommendations at all. I do not know how far the hon. Member's information is correct. We should have a copy of its report.

**Shri Venkataraman:** The hon. Minister will confirm what I say now.

Having said this, I feel that the Government ought to fix a date line for enforcing minimum wages in agriculture. As the Bill now stands, it leaves it entirely to the State Governments to fix minimum wages in agriculture as and when they choose. Such a discretion—wide as it is—entrusted to State Governments is not calculated as far as I can see to make for great progress in this respect or in respect of any other social legislation. In our day to day administration, we have found that the State Governments are liable to greater pressure from interests which influence them than the Central Government. (*An Hon. Member: Question.*) I say this with considerable hesitation, but I must express what passes in my mind. I cannot always repeat opinions and views held by others. I have to say what I feel and I have found, and it cannot be questioned, that the State Governments are subject to influence from interested parties. (*Shri Bharati:* It is very unfair to say that.) It is not unfair at all. I never make statements without authority. In the last session of Parliament, the hon. Shri Jagjivan Ram said that there had been objections and troubles from interested parties as far as provincial Governments were concerned, and that was why the legislation could not be implemented within time. I crave leave to refer to that portion and answer the questions which have been raised just now. This is what the hon. Minister said. I am unable to place my hands on the exact spot; so I shall mention it a little later and proceed to a more important point.

A consideration of this question leads us on to the next more important question: what is the use of the Central Government legislating for things which it has no power to enforce? If the Central Government passes any legislation, it should have the power to enforce that legislation in the event of the State Government not carrying it out. The clause providing for directions has been found to be useless. If the Central Government really wants that certain social legislation should be implemented by the States, then it must arm itself with the power to notify, as in this case, the minimum wages itself instead of allowing it to the State Governments.

Let me make this point clear. If we legislate that within 31st March 1953 minimum wages in agriculture should be fixed by all State Governments and if the State Governments do not do it within the time, I submit

that it is necessary in the legislation that you bring forward to arm yourself with the power to notify the minimum wages after the expiry of the time prescribed. This point of view had been supported by an editorial in the *Indian News Chronicle* last year when the hon. Minister came forward with his Bill for extension of time. The *Indian News Chronicle* said that unless the Central Government armed itself with powers to carry out the obligations which had been neglected by the State Governments, many of our legislations would be merely dead letter.

Therefore, my submission to this House is that not only this Bill should be passed, but that a time-limit should be fixed for the enforcement of the minimum wages in agriculture and in my view—I have also given an amendment—the time-limit should not exceed the 31st of March 1953. Along with that the Central Government should assume responsibility and the powers to implement the legislation if the State Governments neglect or fail to do it within the time prescribed.

I have nothing more to add. I would only say that this Bill is necessary or has been necessitated by the neglect and default of the State Governments and we hope and trust that at least within the time prescribed in this Bill the State Governments will be able to implement this legislation and fix minimum wages in the country.

**श्री चन्द्रिका राम:** मुझे खुशी है कि आज इस मौके पर आप ने मुझे थोड़ा वक्त दिया। यह सवाल आज से नहीं बल्कि आज से दस वर्ष पहले से भारत सरकार के सामने है। सन् १९४२ में इस सवाल को उठाया गया कि हिन्दुस्तान में जो खेती का काम करने वाले लोग हैं उन के लिये क्या किया जाय। इस सवाल पर जितनी प्रान्तीय सरकारें थीं और जो भारत सरकार थी सब का गौर होता रहा। बहुत से सम्मेलन हुए, बहुत सी मीटिंगें (meetings) हुईं और यह बात तय हुई कि इस के लिये कानून बनाया जाय। इसी मकसद को ले कर सन् १९४८ में भारत सरकार के श्रम विभाग के मंत्री ने यह मिनिमम वेजेज ऐक्ट (Minimum Wages Act) इंट्रोड्यूस (introduce)

किया और इस माननीय हाउस (House) ने उसे पास किया। अब उस में दो वर्ष का समय दिया गया था, यह कहा गया था कि सन् १९५१ के १५ मार्च तक सारी स्टेट (State) सरकारों को इस को इम्प्लीमेंट (implement) कर देना चाहिये। कहा यह जाता है कि इस के लिये बहुत दिक्कतें हैं, बहुत सी कठिनाइयां हैं, और इसी मसले को छे कर प्लानिंग कमीशन (Planning Commission) के सामने जो बहुत सी बातों पर विचार कर रही है, इस को दिया गया। प्लानिंग कमीशन ने जो अपना विचार दिया है उस के विषय में लोगों का यह गलत ख्याल है कि प्लानिंग कमीशन खेतिहर मजदूरों की मजदूरी तय करने के खिलाफ है। पहली बात तो यह है कि हिन्दुस्तान खेती वाला देश है और इस में काम करने वाले लोगों की संख्या बहुत है। अभी प्लानिंग कमीशन की जो रिपोर्ट (report) तैयार हुई है उस में यह बताया गया है कि इस पर काम करने वाले लोग करीब १७ करोड़ के हैं। काम करने वालों की संख्या तीन करोड़ साढ़े तीन करोड़ के लग भग रखी गयी है और उन के परिवार का अन्दाजा लगाया जाय तो इस में १७ करोड़के लग भग आदमी आते हैं। आप आजरात दिन सम्मेलन करते हैं, कानफेन्स (conferences) करते हैं, और कहा करते हैं कि हर पहलू से खेती के काम में या कल कारखानों के प्रोडक्शन (Production) में वृद्धि की जाय। फिर आप यह कैसे भूल सकते हैं कि जो सब से बड़ी इंडस्ट्री (industry) खेती की है उस में काम करने वालों के लिए कुछ न किया जाय? आप इस बात को जानते हैं कि खेती में काम करने वाले मजदूरों के लिये आप कोई सुविधा अभी तक नहीं दे सके हैं।

उन के लिये न रहने का घर है, उन का घर जानवरों का घर है। अगर वे कहीं रहते हैं तो उसी घर में रहते हैं जहां कि बड़े बड़े जमींदारों के जानवर रहते हैं। इसलिये उन को तमाम बीमारियों की शिकायत है। आप ने उस रिपोर्ट को देखा होगा तो आप को मालूम होगा कि पहले उन को दो आने से लेकर चार पांच आने तक मजदूरी मिला करती थी। आज भी जब कि चीजों के दाम इतने बढ़ गये हैं उन को आठ आने से लेकर बारह आने और कुछ जगहों पर एक रुपया तक मजदूरी मिलती है। अब आप खुद इस बात को समझ सकते हैं कि हिन्दुस्तान में जहां इतनी कड़ी धूप है, जो इस तरह लगातार पानी बरसने वाली जगह है और जहां इस तरह की कड़ी सरदी में काम करना पड़ता है, वहां इन काम करने वाले मजदूरों को इतनी कम मजदूरी दी जाय तो कैसे वे अपने परिवार का पालन पोषण कर सकते हैं।

यही नहीं, आप को पता होना चाहिये कि अभी सन् १९५० की बात है कि जब हरिजन इनक्वायरी कमेटी (Harijan Enquiry Committee) के सम्बन्ध में हमें अपने प्रान्त के दरभंगा जिले में जाने का मौका मिला था और हम ने अपनी आंखों देखा कि दस परिवार १५० रुपये में बेचे गये। वह मुसहर जाति के थे जो एग्रीकल्चर लेबर (agriculture labour) है और जो खेती में काम करते हैं। एक किसान आता है और कुछ रुपया देकर दूसरे किसान से उन को खरीद लेता है। आप तो बड़ी बड़ी बातें कहते हैं कि हम वेलफेयर स्टेट (Welfare State) कायम कर रहे हैं। आप यह कहते हैं कि हमारी जो सरकार कायम हुई है वह शरीबों और मजदूरों के लिये कायम

[ श्री चन्द्रिका राय ]

हुई है। आप यह कहते हैं कि हम जो कुछ करने जा रहे हैं शरीरों के लिये और मजदूरों के लिए और जो हैव नाट्स (have-nots) है उन के लिए करने जा रहे हैं। लेकिन सरकार का रुख इस तरफ बहुत ही खराब है। प्रान्तीय सरकार यह समझती है कि चुनाव बहुत नज़दीक है। अगर इन की मजदूरी तय हुई तो हम को किसानों की तरफ से कठिनाई होगी। भारत सरकार का रुख भी कुछ अच्छा नहीं मालूम होता। प्लानिंग कमीशन की बात आप कहते हैं तो प्लानिंग कमीशन ने साफ़ तौर पर कहा है कि जहां मजदूरी कम हो, जहां मजदूरों की हालत खराब हो, वहां मजदूरी तय की जाय और सरकार इस के लिए काम करे तो वह सारे देश के लिए, सारे समाज के लिए एक बहुत बड़ी चीज़ होगी, एक बड़े मूनाफ़े की चीज़ होगी। यह सब के लिये लाभदायक होगी लेकिन हालत क्या है? आज आप देहातों में जाय तो आप को पता लगेगा कि यह बेचारे ३६५ दिनों में केवल १५० दिन ही किसी तरह काम करते हैं, बाक़ी समय यह बेकार रहा करते हैं। इन के लिए कोई इंडस्ट्री (industry) नहीं है, कोई ऐसा काम या उद्योग नहीं है जिस को वह अपनी छुट्टी के दिनों में कर सकें। सब से बड़ा सवाल उन के सामने यह है कि जिन १५० दिनों में यह काम करते हैं उन १५० दिनों में उन को काफ़ी मजदूरी नहीं मिलती और वे अपने बाल बच्चों का भरण पोषण नहीं कर पाते। इसलिये यह बात सब से आवश्यक है कि उन की मजदूरी तय की जाय।

अभी सरकार जो मिनिमम वेजेंज़ ऐक्ट का अमेंडमेंट बिल (Amendment Bill) हमारे सामने लाई है उस में प्रान्तीय

सरकारों पर यह डिस्क्रिशन (Discretion) छोड़ दिया है, उन के विचार पर यह बात छोड़ दी है कि जब वे ठीक समझें, जब वे उचित समझें, इन की मजदूरी कायम करें। हम समझते हैं कि यह सब से ग़लत चीज़ है। बहुत सी ऐसी चीज़ें हैं जो कि प्रान्तीय सरकारों के हाथ में रहती हैं जिन को वह ज्यादा जरूरी समझती हैं। मान लीजिये कि उन के सामने ग्रो-मोर-फ़ूड (Grow More Food) का सवाल है। यद्यपि यह प्रान्तीय सरकार के हाथ में है—पर जहां जैसी जरूरत होती है केन्द्रीय सरकार उस में हस्ताक्षेप करती है। इस लिये क्या यह जरूरी नहीं है कि, जसा कि अभी हमारे माननीय मित्र ने कहा है केन्द्रीय सरकार अपने हाथ में पावर (Power) ले और इस को जल्दी से जल्दी तय करे। हम जल्दी नहीं चाहते। हम चाहते हैं कि इस मसले को सोच कर, समझ कर और इस के इकानामिक कानसीक्वेंसेज (economic consequences) को समझकर सरकार तय करे। इसलिये हमारे बहुत से भाइयों ने और हम ने भी जो अमेंडमेंट (amendment) मूव (move) किया है उस में हम ने एक वर्ष का टाइम (time) और दिया है। मुझे मालूम है कि सरकार इस नतीजे पर पहुंची हुई है कि शायद ३१ दिसम्बर, १९५३ तक इस चीज़ को वह इम्प्लीमेंट (implement) करेगी। अगर यह बात सही होगी, तो हमें निहायत खुशी होगी। आखिर ३१ मार्च और ३१ दिसम्बर में इतने बड़े मसले के लिये यह कोई बहुत फ़क़ टाइम का नहीं है। दूसरी चीज़ जो मुझे इस के बाबत कहनी है वह यह है कि जो सब से बड़ा एक आब्जेक्शन (objection) लोगों के सामने आता है और कहा जाता है कि हमारे सामने फ़ैक्टस्

(facts) और फ़िगर्स (figures) नहीं हैं, हमारे सामने ऐसे साधन नहीं हैं जिन से हम जान सकें और उनकी मज़दूरी तय कर सकें। उन के लिये मैं बतलाना चाहता हूँ कि आज से दो साल पहले भारत सरकारके श्रम विभाग ने एक एग्रीकल्चरल लेबर इनक्वायरी कमेटी (Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee) का आयोजन किया था और उस में बहुत सा मटेरियल (material) जमा किया था। यह इनक्वायरी (enquiry) शुरू शुरू में दो हजार गांवों में होने वाली थी, लेकिन वह सिर्फ़ आठ सौ गांवों में ही हुई और सारा सामान तैयार है और यह नहीं कह सकते कि हमारे पास सामान तैयार नहीं है और उन को देखने से पता चलता है कि उन की हालत बहुत ख़राब है। आप इस देश में जब कि चारों तरफ़ प्रोडक्शन (Production) बढ़ाने की बात करते हैं, तो उस समय आप का ध्यान ऐक्चुएली (actually) जो खेत में काम करने वाले मज़दूर हैं, उन की तरफ़ नहीं जाता। आप उस बैल को देखते हैं जो हल में चलता है, आप उस आदमी को देखते हैं जो खेत के चारों तरफ़ ज़मींदार और किसान बन कर घमा करता है और वह ऐक्चुएली काम नहीं करता। मेरा कहना यह है कि आप उस आदमी की तरफ़ ध्यान दें, जिस की हालत बैलों से भी ज्यादा ख़राब है और बैल के पीछे पीछे जिस को चलना पड़ता है, आज उस बँचारे के हाथ में इतनी ताक़त नहीं है, उस के शरीर में इतना बल नहीं है कि वह प्रोडक्शन को आगे बढ़ा सके। सब से बड़ी चीज़ यह है कि हर एक आदमी अपना स्वार्थ सोचता है और वे लोग बड़े-बड़े ऋषि और मुनि तो हैं नहीं जो स्वार्थ परता की बात नहीं करते। लेकिन इस

चीज़ को देखना है कि जिस खेत में वह काम कर रहा है, आखिर वहाँ उस के लिए क्या होता है। चाहे हलवाहा किसान के खेत में से दस मन अनाज पैदा कर दे, या उसी खेत से बीस मन पैदा कर दे या कुछ भी न दे। उसे, हलवाहे को कुछ नहीं मिलता। उस को उस खेत में कोई इंटरेस्ट (interest) नहीं होता। आज हम कहते हैं कि प्रोडक्शन बढ़ायें, अन्न अधिक उत्पन्न करें, तो यह सारा हमारा कहना गलत और बेमानी है, क्योंकि मज़दूर को काम करने के लिए कोई उत्साह प्रोत्साहन नहीं मिलता और उस समय तक हमारा यह अधिक अन्न उपजाओ का नारा बेकार है जब तक कि हम उस की मज़दूरी न तय कर दें और उसका इंटरेस्ट उस के उत्पादन में न पैदा कर दें। हम यह नहीं कहते कि उस का पैसा तय कर दीजिये, और ऐसी चीज़ तय कर दीजिये कि जो खेती करने वाले किसान और ज़मींदार उस को नहीं दे सकते, हम तो यह कहते हैं कि स्थान स्थान पर उस की जो उचित मज़दूरी या तो कैश या काइन्ड (cash or kind) में तय कर दीजिये और उस हलवाहे मज़दूर का उस खेती में आप इंटरेस्ट पैदा कर दीजिये और उस को भी कुछ उस में से मिलना चाहिये और जब तक यह नहीं किया जायगा, तब तक आप प्रोडक्शन को नहीं बढ़ा पायेंगे। इस लिये जो इनक्वायरी कमेटी ने काम किया उस में सिर्फ़ दो चीज़ें सामने आई हैं। एक चीज़ तो यह है कि उन का कहीं भी घर नहीं है, उन के रहने का इन्तज़ाम नहीं है। सरकार को चाहिए कि जैसे बड़े बड़े कारखानों में काम करने वाले मज़दूरों के लिए वह घर बनवाती है, स्कूल खुलवाती है और अस्पताल बनवाती है और दूसरी तरह की सहूलियतें पहुंचाती है, इन खेतों में काम करने वाले मज़दूरों

[ श्री चन्द्रिका राम ]

के लिए हम और कुछ नहीं चाहते, हम केवल इतना चाहते हैं कि उन दिनों म जब उनके पास काम नहीं रहता, तो सरकार का यह फर्ज हो जाता है कि उन को या तो किन्हीं इन्डस्ट्रीज (Industries) में कोआपरेटिव लाइन्स (Cooperative lines) पर लगाने की कोशिश करे और उन को काम दे सके, उन को घरेलू कारीगरी और दूसरे दूसरे काम धन्वों में लगा सकते हैं। इसलिए सरकार का फर्ज हो जाता है कि उन के लिए ऐसा कोई प्रबन्ध करे।

हमारे सामने दूसरा सवाल यह आता है कि उन की हालत सुधारने का सवाल जो हम स्टेट गवर्नमेंट्स (State Govts.) पर छोड़ देते हैं, तो उस का क्या नतीजा होता है। नतीजा यह होता है कि बहुत से कानून पास होते हैं और कानून पास हो कर केवल किताबों तक ही सीमित रह जाते हैं, और उन पर अमल नहीं होता। यह हमारा कटु अनुभव रहा है। सन १९२१ में जब शुरू शुरू में हमारे कुछ प्रतिनिधि बिहार काउंसिल (Council) में आये थे और उन्होंने इनकी दशा सुधारने के लिए बहुत लम्बी चौड़ी बहस शुरू की और १९२१ में इन के लिए एक ऐक्ट (Act) पास हुआ, लेकिन आप को पता होना चाहिए कि बिहार सरकार ने और उस समय की सरकार ने यह उचित नहीं समझा कि इस ऐक्ट को उस कानून को कभी भी अमल में लाया जाये।

इसलिए मैं कहूंगा कि केवल एक कानून पास करके उस को प्रान्तीय सरकारों पर छोड़ देने से ही आप की जिम्मेदारी खत्म नहीं हो जाती। आप कहते हैं कि

हम वेल्फेयर स्टेट कायम किये हुए हैं और गरीब मजदूरों के लिए काम कर रहे हैं, लेकिन यह सब बेकार है जब तक कि गरीब मजदूरों के लिए आप के समाज में कोई स्थान नहीं है, वह मजदूर जो कि समाज की रीढ़ है और उत्पादन बढ़ाने वाले हैं, जब तक उनकी हालत नहीं सुधरती, हम मानने को तैयार नहीं हो सकते कि आप वेल्फेयर स्टेट कायम कर रहे हैं, इसलिए मैं मंत्री महोदय से प्रार्थना करूंगा कि आप इन के लिए कोई टाइम लिमिट मुकर्रर कर दें। सन १९४४ में इंटरनेशनल लेबर आरगनाइजेशन कांफ्रेंस (Conference of the International Labour Organization) में आप के प्रतिनिधि ने कहा था कि हिन्दुस्तान पहला मुल्क होगा जो इस चीज को इम्प्लीमेंट (implement) करेगा। उस के बाद फिर सन १९४९ में एशियन लेबर कांफ्रेंस (Asian Labour Conference) में जिस में हमारे श्री जगजीवन राम ने सभापतित्व किया और वहां पर मजदूरों की स्थिति सुधारने के बारे में सोच विचार किया गया और यह सवाल केवल हिन्दुस्तान के लिए ही नहीं बल्कि सारे एशिया के लिए सोचा गया और वहां पर हिन्दुस्तान ने माना कि हम इस चीज को पहले करेंगे। उस के बाद हमारी सेन्ट्रल गवर्नमेंट (Central Govt.) ने इस काम के लिए एक सेन्ट्रल बोर्ड (Central Board) बनाया जिस की मेम्बरी का मुझे भी सौभाग्य प्राप्त है, जब उस की पहली मीटिंग (meeting) हुई, तो उस में सारे देश के राज्यों के प्रतिनिधि आये और उस में मजदूर विभाग में काम करने वाले दूसरे भाई भी उपस्थित थे और वहां पर यह तय पाया गया कि इस चीज

को किया जायगा और इसे एक टाइम लिमिट (time limit) में किया जायगा। आप अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय जगत में भी इस को मान चुके हैं और आप पर यह लाजिम हो जाता है कि आप इस चीज़ को जल्द करें। कुछ भाई ऐसा सोचते हैं कि अगर उन की मजदूरी तय कर दी जायगी, तो उत्पादन घट जायगा और वह काम नहीं करेंगे, लेकिन मेरा विचार इस सम्बन्ध में बिल्कुल उल्टा है, क्योंकि मुझे थोड़ा खेती का काम करने का अनुभव है और उन के बीच रहने का अनुभव है। एक हमारे भाई ने अभी बताया कि यू० पी० के सहारनपुर और दूसरे जिलों में ३०० एकड़ भूमि बिला जुते रह गई, क्योंकि हम को मजदूर नहीं मिल सके। मेरा कहना है कि अगर उन की तरफ ध्यान नहीं दिया गया और उन के लिए कोई प्रबन्ध नहीं किया गया, तो यू० पी० क्या देश की लाखों एकड़ ज़मीन बिला जुते हुए रह जायगी और उस के लिए कोई मजदूर नहीं मिलेंगे। आष होता यह है कि चूंकि उन को गांवों में काफ़ी वेजेज (wages) नहीं मिलते हैं इसलिए वह शहरों में चले जाते हैं, शिक्षा हांकते हैं और दूसरे दूसरे काम करते हैं और इस तरह गांवों में उन पर होने वाले अन्याय अत्याचार और ओपरेशन (operation) से अलग रह कर एक अच्छा जीवन बिताते हैं। जहां तक मजदूरी का सवाल है, मैं समझता हूं कि आप उन की मजदूरी एक रुपये बारह आना, या बंद रुपया भी तय करने को तैयार नहीं हैं और मैं ने शहरों में उन की रोजाना आमदनी के आंकड़ों का हिसाब लगाया है और मैं ने देखा है कि वह पांच रुपये से किसी दिन कम नहीं कमाते। इसलिए मजदूरों का

वेतन और उन की दशा सुधारने का ही सवाल आज हमारे सामने पेश नहीं है, बल्कि यह सारे देश का सवाल है और सारे देश की खेती का सवाल है, और जो सब से बड़ा आप का सवाल बना हुआ है।

इस लिये मैं आप से अर्ज करना चाहता हूं कि आप प्रान्तीय सरकारों पर खेत में काम करने वाले भाइयों के लिये एक क़ानून लागू कर के यह दिखाने का प्रयत्न न करें कि आप के दिल में उन के लिए बहुत दर्द है। आप इस के लिए टाइम लिमिट (Time limit) करें और ज़रूरत पड़े तो उन पर एन्फोर्स (Enforce) करें। अगर आप समझते हैं कि एक वेलफ़ेअर स्टेट (Welfare State) की तरफ हमें बढ़ना है तो आप के लिए यह लाजमी हो जाता है कि आप इस को करें।

दूसरी बात यह है कि अभी आप की ऐग्रिकल्चरल एन्क्वायरी कमेटी (Agricultural Enquiry Committee) हुई, उस में आप ने दिया है कि आप ने दो वर्षों तक कुछ ऐसे लोगों को ट्रेन (train) किया जो हमारे इस रास्ते पर, पालिसी (policy) और प्रोग्राम (programme) पर काम कर सकते हैं, उन काम करने वालों की संख्या ४०० से कम न होगी। उन्होंने खेतों में रह कर प्रैक्टिकल (practical) अनुभव किया, लोगों के बीच में जा कर रहे हैं। मगर उन की हालत आज क्या है? एक तरफ़ तो आप कहते हैं कि हम बेकारी को समस्या, अनएम्प्लायमेन्ट (unemployment) की प्रॉब्लेम (problem) को साल्व (solve) कर रहे हैं, दूसरी तरफ़ आप इन लोगों को न ले

[श्री चन्द्रिका राम]

लेकर उन को अलग कर रहे हैं, जो कि हमारे समाज में जा कर नुइसेन्स (Nuisance) पैदा करने के सिवा और कुछ नहीं करेंगे। इसलिये अगर प्लानिंग कमिशन (Planning Commission) के मुताबिक थोड़ा सा काम उन कानूनों से लिया जाय, देश के उन हिस्सों में जहां उन की मजदूरी सब से कम है, जहां उन की हालत सब से खराब है, अगर उन कानूनों को काम में लाया जाय तो हमारा बहुत काम चल सकता है। अगर सारे हिन्दुस्तान में नहीं तो थोड़ी जगहों पर इस काम को किया जा सकता है। इस काम को करने पर उन दूसरे लोग देखेंगे तो उस को बह भी करेंगे। इसलिये यह जरूरी है कि जिन लोगों ने आप के अन्दर रह कर इतना अनुभव किया, उन का भविष्य के लिए काम में लायें; उन को युटिलाइज (utilise) करें, यह एक जरूरी चीज है। आप लाखों बीर करोड़ों रुपया बरबाद करते हैं, पता नहीं कितने स्कैन्डल (scandals) इस हाउस (House) में बयान किये गये, किसी में एक करोड़ बरबाद हुआ, किसी में दो करोड़, किसी में लाख, किसी में पचास हजार रुपया खर्च हुआ। क्या इतने रुपयों में से आप जो कम से कम पच्चीस लाख रुपया नहीं निकाल सकते हैं ताकि उन को काम दिया जा सके। कभी कभी कहा जाता है कि यह सारी चीज प्रांतीय सरकारों के हाथ में है, लेकिन मैं पूछता हूँ कि क्या केन्द्रीय सरकार के हाथ में कोई जगह है कि नहीं। उन इलाकों में क्यों नहीं इस काम को जारी किया जाता, और इलाके बहुत छोटे हैं, लेकिन देहली, अजमेर, कुरु और दूसरे तीसरे स्थान हैं जहां आप इस काम को अच्छी तरह से

चालू कर सकते हैं। इसलिये मेरा सुझाव यह है कि अधिक नहीं तो पच्चीस या पचास लाख रुपया सरकार अपने बजट में रख दे और उन रुपयों से अपने ही क्षेत्रों में काम करने की कोशिश करे तो जो वे आदमी बेकार हो जाते हैं उन को भी काम मिल जायगा; और सरकार एक नमूना प्रांतीय सरकारों के लिये तैयार करेगी। यह चीज बहुत महत्वपूर्ण है और उस को देख कर दूसरी प्रांतीय सरकारें भी उस को अच्छी तरह से करने की कोशिश करेंगी।

मैं इस के बारे में बहुत अधिक नहीं कहना चाहता। यह एलेक्शन (Election) की बात नहीं है, अगर एलेक्शन के नुक्ते नज़र से देखेंगे तो एलेक्शन तो आता जाता रहता है, प्रांतीय सरकारों को यह मालूम होना चाहिये, यह ऐडल्ट फ्रैन्चाइज (Adult Franchise) बालिग मताधिकार के वाद उन्हें सोचना चाहिये कि उन की जन संख्या, देश की आधी जनसंख्या है। अगर किसी पार्टी (Party) को एलेक्शन के नुक्ते नज़र से काम करना है तो उस के लिए तो यह निहायत जरूरी हो जाता है कि इस काम को सब से पहले हाथ में ले और उन की बफ़ादारी अपने प्रति पैदा करने की कोशिश करे। और इसी तरह हमें सफलता मिलने की आशा हो सकती है। इसलिये मैं अपने माननीय मंत्री साहब से, जिन के हृदय में उन के प्रति बहुत दया और प्रेम है, कहना चाहता हूँ कि वह अपने बिल में अपना ऐमेन्डमेन्ट (Amendment) दें कि कम से कम वह टाइम लिमिट जो उन्होंने निश्चित की है यानी ३१ दिसम्बर १९५३ तक वह इंट्रोड्यूस (introduce) की जाय जिस से इस



हाउस और हाउस के बाहर लोगों को यह सन्तोष हो जाय कि भारत सरकार बेकार बैठी नहीं है। मैं फिर कहना चाहता हूँ कि इन गरीब मजदूरों के लिये कुछ करना बहुत जरूरी है।

(English translation of the above speech.)

**Shri Chandrika Ram (Bihar):** Sir, it is a matter of pleasure to me that you have given me some time to speak on this occasion today. The problem under discussion has been pending before the Government for the last ten years and is in no way a new one. This question as to what should be done for the agricultural labourers was raised in the year 1942. All the provincial governments and the Central Government considered this problem, several conferences were convened, and many meetings were held; and in the end it was decided that some legislation should be made to this effect. It was with this purpose in view that the Minister of Labour of the Government of India introduced the Minimum Wages Act in 1948, and this House passed it. A time-limit of two years was fixed for its implementation, and all the State Governments were advised at that time to implement it up to 15th March, 1951. It is said that there were many difficulties and handicaps in its implementation and so this problem was placed before the Planning Commission which is considering similar other issues. There has been some misunderstanding about the Planning Commission's report in this connection, and it is alleged that the Planning Commission is against any fixation of wages for the agricultural labourers. First of all we have to keep this fact in mind that India is an agricultural country and has a vast working class population. According to the report of the Planning Commission, which is ready now, there are seventeen crore working-class people here. Actually the number of working hands is only three to three and a half crores and if we take their families also into consideration, their number comes to about 17 crores. You hold meetings and conferences day in and day out and say that production should be increased in fields as well as in factories. Then how is it that you forget that something must be done for the good of the workers who work at agriculture—the principal industry of our country. You realise it that nothing has so far been done in order to give facilities to these people. They have no houses to live in. Their houses are no better than cattle sheds. If they live anywhere at all it is the cattle-shed of

the big landlord. This is why they suffer from all sorts of diseases. You might have read in that report that previously they used to get two to five annas a day as their wages. And now in these days when the prices have gone up so high they get only eight to twelve annas a day as their wages and at the most it has gone up to one rupee a day at some places. Under these conditions you can yourself imagine as to how a labourer who gets one rupee a day as his wages, can maintain his family in India where he has to work under ever-changing climatic and seasonal changes, in scorching heat of the summer, under the monsoon showers and in the biting cold of the winter.

Not only this much but also you should know that when in 1950 we had a chance to visit Darbhanga district in connection with the work of the Harijan Enquiry Committee, we saw with our own eyes that ten families were sold for one hundred and fifty rupees only. They belonged to the Moosahar caste and were agricultural labourers. One peasant came and purchased them from the other peasant after paying some money to him. You talk of high things and say that you are going to establish a welfare state, you say that the present Government is meant for the betterment of the poor people and the labourers, you say that whatever you are going to do is for the good of the poor, the labourers and the have-nots, but I dare say that the attitude of this Government is not at all satisfactory in that direction. The Provincial Governments think that the elections are ahead and if they will settle the minimum wages of the agricultural labourers, they will have to face hardships at the same time from that end. The attitude of the Government of India too does not seem favourable. You talk about the Planning Commission. But it has plainly laid down that wherever the wages are low and the condition of the labourers bad, wages should be fixed, and if the Government would work to that end, it would be a great achievement for the entire society and would be advantageous to all. But what is the condition at present? If you go to the villages you would find that the poor villagers somehow manage to get work only for 150 days out of 365 days of the year, for the rest of the time they remain idle. There is no industry, no work or no such craft that may keep them busy in their spare time. The major problem that confronts them is that they do not get sufficient wages during those 150 days for which they work and in this way they are unable to maintain their families. Under these conditions it is essential that their wages should be fixed.

[Shri Chandrika Ram]

The amendment Bill of the Minimum Wages Act, which has been brought forth by the Government, gives the discretion to the Provincial Governments to fix up the wages of these labourers whenever they think it proper. I am of the opinion that this is a wrong procedure. There are many such things under the Provincial Governments which they think more essential. For example the problem of 'Grow More Food' is there for them to tackle. Although it is a provincial subject, the Central Government interfere in it where they think it necessary. Therefore is it not essential, as my friend has just now stated, that the Central Government should take power into their hands and decide this issue at an early date. I do not want any hurry in this matter, but as against this I want that the Government should solve this problem after giving due thought to it and also taking its economic consequences and other things into consideration. This is why we have given one year's time in the amendments which have been moved by many of my friends as well as by me. I know that the Government have reached at this conclusion that perhaps they may implement it by the 31st December, 1953. If this is a fact I would be only too pleased at it. After all the difference of 31st March and 31st December does not matter much, so far as the tackling of this important problem is concerned.

Second thing that I have to submit with respect to this subject is that weighty objections are raised and it is said that the Government have not got facts and figures with them, nor have they any means to know them and subsequently fix up the wages. With regard to this objection I would submit that two years ago the Ministry of Agriculture of the Government of India had set up an Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee. It gathered sufficient material by way of information. To start with this enquiry would have extended to two thousand villages, but in fact it was actually carried out in eight hundred villages only. Every requisite material is ready and we can no more complain that we have no means at our disposal to ascertain the facts and figures. If we look into that enquiry we would find that their condition is very bad. It is strange that your mind does not go to these labourers who actually work in the fields and even at a time when the talk of increasing the production goes on, on all side. You look after the bull that draws the plough, you look after the man who is called the landlord and who moves around

the field without actually doing anything for that field. My submission is that you should also pay attention towards the man whose condition is worse than the bull itself, who has to walk step by step after the bull, and who has no strength left in his limbs to increase the production. The outstanding thing is that everybody is led by his self-interest; and the labourers can hardly be considered as sages and ascetics who would not think in their own terms. But we have to see as to what does he derive from the field in which he works. The tiller does not get anything from the produce of the field whether it is ten maunds or twenty maunds of grains; naturally he has no interest in the development of that field. Today we talk of increasing our production, but it is all humbug and hypocrisy, because the labourer does not get any encouragement or stimulant to work harder. Our slogans to increase the production will not bear any fruit so long as we do not fix the minimum wages of the tiller and do not create any interest in him for producing more. I do not say that his money earnings or anything, which the peasant or the landlord would not be in a position to give to him, should be settled, but I only say that his fair wages whether in cash or in kind should be fixed from place to place so as to create some interest in the tiller for his work, and he also should get some satisfactory portion from the production. Unless and until it is not done the production cannot increase. Only two things have come into light from the work done by the Enquiry Committee. One thing is that these labourers have no houses to live in and there are no arrangements for providing them with any shelter. As the Government builds houses, schools and hospitals for the workers who work in big factories and provide them with similar other facilities, similarly it is the duty of the Government to employ these labourers in the different industries run on co-operative lines or in cottage industries and handicrafts or similar other works during their spare time. I want only this much for these labourers and nothing more. So it is imperative on the part of the Government to make such arrangements for them.

The other question that comes before us is the question of improving their condition. We have left this question to the States Governments and now see what are its results. Legislations are made and the laws so framed remain confined to the statute-book, they are not enforced. This is our bitter experience. As back

as in 1921 when some of our representatives were elected to the Bihar Council they tried their utmost to improve their condition. The result was that an act was passed in 1921 to this effect. But you should know that the then Government of Bihar never thought it proper to enforce that Act. This is why I say that your responsibility does not cease with the passing of any legislation and then leaving it to the provincial governments to enforce it afterwards. You say that you are aiming at a welfare state and are establishing it for the benefit of the poor labourers. But this is all useless so long as you do not give the poor labourer his proper place in the society. We are not going to agree with you in saying that you are establishing a welfare state so long as the condition of the labourers who are the backbone of the society and are the real producers does not improve. So I would request the hon. Minister to fix up some time limit for this purpose. In the year 1944, your representative had said in the Conference of the International Labour Organization that India would be the first country to implement such a legislation. After that in the year 1949 this problem was considered in the Asian Labour Conference as well, which was presided over by our hon. Shri Jagjivan Ram. The Conference considered the question of improving the labour condition not only in India but in the other Asian countries as well. There too India agreed that she would be the first to do that job. After that our Central Government set up a Central Board for this purpose, and I also had the privilege of being one of its members. At its first meeting the representatives of all the states attended, some friends from the Labour Department were also present in it. It was decided at that time that such and such a thing would be done and a time limit be fixed for it. You have agreed to do it even in presence of the world nations; and as such it becomes obligatory upon you to accomplish it as soon as possible. Some of our friends apprehend that if the wages of the labourers would be fixed, production would decrease because they will not work. But my opinion is quite different from that because I have some personal experience of working in the fields and also of living among those people. One of my friends has just now stated that three hundred acres of land remained unploughed in the Saharanpur district of U.P. because they could not find labourers to till it. I say if due heed is not paid to them and no satisfactory arrangements are made for them, not only a few acres of land in U.P. will

remain unploughed but all the lakhs of acres of land in the country would meet the same fate and you would find no labourers. What happens today is this that they migrate to cities because they do not get sufficient wages in the villages. They pull rickshas there, do other similar jobs and in this way remain away from the tyranny and the excesses that are being perpetrated on them in the villages. So far as the question of their wages is concerned I understand that you are not prepared to fix it at Rs. 1/12/- or 1/8/- per day even, but I have calculated it from the available figures of their daily income and have seen it that their income in the cities is not less than five rupees on any day. Therefore it is not the question of their wages or of improving their condition alone but this is a question of the whole country. It pertains to the agriculture of the whole country, which has taken the form of a major problem now.

Therefore, I want to say that by making legislation for the agricultural labourers, you should not try to show that you have got much regard for them. You should fix time-limit for this and if the need arises you should try to enforce it. If you want to establish a welfare state then it is necessary for you to do like that.

The second thing is that recently your Agricultural Enquiry Committee held a meeting in which it was stated that you have trained some people who will follow your policy and programme, and their number will not be less than 400. They have acquired practical experience by working in the fields and mixing with the villagers. But what is their condition today? On one side you say that you are solving the unemployment problem while on the other hand instead of employing them you are turning them out, and they will do nothing except creating nuisance in our society. Therefore, if we enforce those laws according to the recommendations of the Planning Commission in those parts of the country where their wages are the lowest, where their condition is most miserable, we can greatly improve their lot. If we cannot enforce it in all the parts of India, atleast we can start with some of them only. When other people will see us working in that manner, they shall also try to do like that. Therefore, it is essential that we should utilise the services of those people who have gained experience under us. You waste millions of rupees and I do not know how many scandals have been exposed on the floor of this House. In some case-

[Shri Chandrika Ram]

you have wasted a crore while in other two crores and so on. Could you not find twenty five lakhs of rupees out of these in order to give them employment? Often it is said that it is in the hands of the State Governments but may I ask whether the Central Government have no areas under them? Why do not you start it in those areas? Other areas may be small but Delhi, Ajmer and Coorg are the places where you can easily start it. Therefore my suggestion is that the Government should make provision of at least 25 or 50 lakhs of rupees, if not more, in the budget and should try to implement it with the aid of that money and thus the unemployed persons will be benefited by it and you will be also setting an example for the States Governments. This is a very important thing and I am sure, the States Governments will also try to implement it with greater zeal.

I do not want to say much about it. This is a thing which has nothing to do with elections. If you judge it from the point of view of elections then elections are held on and often. But the States Governments must bear in mind that according to adult franchise, they form half the population of our country. If any party wants to do something only from the point of view of forthcoming elections then it becomes all the more important that the Government should tackle this problem first of all and try to win over their confidence. We can hope to achieve success like that. Therefore, I want to appeal to the hon. Minister, who has got every sympathy and consideration for them, that he should introduce his amendment in the Bill so that it may be introduced at the most up to 31st December, 1953, the time-limit which he has fixed himself, in order that the House and the people outside may have the satisfaction that the Government are not sitting idle. I want to submit again that it is very essential to do something for these poor labourers.

**Shri Khandubhai Desai (Bombay):** Though the Bill before this House on the face of it appears to be regressive, I have no hesitation in supporting the Bill. A question may be asked why I support this Bill even though on the face of it the Bill looks a little regressive....

**Shrimati Durgabai (Madras):** You sympathize with the hon. Minister perhaps.

**Shri Khandubhai Desai:** Please give me time to explain my point. I am just going to place before the House my justification for supporting this Bill from the point of view of the Indian National Trade Union Congress. We do not believe in getting legislation only on the statute-book on a theoretical basis but we want it, after it is passed, to be properly implemented and administered (*Hear, hear*).

**Shrimati Durgabai:** That is the complaint now.

**Shri Khandubhai Desai:** I am just coming to that point. For the last few years, on the floor of this House, we have been very enthusiastic on putting so many Bills on statute-book, adopting one clause or the other for the improvement of society, but we have been lethargic in either administering or implementing it. I am one of those who believe that it is the obligation of the Central Government to see that the Bills which they pass here ought to be implemented and administered by the States according to the time schedule which they once lay down in the Bill itself. We have been accustomed to hear on the floor of this House when a particular question comes up: This is not our responsibility. It is the State Government's responsibility. That is the shelter under which some of the Central Ministers have unfortunately sought refuge. But as far as the people are concerned, we do not make any distinction between the Central Government or the State Governments. We take the Government as a whole. The fact that the State Governments have not been able to implement this Bill up to now and have come before the Central Government saying: We are not able to do it, is in my opinion a sad commentary on both the Central Government and the State Governments. (*Interruption*) Why I support this Bill is because, in a large country like India where conditions differ from region to region and from State to State, a provision has been made here in this Bill so that any State will now be able to notify the implementation of this Bill, according to conditions. At the same time,....

**Shrimati Durgabai:** On a point of order. May I know whether it is open or not open to an hon. Member to seek any information on any point from any hon. Member who is speaking?

**Mr. Chairman:** The hon. Member is fully aware of the practice of this House. Unless the Member speaking gives way, he cannot be forced to give way.

**Shri Khandubhai Desai:** Normally, I would not have yielded; but being a person of the fair sex, I have to bow...

**Shri Bharati:** He has yielded only on the point of order.

**Shrimati Durgabai:** I do not want any concession on the ground of sex.

**Shri Khandubhai Desai:** The point I was trying to make out is, whatever power the Central Government is taking, or whatever latitude they are now taking, should be the last extension and this should be the last extension Bill that the Government brings before this House.

There is one other matter to which I would like to draw the attention of this House. If the Bill is kept as it is, again the Central Government will come up before the legislature some time hence and say, let us extend the period by two or three years: may be four or five years, one does not know. Unless we lay down a time limit, during which every State Government must prepare itself for bringing into operation this Bill, the purpose would not be served. Parliament and Government have placed before the country, the Minimum Wages Act, particularly this Act which affects the employees of small industries which are located more or less in rural areas, that is Part I, and as far as part II is concerned, agricultural labour. According to my rough calculation, it affects not less than 80 to 90 million people, who, in my opinion will decide the future fate of this Government or any Government. It is a fairly large number.

**Shri Chandrika Ram:** The report of the Labour Enquiry Committee is that not more than 15 crores are affected by this.

**Shri Khandubhai Desai:** What I feel is, it affects, as I said, one-third of the population of this country. Any step that is now being taken by this Bill should be final and before long, it should be implemented. A time-limit should be placed even in the case of Part II of the Schedule so that by that time the State Governments may prepare to implement this Bill. This legislation, if it does anything, it is taking us to a welfare State about which we are talking a great deal. The disparity between the standard of living of the rural areas and urban areas is there. That is, in my opinion, one of the chief grounds on which anti-social elements are exploiting our people. I think Government would be simply putting into practice what they have been preaching for the last 3½ years if they accept the amendment before the House that a time-limit

should be fixed. In these circumstances, I would appeal to the hon. Minister in charge of this Bill today to accept that amendment and assure not only this House, but through this House the whole country that now they are determined to see that this Bill is going to be implemented with a view to remove the disparities, that exist between the standard of life of the rural areas and the urban areas.

**Shri Karunakara Menon (Madras):** How can the Central Government force the State Governments?

**Shri Khandubhai Desai:** My hon. friend here asks how the Central Government can enforce its legislation on the State Governments. If it is not able to enforce its legislation, then, I think, they must come before this Parliament to amend the Constitution if it is so necessary.

With these few words, I support this Bill.

**Shri Kamath (Madhya Pradesh):** This amending Bill is, I have no hesitation in saying, a retrograde piece of legislation. I almost said reactionary; but it is sufficient to call it a retrograde measure. At one time it was feared that the Minimum Wages Act was about to join the merry throng of dead letters whose shining examples are the Estate Duty Bill, and the Industries Regulation Bill. I do not know what fate is going to overtake the Labour Relations Bill and the Trade Unions Bill. Be that as it may, it was inopportune and improper for Government not to have enforced the provisions of the Minimum Wages Act. The Labour Minister has very often boasted of numerous labour laws which he has brought before the House, and various welfare measures that he has been able to enact. But, I am afraid, the Minimum Wages Act, so far as the implementation of this Act is concerned, has been a blot on his escutcheon, and I am indeed sorry that it has remained almost a dead letter.

The Act provided, as the Statement of Objects and Reasons, shows clearly, that the State Governments were to fix the minimum rates of wages in respect of employments specified in the Schedule to the Act before 15th March 1951. That date, the Ides of March of this year, has come and gone and the State Governments, many of them, have not taken action in pursuance of the provisions of the Act. I do not know what method was adopted by Government to extend this date, 15th March 1951, because today, we are still considering the amending

[Shri Kamath]

Bill. I wonder whether by mere executive order or by instructions sent to the State Governments, the date has been extended. That, to my mind, is an irregular procedure. I would like the Minister to tell us how the date was extended.

**Shri Hussain Imam (Bihar):** Any authority for extending?

**Shri Kamath:** So far as I know, there is no authority in the Act which was passed in 1948.

The background to this amending Bill is rather interesting. It would appear that this measure was discussed in the Standing Committee of the Ministry of Labour as late as the 17th March 1951. And the Committee expressed itself strongly in favour of a time-limit for the fixation of minimum wages in agriculture. But in spite of such a time-limit the implementation of the Minimum Wages Act has been very slow. Three years were given, from 1948 to 1951, but precious little was done during this long interval of three years. There was unanimity—mark the word unanimity. There was unanimity among the members of the Standing Committee that without a time-limit the State Governments would neglect the fixation of minimum wages in agriculture for a very long time. In case it was not possible to fix minimum wages for agriculture by 31st of March, 1952, it should be possible to do so by 31st March, 1953. But the amending-Bill leaves that vague and leaves it to the sweet will and pleasure of the State Government. That should not be the case. The Standing Committee for Labour suggested that the Ministry should bear this criticism of the proposed amending Bill in mind in enacting the legislation. Finally, after some discussion in the Committee, the Minister of Labour agreed to bring this matter before the Cabinet. That was subsequent to the 17th of March, 1951. And the Bill was introduced, I believe, in Parliament some time during the early part of this session. Because of the objections and criticisms made by the Standing Committee, the Minister agreed to refer the matter to the Cabinet. I do not know what view the Cabinet has taken. Some amendments are sought to be proposed by the Minister of Labour, but even those amendments do not meet the situation adequately. They are only half-hearted measures to meet the difficult situation created by the non-fixation of minimum wages for agricultural labour. I put a question in Parliament during this session, asking the Minister to

state the reasons why in certain States minimum wages have not yet been fixed. The Minister said that enquiries were being made from the State Governments concerned, though in view of the amending Bill which "I introduced on Monday last, this may not be necessary at this stage." To say the least, this is an amusing view to take of the situation. Three long years have elapsed since Parliament enacted this legislation, a very important piece of legislation with a social purpose behind it, I may even say a socio-economic purpose behind it. As my friend Mr. Khandubhal Desai observed the other day, though in a different context, we are committed to the creation of or the establishment of a welfare State, and this would have gone at least one step, one small step, towards the creation of such a State. But three years later, the Centre has no information why the State Governments did not care to fix minimum wages in these establishments or employments such as are specified in Parts I and II of the Schedule to the original Act. And what is more, the Minister goes on to say that in view of the amending Bill introduced in Parliament, there is no need to enquire about this matter. This attitude is hardly one which can be called an attitude of responsibility to Parliament. Parliament wants to know, on a point of information why the State Governments failed to take any action in implementation or in pursuance of the provisions of this Act. The Minister merely says that enquiries are being made, and even then adds that these are not necessary because of the amending Bill. I say it is precisely because of this amending Bill that it is necessary to find out why no action has been taken so far. It is necessary to tell the House and the country why no action has been taken. Otherwise, this will encourage a tendency on the part of the State Governments which will not be conducive to the unity and the strength of India.

**Shri Sondhi (Punjab):** They think they are wiser

**Shri Kamath:** I am glad that Mr. Sondhi at least thinks that they are wiser. I know he has got a store of wisdom in himself and is in a position to judge who is wise, who is unwise and who is otherwise.

**Shri Sondhi:** They think so.

**Shri Kamath:** I am glad to hear that Mr. Sondhi must have been in touch with the State Governments and they might have conveyed to him secretly information which he may

not like to convey to this House in the public interest, perhaps. Well, I will leave it at that.

**Hon. Members:** It is already one o'clock.

**Mr. Chairman:** Is the hon. Member likely to finish now?

**Shri Kamath:** No, Sir, I shall require a little more time.

**Mr. Chairman:** Then we adjourn now to meet again at 2-30 P.M.

*The House then adjourned for Lunch till Half Past Two of the Clock.*

*The House re-assembled after Lunch at Half Past Two of the Clock.*

[PANDIT THAKUR DAS BHARGAVA in the Chair.]

**Shri Kamath:** When the House rose for lunch I was trying to make out that without telling the House why the States had not been able to fix minimum rates of wages under Parts I and II of the Schedule to the Act, the Government has come to the House with an amending Bill. This is neither proper nor desirable. The suspicion in my mind is that just because some States refused to fix such minimum wages, perhaps in some industrial establishments and most of them for agricultural labour, the Centre knuckled under to the States and this: to my mind is an unhealthy development so far as our own political future is concerned. If this tendency were not curbed by the Centre it will mean an encouragement, if not an incitement, to centrifugal forces.

This is a minor piece of legislation from one point of view, it is only an amending Bill, but the social purpose behind it cannot be overlooked by this House. As no reliable data about the standard of living and conditions of employment of agricultural labourers were available at the time the Act was passed, the Government of India started an Agricultural Labour Enquiry in each State and the enquiry began, so far as I recollect, in May 1949 and perhaps it has been concluded in some States and is nearing completion in most other States. I am given to understand that certain States, particularly West Bengal and also, I believe, Madhya Pradesh, have raised objections to the implementation of the Minimum Wages Act on the ground that cultivators are not in a position to pay such minimum wages to agricultural labour. What political considerations may have been behind these protestations and objections by the State Governments it is not easy to go into. But under clause 2 of the Bill

before the House the State Governments again are given full discretion in the matter of fixation of dates, the dead line or the last date for the determination of minimum wages for agricultural labourers. This, to my mind, is giving an undue liberty or latitude to State Governments which have already shown an unwillingness to move forward in this direction at all; and that, I am sure, neither the Minister of Labour nor the Minister deputising for him today in this House is anxious to promote, namely, to give more latitude to a reluctant party which is bent upon not implementing the legislation of the Centre in this regard. Otherwise within three years there should not have been much difficulty in showing some progress in this direction. The amending Bill therefore is to my mind letting down. I will not say betraying, the cause of the most down-trodden section of labour in our country.

India is an agricultural country. Its economy is mainly agricultural and agricultural labour, I believe, forms nearly 26 per cent. or even more of the total population. This labour is not organised and is not in a position to fight for its rights as other sections of labour are able to do and that is all the more reason why the Government should take more interest and show a greater solicitude for the welfare of this most backward class of Indian labour.

Another disquieting feature of the present amending Bill is that the State Governments are to be given power to fix minimum wages for a part of the State and also for any class of employment in the particular State. What confusion this might produce it is easy to imagine. A State may fix minimum wages in one or two districts and may not do so for other districts. In such circumstances it is not inconceivable that labour from those districts where minimum wages are not fixed will tend to migrate to other districts where a minimum wage has been fixed. In Madhya Pradesh there was some difficulty one or two years ago about agricultural labour trying to get into bidi labour, because there was no minimum wage in agriculture and higher wage was paid to labourers in the bidi-making industry. The Government of Madhya Pradesh in order to get over the difficulty passed an Act more or less prohibiting the diversion of agricultural labour to bidi labour. But that Act has been held by the High Court of Madhya Pradesh as *ultra vires* of the Constitution and so the *status quo ante* has been restored and the conflict between agricultural

[Shri Kamath]

labour and *bidi labour* is going strong and it has created all sorts of difficulties in the matter of agriculture. This, to my mind, is a development which we must fight from Parliament and from the Centre.

The Agricultural Labour Enquiry has revealed that in certain backward parts of Bihar, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh they are paid a ridiculously low wage of eight annas a day for men and four annas a day for women, even these days when the cost of living is, so high. (*Interruption*) Reports have reached the Centre that the minimum wage is as low as eight annas for men and four annas for women per day in certain tracts. All the data collected by the Agricultural Labour Enquiry should be tabulated and published and made available to the House and the public and it will reveal many disquieting features of the situation.

Then there is the fear that the fixation of minimum wages for agricultural labour would hamper our rural economy. But this fear, to my mind, at any rate, is more imaginary than real. As the House very well knows, there are three categories of wages: the minimum wage, the fair wage and the living wage. What we are trying to enact here in this very modest Bill, as we have enacted in the very modest Act, pertains only to minimum wage which is barely sufficient to meet the biological needs of a human being, that is, the very elementary necessities or the barest quantum of food, clothing and shelter. I may even say it is only to hold, as the saying goes, body and soul together, to make the human being exist and not live—living is a much higher condition than mere existing, and the minimum wage is supposed to enable the human being to just exist. Even in this very limited field, this very restricted field, we have found that needless difficulties have been posed, or created, by some of the State Governments. Every civilised country has, or must give, a minimum wage to its labour. The I.L.O., as far as I am aware, has given a directive that minimum wages in agriculture should be fixed by all the member-nations, and the wage so far as India is concerned must be at least one rupee a day for men and eight to ten annas, or perhaps twelve annas, for women.

**Shri Bharati:** How many nations have done it? I would inquire of my friend.

**Shri Kamath:** I would be thankful to Mr. Bharati for that information.

**Shri Bharati:** I asked to be enlightened on it.

**Shri Kamath:** The I.L.O. has many members, but India is the most populous member-nation, and certainly, Mr. Bharati, with the Hindu Code coming before Parliament, will agree that India is certainly one of the most progressive countries in the world, and she must take a progressive step in this regard and not take....

**Shrimati Durgabai:** Do you think the country is progressive only if that Bill is passed?

**Shri Kamath:** Why is my hon. friend sceptical that the Bill would not be passed?

**Shrimati Durgabai:** The hon. Member's optimism may help this House.

**Shri Kamath:** Optimism, as well as my hon. friend's patience, both are necessary for life.

**Shrimati Durgabai:** For several years the patience has been exhausted.

**The Minister of Works, Production and Supply (Shri Gadgil):** Minimum speech now.

**Shri Kamath:** Now, it is a well-known fact that with the very marked rise in the prices of agricultural commodities, the cultivator is in a better position today to pay a higher wage to agricultural labourers than he was formerly and this is an additional reason why this Minimum Wages Act, passed some years ago, must be implemented and not left to the whims, fancies and caprices of the State Governments. But somehow or other either some vested interests or some reactionary forces somewhere are coming in the way and it is up to the Government at the Centre and to this Parliament of our Sovereign Democratic Republic, which aims at the creation of a welfare state, to take steps, as early as possible, in this direction and see that the purpose of the Act is not thwarted by any force whatsoever. Therefore, I would suggest that, firstly, the data collected by the Agricultural Labour Inquiry must be made available—all the data collected by them must be made available to this House as early as possible. Secondly, I would suggest that though the proposed amending Bill gives full power and discretion to the State Governments in the matter of fixing the date for implementation of the Act, I submit that this will result in utter confusion without a co-ordinating and a guiding and even, may I say, a unifying force emanating from the Centre. Left to themselves, they



will promote only chaos in the field. Some States, who have already shown some unwillingness, will I am afraid, never fix minimum wages, if left to themselves, and the amending Act and the original Act will be reduced to nullity in practice. Therefore, the better method would be to postpone—that is a lesser evil—the implementation of the Act by, say, a year at the most, and not to postpone it indefinitely—that will certainly not conduce to the welfare of our labour, and the most backward and most harassed. May I say down-trodden, section of labour in the country. The Bill which is before the House, is, therefore, I repeat, a retrograde measure and unless it is amended I feel I cannot give my support to it as brought before the House.

I oppose the Bill.

**Shri Rathnaswamy (Madras) rose—**

**Shri C. Subramaniam (Madras):**  
rose—

**Mr. Chairman:** Shri C. Subramaniam.

**Shri Rathnaswamy:** May I suggest for your due consideration that in view of the fact that there are so many Members wanting to speak on this Bill, fifteen minutes may be allotted to each speaker?

**Hon. Members:** No time-limit.

**Mr. Chairman:** No time-limit is usually fixed so far as Bills are concerned, but as I find there are many Members who are anxious to speak, if the House so desires it can be fixed. At the same time, I would request hon. Members to finish their speeches within ten and not fifteen minutes because after all I find there are very few new points being made and the earlier arguments are being repeated.

**Shri C. Subramaniam:** The opposition to this Bill has centred round the provisions relating to agricultural labour, and in my view that opposition has mainly arisen because of this misunderstanding of the scope of this Bill, firstly, and, secondly, because of certain wrong assumptions made regarding the working of the State Governments and the Central Government. It was argued that this House is asked, by this Bill, to go back upon the principles which it has already accepted. A reading of the Bill will clearly show that there is no going behind any of the principles which we have already accepted. We are not saying that there should be no minimum wages for agricultural

labour, we are not saying that the condition of agricultural labour has now improved and that therefore there is no necessity for the implementation of the Minimum Wages Act. It is not so. This House is committed to the principle of minimum wages to agricultural labour. It is committed to the welfare and uplift of the agricultural labourer and this Bill, in my view, in no way goes back upon those principles which we have accepted. But in the implementation of the Minimum Wages Act, we have found certain difficulties and this Bill makes provision to overcome those difficulties. Certain hon. Members made reference to this Bill as a retrograde step. On what ground? Because this Bill places the responsibility for the implementation of the Bill on the State Governments. That is, according to certain Members, a retrograde step. I really fail to understand them. Some Members are in the habit of assuming superior airs and thinking that they have more wisdom than the members of the State Legislatures; they have also, in the course of time, come to think that they have got a more representative character than the members of the State Legislatures, forgetting that they themselves are the creatures of the State Legislatures. To think that we alone can safeguard the interests of the down-trodden agricultural labourer is a wrong assumption to go upon. The State Legislatures also are there and they are as much responsible, and I am sure they are aware of that responsibility they owe to the agricultural labourer. As far as I know, steps are being taken in many of the States for the implementation of this Act. If there is any delay in the work not being as speedy as this Parliament would wish, it is due to certain practical difficulties. Without realising those difficulties, we simply criticise that the State Governments are not moving in the matter. A Committee was appointed by the Madras Government for the purpose of making recommendations for the implementation of this Act and I happened to be a member of that Committee. I have studied this question a little deeply and I may tell the House that while it is very easy to pass a Bill, if you go into its implementation, you find so many difficulties. The first one is this. It is not as if agricultural labour is confined to certain centralised localities like factories. It is as widespread as the country itself, and every field is a factory. So the question is how you are going to implement the Act. You should see that it is enforced in the entire agricultural sector in the country and I feel that it will be very

[Shri C. Subramaniam]

difficult to enforce it unless agricultural labour itself is vigilant and the cultivators also realise their responsibilities. In my view, this field should be cleared first.

Then, you find a bewildering variety in the conditions of agricultural labour. The conditions vary not only from district to district and taluk to taluk but from firka to firka and village to village. What is the principle that you will adopt in fixing minimum wages? A thorough study of the entire field of agriculture will have to be made, not with reference to one district or taluk but village by village. Only then will it be possible to find out from the mass of contradictions and varieties whether it would be feasible to evolve a uniform formula for the fixation of minimum wages. Not only do the conditions of agricultural labour vary so much, but the classes of employees also are too numerous to admit of calculation. Therefore, you cannot very well say that here and now we should fix minimum wages for agricultural labour, and that too not for a particular class of agricultural labour but for the entire field contemplated in Part II. It may be all right for us sitting in this Parliament to fix 1952 or 1953 as the target date. As an incentive to the State Governments we may do that, but I may tell you that the implementation would be impossible even by the year 1953. You let alone the so-called backward States, but even in the most forward States this would be the position and another Bill will have to be brought in the next Parliament extending the time. That is why, after considering all these difficulties, the suggestion has been wisely made to leave the implementation to the State Governments. After all, State Governments and State Legislatures are not irresponsible bodies. They have been elected by the voters. I find certain hon. Members here developing an attitude of criticising the State Governments here. Apart from its propriety, it is a dangerous thing. If we begin to criticise the State Legislatures, and the State Legislatures begin to criticise us, then.....

**Shrimati Renuka Ray (West Bengal):** They will improve and we will also improve.

**Shri C. Subramaniam:** I hope so. But if we start doing that, then the only business that we can transact in Parliament would be to answer the criticism of the State Legislatures and the State Legislatures will in turn be

engaged in answering the criticisms made in Parliament. Apart from this, it is a well known canon of criticism that it should be made in a forum where it can be effectively answered by the body which is criticised. Unfortunately, there is nobody here representing the State Governments as such to say whether the State Governments are acting in a responsible or an irresponsible way. To say, as my hon. friend Shri Venkataraman chose to do, that the State Governments are likely to be influenced by vested interests to a greater extent than the Central Government can only result in the thing being paid back in the same coin to Parliament in certain of the Legislatures of the States. That is not certainly the way in which a responsible House should act. After all, the State Governments and the Central Government are regulated by the Constitution and we should take it that we are functioning in our sphere with a due sense of responsibility and they are functioning in theirs in the same way.

I would say that the implementation of the Minimum Wages Act in regard to agricultural labour should be squarely placed on the shoulders of the State Governments. It is no use our fixing target dates. If you do so, the State Governments would say, "It is impossible for us to adhere to this date. Therefore we have not taken any steps." In view of that, we should leave it to them to implement the Act as soon as possible. It is not as if pressure could be exercised only upon Parliament. That pressure can be more effectively brought upon the State Legislatures. After all, it is the State Governments which are in greater touch with the agricultural labour and agriculture is a subject which is peculiarly within the sphere of the State Legislatures. Therefore, the responsibility should be left to the State Legislatures and Governments and if they fail to carry it out, their masters—the voters and the people—will take it upon themselves to teach them a lesson in the elections. In the circumstances, I am unable to accept the argument that this measure is a retrograde one simply because the State Governments are asked to implement it.

**Shri Venkataraman:** May I enquire whether the hon. Member was a Member of the Land Revenue Enquiry Committee or of the Minimum Wages Committee on Agricultural Labour?

**Shri C. Subramaniam:** I was a member of the Land Revenue and Tenures Reforms Committee appointed by the

Madras Government, but one of the questions referred to it was the implementation of the Minimum Wages Act. We had the advantage of looking into the materials made available to the other two Committees. So, with the experience of these two Committees I am speaking.

There is one other aspect also. My hon. friend very glibly said that whenever an industry is unable to pay minimum wages or fair wages, it should die.

**Shri Venkataraman:** Not fair wages, but minimum wages.

**Shri C. Subramaniam:** Even minimum wages. After all, in fixing minimum wages, what are you going to fix? Is it going to be some illusory or imaginary figure? Minimum wages will ultimately be the maximum wages also. Once you fix the minimum wages you cannot induce anybody to pay more than that and ultimately the wage you fix will tend to work out to the maximum wage also. With that end in view you have to fix the minimum wage. According to Mr. Venkataraman if an industry is not able to pay that minimum wage that industry should die, which means that the agricultural industry should close down. Instead of enthusing people in the grow-more-food campaign Mr. Venkataraman wants the agricultural industry to close down, because they have not been able to implement the Minimum Wages Act.

And again it will not stop with the agricultural industry. It will ultimately spread to other industries as well. Really speaking, I am unable to understand this argument. I can very well understand the argument that there should be more equitable distribution of the profits between labour and the cultivator. But the argument that an industry which is not able to implement the provisions of the Minimum Wages Act should close down would, I am sure, not appeal to this House.

It must be realised that we are passing through very difficult times. There is food shortage everywhere, as a result of which we have imposed controls. When these controls will be removed nobody knows. Since controls exist, the agriculturist receives only the controlled prices, the prices fixed by Government. So far as the Madras State is concerned, I can say that the agriculturists are finding the present prices very very unremunerative if they grow food crops, with the result that they incur losses. My hon. friend Mr. Venkataraman will no doubt argue for the continuance of the controls so,

long as the food scarcity lasts, which means that the agriculturist, in his turn, will only get controlled rates for his produce. At the same time you ask him to pay higher wages. Will it be possible?

For the matter of that, you can as well say: "Nationalise the entire agriculture." That would be one good solution. I am sure my hon. friend Mr. Venkataraman will jump at that idea. But with what results we do not know. It is now a fashion among labour leaders to say "Nationalise all industries and everything will be all right." When we pay only controlled and restricted price to the agriculturist, what is the use of asking him to pay a higher wage to the agricultural labour.

Therefore, I feel that this is a matter which can well be taken up after this period of transition through which we are passing is over. Then will be the time for us to assess what would be the natural level of prices of agricultural commodities and what could be fairly paid to the agricultural labour. We are fixing the end of 1953 as the time-limit by which this Act should be implemented. Can this House give an assurance, can anybody give an assurance that by the end of 1953 the food scarcity will be over, that controls would be removed and the agriculturist would be allowed to sell his produce in the open market? That is why I am suggesting that instead of fixing any definite time-limit, it should be left to the responsible State Governments to act as diligently as possible in this matter and fix the minimum wage.

There is another aspect to this question. Once you pass this Act and fix a time-limit, you will find agitation being carried on from town to town and from village to village. Unfortunately in this country doctors have to thrive on diseases; and lawyers on litigation. Therefore, a doctor is interested in the increase of epidemics and diseases. So also a lawyer is interested in the increase of litigation, whether constitutional, civil or criminal. So also labour leadership in this country maintains itself on labour unrest. If you want to extend their area of operation this will be the best thing to do and there will be sufficient scope for agitation for labour leaders. They need not confine themselves to industrial areas in the towns. They can infiltrate to villages and once they go into the villages agitating for the implementation of this Act the different schools of labour leaders, one belonging to the socialist

[Shri C. Subramaniam]

group, the other belonging to the congress group and the third belonging to the communist group will view with one another and the demands will go sky high, with the result that no agriculturist will be able to satisfy them. Ultimately what will happen is that the better situated agriculturist will be able to displace labour by mechanising agriculture and they will become unemployed—of course good material for communism! As far as the poor agriculturists are concerned, who form the majority of the agricultural population, they will have to suffer in between—the labour legislation, the labour leaders and their land.

Therefore, instead of launching upon this scheme, without thinking of the consequences,—of course I do admit that the principle of fixation of minimum wages is good—it is better to leave the responsibility of implementing this Act as speedily as possible to the State Governments.

Therefore, I wholeheartedly support the provisions of the Bill. If any time-limit is imposed as target, you may take it from me that there will have to be another Bill extending the target again.

श्री भट्ट : मैं न्यूनतम वेतन क़ानून के विषय में बहुत बड़ी तफ़्सील में नहीं जाऊंगा लेकिन यह वेतनों के ठहराने का काम जरूरी हो गया, क्योंकि हमारे में से कई लोग, उद्योग वाले, या तो काम लेने वाले, नौकरों से मजदूरों से इस प्रकार से काम लेने लगे जिस में वह एक प्रकार से हमारी बेगार सी करने लगे। इस लिये यह मिनिमम वेज (minimum wage) या फ़ेयर वेज (fair wage) या लिविंग वेज (living wage) शब्द व्यवहार में आये हैं। मैं उस के लिये अगर कोई सहूल शब्द इस्तेमाल करूँ तो मैं मिनिमम वेज के लिये रोट्टी वेतन कह सकता हूँ और लिविंग वेज और फ़ेयर वेज के लिये जीवन निर्वाह या जीवन वेतन कहूंगा। वेतनों को मुक़र्रर करना यह कोई नई बात नहीं है। हम सरकारी महकमों में कई अचह बेवज़ (grades) स्केल (scale) ठहराते हैं, तो यह जो स्केल का ठहराना या

दर का मुक़र्रर करना, यह एक प्रकार से वेतन ही मुक़र्रर करना है।

लेकिन जब हमारा दायरा बढ़ता है और जब सेठ और मजदूर आपस में झगड़ा करते हैं, तो हमें कायदा बनाना पड़ता है। तो यह कायदा हम ने कोई आज से नहीं बनाया है, हिन्दुस्तान में ऐसे कायदे कई साल पहले से बनने लगे हैं और दुनियां में भी कई हिस्सों में ऐसे कायदे बनने लगे हैं। सन १९४८ में जब यह रोट्टी वेतन का क़ानून मंजूर किया गया उस समय हम ने अपने प्रान्तों अथवा प्रदेशों को मियादा दे दी थी। जो परिशिष्ट के पहले हिस्से में दिया गया है उस में चन्द दिन हुए इन उद्योगपतियों से यह कहा गया था कि आप १९५१ के मार्च की १५ तारीख तक वेतन मुक़र्रर कर दीजिये, कम से कम वेतन। लेकिन हमारे माननीय सुब्रमाणियम साहब और श्री वेंकटरामन साहब वगैरह मद्रास के झगड़े में लगे हैं, और वहां का प्रश्न कोई ऐसा उलझा हुआ है कि वह लोग आपस आपस में बहस में सुलझा रहे हैं। मैं उन से कहना चाहता हूँ कि जिन प्रान्तों को पार्ट (१) के बारे में कहा गया था, उन सब प्रान्तों ने क्या किया। और चूंकि वह नहीं करते हैं इस लिये हमें आज यह संशोधन करना पड़ रहा है और इसे हम एक साल के लिए बढ़ा रहे हैं। केन्द्र तो बहुत कुछ अच्छा काम करना चाहता है और हमारी प्रान्तों की धारा सभाएँ भी बहुत हमदर्दी के साथ गरीबों के सवाल को, मजदूरों के सवाल को हल करना चाहती हैं लेकिन मैं बड़े अदब के साथ कहना चाहता हूँ कि लेबर स्टैंडिंग कमेटी (Labour Standing Committee) में जब यह संशोधन आया और बहुत बहस हुई तो हमारे माननीय मंत्री जी ने बताया कि क्या करें, कोई प्रान्त आज तैयार नहीं

है इस चीज को हाथ में लेने के लिये। वह हिम्मत नहीं करते हैं। तो क्यों हिम्मत नहीं करते हैं? क्या घबराहट है? अगर कोई चीज करना है तो हम साफ साफ कह दें कि हम करना चाहते हैं। अगर वह चीज बाज बेमौका है, अप्रासंगिक है तो हम केन्द्र को बतला दें कि हम कम से कम दस पंद्रह साल तक कुछ न कर पायेंगे तो केन्द्र को यह भी लगेगा कि हम क्यों फुजूल समय और अपनी शक्ति बरबाद करें इस कानून को बनाने में। लेकिन उन को कोई न कोई मुसीबत ऐसी आ जाती है, और वह मुसीबत कब आती है, मियाद खत्म होने के एक दो महीने पहले। और वह कहते हैं कि अब तो हम कुछ न कर सकेंगे, एक साल और बढ़ा दिया जाय, छः महीने और बढ़ा दिया जाय और बाद में हम कुछ करेंगे। इस सम्बन्ध में मैं यह जरूर कहना चाहता हूँ अपने माननीय मंत्री जी से और पहले भी कहा था कि हमें साफ स्थिति बतला दीजिये, कि क्या बात है। कौन से प्रान्त क्यों नहीं करना चाहते हैं, कम से कम वेतन ठहराने में उन को क्या मुसीबत है? कोई कहता है कि मजदूरों की मजदूरी इतनी बढ़ गई है कि उस में मिनिमम वेजेज ठहराने की कोई जरूरत नहीं है। तो मैं कहता हूँ कि वह घबराते क्यों हैं? यहां दिल्ली में बहुत थोड़े दिन हुए दिल्ली ट्रांसपोर्ट अथॉरिटी (Delhi Transport Authority) जो है उस के कर्मचारियों के लिये कम से कम वेतन ठहराया गया। उस में जो वेतन ठहराया गया है उस से ज्यादा भी मिलता है लोगों को। तो क्या इस के यह माने हुए कि जो वेतन हम ठहराते हैं वह वेतन हमेशा रहेगा, इस से ज्यादा नहीं बढ़ाया जायगा? यह इस का मतलब नहीं है। हाँ अगर कोई कायदा कानून जानने वाले वकील की तरह

दिमाग लड़ा कर यह कह दे कि जो कम से कम वेतन ठहराया गया है वह भी ज्यादा से ज्यादा वेतन रहने वाला है। लेकिन मैं कहूंगा कि मजदूर कोई ऐसा नहीं है, और मजदूरों के नेता चाहे वह कांग्रेसी दिमाग के हों या साम्यवादी हों या कोई दूसरे हों लेकिन उन का दिमाग और मजदूरों का दिमाग हमेशा चलता रहता है, वह स्थिर नहीं है स्थितिस्थापक नहीं है। वह तो कोई न कोई चीज निकालेंगे ही। आखिर हमें जो हमारा स्टैण्डर्ड है उस को नीचा तो नहीं करना है। कोई एक रोटी खा कर रहना चाहता है, कोई रोटी और चटनी खा कर रहना चाहता है लेकिन उस के साथ सब्जी भी चाहता है। सोधी जी हमारे मुर्गा खा कर और भी मोटा होना चाहते हैं, तो इसी हिसाब से कोई दूध की पूरी खा कर मोटा होना चाहेगा। तो आदमी तो हमेशा बढ़ना चाहता है वह कोई छोटी चीज नहीं लेना चाहता। जैसे जैसे हम आगे जाते हैं वैसे वैसे हमारी क्षितिज बढ़ती जाती है। हम यह न मानें कि आज जो मिनिमम वेज है, शायद पांच रुपया है वही कायम रहेगी, उसे बढ़ाया न जायगा। तो मेरे अर्थ करने का मतलब यह है कि हम इस झगड़े में न पड़ें। हम तो यही कहें कि यह चीज करनी चाहिये या न करनी चाहिये। और अगर करना है, अगर रोटी वेतन हमें मुकर्रर करवाना है, कहां करवाना है, किस के लिये करवाना है यह बाद की बात है। जब तक कल कारखाने वालों को देखते थे तब तक खेत वाले हमेशा लेबर (Labour) को सपोर्ट (support) किया करते थे। लेकिन अब जब कि कृषि के मजदूरों का सबाल आया तो जितने हमारे कृषि करने वाले खेती करने वाले हैं उन को लगने लगा कि यह हमारें ऊपर आफ्त आ गई। मैं तो कहता हूँ कि उन्हें यह महसूस न करना चाहिये कि अब

[ श्री भट्ट ]

हमारे पास से ज्यादा पैसा चला जायगा। बहुत कर के अभी भी कई जगह जो मजदूरी देते हैं वह रोटी वेतन से कम नहीं देते हैं, भाई कामत जी के मध्य प्रदेश में शायद कुछ कम देते होंगे, लेकिन दूसरी जगह मेरा यह अनुभव है कि ठीक ठीक वेतन दिया जाता है। वह जो मिनिमम वेज ठहराई गई है उस से ज्यादा ही दिया जाता है। हां किसी जगह के कुछ क्षेत्र को छोड़ दिया जाय तो मुझे इस में कोई धबराहट नहीं मालूम पड़ती है। मेरी समझ में यह बात नहीं आई कि हमारे प्रान्त वाले क्यों धबराते हैं और इस चीज को क्यों नहीं करते हैं। क्योंकि यह दलील हमारे सामने कभी रक्खी नहीं गई और न हमारे माननीय मन्त्री जी ने ही बताया है कि उनको यह दिक्कतें हैं इसलिये वह नहीं करते हैं। इसलिये लेबर स्टैंडिंग कमेटी ने यह प्रस्ताव किया था कि हम इस बिल को इस रूप में मंजूर नहीं करना चाहते हैं, जिस रूप में आज है। अगर आप इस को इसी रूप में रखना चाहते हैं तो मैं आप से कहूंगा कि आप इस बिल को रक्खिये ही नहीं और जैसे चलती है वैसे ही चलाइये। आखिर हमारे हेल्थ इन्श्योरेन्स बिल का क्या हुआ, हमने वह मंजूर कर लिया, एक साल तक पड़ा रहा और अब हम उस में संशोधन कर रहे हैं। अगर इस प्रकार की कोई दिक्कत हो तो उसे आप हमारे सामने लाइये। हम उस दिक्कत को मिटावेंगे। लेकिन अब जो संशोधन आना चाहिये था वह माननीय मंत्री जी की तरफ से आना चाहिये था क्योंकि लेबर स्टैंडिंग कमेटी में यह कहा गया था कि आज भी बेंकटरामन साहब ने और दूसरे साथियों ने संशोधन दिये हैं कि कम से कम यह किया जाय कि उन

को १९५३ तक की मियाद दी जाय। १९५३ तक वह क्या करें और क्या न करें यह नहीं है। सारे प्रान्त में मिनिमम थोड़ा मुकर्रर करें यह भी नहीं है। इस बिल में लिखा हुआ है कि क्लॉज २ पार्ट २ में कि जिस प्रान्त के एक मर्यादित क्षेत्र और मर्यादित काम के लिये वह मुकर्रर करना चाहें तो वह भी कर सकें। इतनी हम ने गुंजाइश रखी है तब इस में धबराने की क्या बात है? और तब प्रांत वाले कैसे एतराज उठाते हैं कि यह १९५३ तक भी हम नहीं कर पायेंगे? तो मैं कहना चाहता हूं कि मैं इस पक्ष में हूं। हमें जब कभी कोई चीज करनी हो तो उस का लक्ष्य बनाना चाहिये। हम को मर्यादा रखनी चाहिये। अगर हम लक्ष्य और मर्यादा न रखें तो उस चीज तक हम पहुंच नहीं सकते हैं।

यह मर्यादा रख कर जो बात यहां सुझाई गई है वह बहुत ही अनुरूप और अनुकूल बात है। इसलिये मैं बहुत लम्बी बहस में नहीं पड़ना चाहता क्योंकि बहुत से और भी मेरे मित्र बोलने वाले हैं। लेकिन मैं माननीय मन्त्री जी से यह अदब से कहना चाहता हूं कि यह चीज जो उन की तरफ से आनी चाहिये थी उसको मेरे दूसरे मित्र लाये हैं। अब उन को इसे मंजूर करना चाहिये। मैं समझता हूं कि प्रान्त वाले भी इस सवाल को जरूर हल करेंगे और जो सन् ५३ की मियाद रखी गई है वह बहुत लम्बी मियाद है। मैं आशा करता हूं कि इस मियाद में प्रान्त वाले इस को कर सकेंगे। और बिना किसी की नुक्ताचीनी किये हुए मैं आशा करता हूं यह जो सुझाव दिये गये हैं और यह जो लक्ष्य रखा गया है इस पर हम पहुंच सकेंगे और हमारी मुराद पूरी होगी।

(English translation of the above speech)

**Shri Bhatt (Bombay):** Sir, I shall not be going into any kind of details with regard to the Minimum Wages Act. This work of wage-fixing has come to assume some importance because some people in industry have started getting work out of petty employees and labourers which would almost amount to *begar*. Hence, the expression 'Minimum Wage', or 'Fair Wage' or 'Living Wage' has come to be used. If I were to employ easier terminology I might use the expression '*roti vetan*' for 'minimum wage' and '*jivan nirvah*' or '*jivan vetan*' in place of 'living wage' and 'fair wage'. The fixation of wages is not a new thing. We fix grades and scales of pay in the case of people serving in Government offices which too is a kind of wage fixation. But as our sphere of activities expands, when disputes arise between the employer and the employee we are obliged to frame rules. Thus we are not doing it today for the first time. This process started in India several years ago and it is also being done in other parts of the world. When the law relating to Minimum Wages was passed in 1948 we set a time-limit for our Provinces or States, as laid down in the first part of the Appendix. In pursuance of that provision the industrialists were called upon some time back to fix the minimum wages by the 15th March, 1951. Our hon. friends, Shri Subramaniam, Shri Venkataraman and others are occupied in the Madras tangle which is rather complicated and which they are trying to resolve by mutual discussion. I would like to ask them what have all those Provinces done who had been asked to take action as provided in Part (1). Since they are not doing it we are today constrained to bring forward this amendment under which we are extending the limit by one year. The Centre wants to do a lot of good work and the Legislative Assemblies of our States also want to solve the problem of the poor classes, and the labourers most sympathetically but I have to submit very respectfully that, as told by the hon. Minister, when this amendment came up before the Labour Standing Committee it was found that some of the Provinces were not at present prepared to undertake that job, that they lacked the courage. Now, why should they lack the courage? What are they afraid of? If we want to do anything we should say so frankly. If, however, they feel this is not the opportune time for it they should tell the Centre that they would not be in a position to do anything for say ten or fifteen years. The Centre would thus realize that it is

no use for them to waste their time and energy in enacting this legislation. On the other hand, they just keep having some trouble or the other and this trouble comes just a month or two before the expiry of the time-limit. Then they come out with the plea, 'We shall not be able to do anything about it at this time. Please give us a year's or six months' extension before we can do anything.' In this connection I have to ask the hon. Minister, as I have done before, that he must tell us what is the exact position, what are the States that do not want to do it and why and what are exactly the difficulties in the way of their fixing the minimum wages. Some say the wages of the labourers have already gone up so high that it is no longer necessary to fix the minimum wages. But, then, why are they fighting shy of it? Here in Delhi, just recently, the Delhi Transport Authority fixed the minimum wages for their workers. Wages at a rate higher than that fixed by them are being received by people. But does that mean that the wages we fix are going to endure for ever and would not be raised? That is not the thing. Someone might say in a lawyerlike fashion that the minimum wage now to be fixed is also going to be the maximum wage. But I would say the labourers are not like that. Their brains and the brains of their leaders, whether professing the Congress creed or the Communist ideology, are constantly working. They are neither idle nor stuck up. They must hit out something new. Moreover, we are not going to lower our standards. One man is glad enough to eat bread alone, another wants bread with *chutni* and a vegetable too. Our Sindhiji would like to have his roast chicken and grow fatter still. Similarly someone else might like to grow fat on milk *purries*. Thus man wants to march on to better and higher things of life. And, as we move forward the horizon expands. Let us not take it for granted that the minimum wage—suppose it is five rupees today—is going to stay where it is and would not be raised. So let us not worry about that. We have only to state whether this thing ought to be done or not. If we decide in favour of the fixation of the minimum wages, it will be a matter for further decision where we would like to have this done and for whose benefit. So long as attention was focussed on the millowners alone the agriculturists always used to support labour but now that the question of the agricultural labour has arisen the agriculturists have started feeling apprehensive. They are afraid they are in for suffering. I must say that they should not feel any more that

[Shri Bhatt]

they would be made to part with larger amounts. In many places, even now, the wages given are not less than the minimum wages. May be they are not paying them enough in Kamathji's Madhya Pradesh but I can say from my experience that proper wages are being paid. They are rather being paid more than the minimum wage that has been fixed. Besides, I see no harm if some areas are exempted. I fail to understand why the State Governments are fighting shy of it and are not prepared to do it. For they have never advanced the argument that they are not doing it because of such and such difficulties, nor has the hon. Minister told us so. Hence, a proposal was moved at the Labour Standing Committee that the Bill was not acceptable to them in its present form. If you want to keep this Bill in its present form I would ask you that you should rather not have it at all and carry on as best as possible. For instance, what happened to our Health Insurance Bill? We passed it but it just remained as it was for a year and now we are out to amend it. If there is some such snag in this case too, bring it to us and we shall try to set it right. But now whatever amendment was called for should have been brought forward by the hon. Minister for it was said at the meeting of the Labour Standing Committee, and even now amendments have been proposed by Shri Venkataraman and others, that they should at least be granted time up to 1953. It is not mentioned, however, what they propose doing up to 1953. It is not essential that the minimum wage be applied to the whole of the State. Clause 2 part (2) of this Bill provides that they may fix it in the case of a specified area and a specified trade. When such is the latitude given, why be afraid? How is it, then, that the State Governments come forward with the plea that they would not be able to do it up to 1953? I would therefore say that, in my opinion, whenever we wish to do something we must formulate our objective. We must have an aim before us for we cannot achieve our purpose unless we have a definite aim and objective. This is the right and proper thing. I would not enter into a lengthy argument because many of my other friends are also anxious to speak. But I must submit very respectfully that this proposal that has been brought forward by my hon. friends should have proceeded from the hon. Minister. Now he should accept it. I think the State Governments would also try to solve the difficulty. The period asked for, viz., up to 1953, is too long a period. I hope

they would be able to do it within that period. Hence, without criticising anybody, I express the hope that we would be able to act up to the suggestions that have been made and would achieve our end.

Shri Rathnaswamy: I entirely disagree with the views expressed by Mr. Subramaniam. When he said that agricultural labour would become unprofitable, I would say that if such of those people find this agricultural industry not to their profit, they may as well surrender their lands to the tillers of the soil. This is an unfounded apprehension felt only by persons like my hon. friend Mr. Subramaniam in this country. There is no other justification to think that there is not that amount of interest or sincerity on the part of the States to implement this Act which was passed about two years back. There is some justification to feel that most of the States in this country only succumb to the dilatory and delaying tactics of the vested interests and business magnates. There is one danger which I should like to point to such of those who are against fixing minimum wages in this country either in respect of agricultural industry or of urban industry and that danger is something very potential and I would urge on those to give due consideration to such possibilities. You know for certain that in this country, and particularly in the South, these agricultural workers are largely influenced by the reactionary forces and anti-national forces and I should like to draw your attention to some of the outbursts and demonstrations of the agricultural workers in districts like Tanjore in the Madras State. Therefore, unless the Government takes early steps and unless the Government takes a little more interest in this matter of fixing adequate wages for the workers either in respect of agricultural industry or other industries in this country, I am afraid these workers would constitute a potential danger to the security and the stability of the State. Therefore, our Government both in the States and in the Centre should turn their attention to this very important question of fixing the minimum wages as early as possible, instead of succumbing to the delaying and dilatory tactics of vested interests in this country, of fixing a living wage, a fair wage to a worker and which alone would make him contented and happy. Only if he is contented and happy, we could expect more production in this country and unless we do that, I am afraid, whatever we may do in regard to improving of seeds or other ingredients in respect of production, it is not



going to solve this question of food production in our country. As I remarked a few days back, it is a very tragic thing that the Government pays so much of attention to other factors ignoring a very important factor, namely, that the human material is a very potential factor in the chain of production in this country. The human factor is a very important link in the chain of production and that should be attended to by the Government. What are the actual conditions of the agricultural workers in the villages today? My hon. friend, Mr. Kamath was referring to some State, I believe it is Madhya Pradesh and there he said that the agricultural worker is getting about eight annas to one rupee but I can tell you that the worker in the rural parts in the Madras State hardly gets six annas to eight annas a day...

**An Hon. Member:** Where do you get this figure?

**Shri C. Subramaniam:** Two rupees is the minimum wage that a man gets and one rupee for a woman.

**Shri Bharati:** That may be in Tanjore perhaps.

**Shri Rathnaswamy:** This is borne out by personal experience. When I had the privilege of going round some of these districts, particularly Tanjore in the South, I came across persons who gave evidence to me to the effect that they were not getting even six annas a day. I may tell you this is on very good authority and my statement here in this House is borne out by my personal experience.

**Shri Bharati:** What sort of work is it? Was it for a full day work or any kind of labour?

**Shri Rathnaswamy:** I need not labour to point out to you, Sir, the appalling and the tragic conditions in which the poor agricultural workers live in the rural parts in this country. They only exist and do not lead a life. There is absolutely no chance of leading a dignified and decent life in this country. It is not an uncommon feature that an agricultural worker has many dependants on his slender earnings to support and in more cases than one, I have come across agricultural workers having a number of children, with their aged parents to look after and a number of dependants to support and that is the pitiable plight in which an agricultural worker lives in this country. I ask how will it be possible for him to look after his own self, keep his body and soul together and at the same time

look after so many people who depend upon him with the slender earnings? This apart, there are other difficulties and there are numerous troubles to which he is subjected in the rural parts. What do you say about the rural debts? An agricultural worker sometimes has got to mortgage his property for the sake of attending to his domestic necessities and in most cases I have come across workers who have sold away their little holdings and consequently, their conditions have been.....

**Mr. Chairman:** I do not want to interrupt the hon. Member. I may tell him that we are not discussing the Minimum Wages Act itself. When he himself was so anxious to speak, he gave the House an indication of his desire that some time-limit should be fixed. I propose to finish the discussion at four o'clock. I would therefore request the hon. Member to be brief so that other hon. Members may also get a chance.

**Shri Rathnaswamy:** I shall finish in a few minutes, Sir.

The fact is that the agricultural worker in particular in this country does not lead a life worthy of a human being. This is something to which our Government must pay attention.

There is another fact to which I should like to draw your attention. In some of the factories we find that a worker gets hardly about Rs. 40 a month whereas the manager and other officers get as high a salary as Rs. 2,000 and 3,000. This looks like a very cruel disparity which is beyond human conception. I always feel that unless the Government sets its own house in order, unless Government takes early steps to reduce and eliminate the disparity which is existing within the four corners of the Government itself, unless the Government takes early steps to reduce the high salaries of officers and raise the salary of the menials, I am afraid this disparity in the private concerns will not be removed and therefore I venture to suggest on this occasion that if the Government alone could reduce this disparity between an officer and a *chotkidar*, it will have a very salutary and healthy effect on the private concerns in this country.

I do not want to say anything more as many other hon. Members are very anxious to speak on this subject. I should only conclude by saying that unless the Government takes it into its head to fix a fair wage, a minimum wage, a decent wage to the industrial

[Shri Rathnaswamy]

and agricultural workers in this country, very early, I am afraid, these discontented workers would constitute a potential danger to the security and stability of the State.

**श्रीचरी रणबीर सिंह :** बिल का समर्थन करते हुए मैं यह कहे बगैर नहीं रह सकता कि मंत्री महोदय ने जो समय की तादाद मुकर्रर नहीं की है इस से उन्होंने मजदूरों की और देश की सेवा नहीं की है। मैं तो यह भी कहता हूँ कि इस से एक तरह से उन्होंने संसद् के कुछ अधिकारों को भी छीनने की कोशिश की है, वह इस तरह कि अगर इस में एक साल या दो साल की तादाद होती तो अगर तादाद बढ़ाने की जरूरत होती तो संसद् को उस पर अपने विचार प्रकट करने का मौका मिलता। जहाँ मैं यह जरूरी समझता हूँ कि इसकी भियाद मुकर्रर की जाय वहाँ मैं उन प्रान्तीय सरकारों के साथ भी अन्याय नहीं कर सकता जो कि इस मसले की अहमियत को समझती हैं। इस से कोई इन्कार नहीं कर सकता कि देश के अन्दर सब से गरीब तबका खेत मजदूर का है और देहात के मजदूर का है। लेकिन इस को भी मानने से कोई इन्कार नहीं कर सकता, जैसा कि मेरे लायक दोस्त रथनास्वामी ने कहा, कि आज अगर एक मिनट के लिए यह मान भी लिया जाता कि एक दम से बड़े २ सरकारी अफसरों की तनख्वाहें सौ रुपये भी कर दी जायें तो भी यह मुमकिन नहीं कि यह समस्या हल हो जाय। मैं नहीं समझता कि यह समस्या तेंजी से हल की जा सकेगी। यह समस्या बहुत बड़ी है और यह उस समय तक हल नहीं हो सकती जब तक कि देश की पैदावार न बढ़े। मैं इस बात से भी अनभिज्ञ नहीं हूँ कि प्रान्तीय सरकारें क्यों अभी तक इस मसले को हल नहीं कर पायी हैं। इस के अन्दर एक

बहुत बड़ा मसला छिपा हुआ है और वह यह है कि बड़े बड़े कारखानों के मालिक चन्द बड़े आदमी हैं और उन की आमदनी भी बहुत बड़ी होती है लेकिन खेत के मालिकों का जहाँ तक ताल्लुक है उन में से बहुत से तो ऐसे आदमी हैं जो खेत मजदूर की तरह ही गरीब हैं। हो सकता है कि कुछ बड़े बड़े जमींदार हों, लेकिन जमींदारी उन्मूलन के साथ उन का तो ख़ात्मा हो रहा है। इस के बाद छोटे २ और गरीब खेत के मालिकों और खेत के मजदूरों का मसला रहता है। मेरा निवेदन यह है कि यह ठीक है कि खेत के मजदूर के साथ न्याय हो, और यह बहुत जरूरी भी है। उस की मदद की निहायत जरूरत है। इसीलिये पिछली दफा जब हाउस के सामने एक और मसला था तो मैं ने उस वक़्त कहा था कि अगर राशन कहीं होना चाहिये तो वह खेत के मजदूर के लिए होना चाहिये क्योंकि वह सब से गरीब है और उस के अन्दर इतनी ताकत नहीं है कि वह खुले बाजार में चीजों को खरीद सके। मेरे एक भाई ने बतलाया कि इन मजदूरों की तादाद सात करोड़ है, दूसरे ने बताया कि १५ करोड़ है। मेरा दावा है कि जिन लोगों से इन का वास्ता पड़ता है उन की तादाद भी १५ करोड़ है। तो जहाँ आप को इन सात या १५ करोड़ के लिए सोचना है वहाँ आप दूसरे १५ करोड़ के लिए भी सोचना बन्द नहीं कर सकते हैं। यह बड़ा ही टेढ़ा मसला है। अगर आप को उन की मजदूरी मुकर्रर करना है तो आप को यह भी मुकर्रर करना होगा और देखना होगा कि खेत के अन्दर जो पैदावार होती है जिसे खेत का मालिक खेत के मजदूर की मदद से पैदावार करता है, उस को क्या पड़त पड़ता है और उसी के मुताबिक आप को हर एक चीज का भाव मुकर्रर करना होगा।

फिर आप ऐसा करने से इन्कार नहीं कर सकते और आज की तरह अपने देश में बुनिया के सब देशों से सस्ता कपास नहीं बिक सकता जितना सस्ता कि आज हमारे देश में बिक रहा है। फिर आप इन्डस्ट्री के लिए सस्ता माल नहीं ले सकेंगे जैसे कि आप आज शुगर फ़ैक्टरी के लिए सस्ता गन्ना लेते हैं। जो लोग खेत के मालिक हैं आज न कोई उन की आबाज है और न उन की तरफ से मजदूरी नियमित की कोई मुखालिफ़त है। मैं भी थोड़ी सी ज़मीन का मालिक हूँ और मेरा यह विचार है और मैं सब से पहले इस बात की बकालत करता हूँ कि सरकार के लिये अफ़सलमंदी तो यह है कि एक साल तो दूर रहा, वह इस चुनाव के पहले ही उन की कम से कम मजदूरी मुकर्रर कर दे। वह उस को निबाह सकेगी या नहीं यह बाद को देखा जायगा। इस से चुनाव में काफ़ी फ़र्क पड़ने वाला है। मैं आप को ऐसे कई कायदे और कानून गिना सकता हूँ जिन को संसद् ने पास कर दिया है पर आज तक उन पर अमल नहीं हुआ है। मैं समझता हूँ कि अगर हम उस कानून को भी पूरा न कर सके तो कम से कम देश को एक रास्ता दिखाने में तो ज़रूर कामयाब होंगे। हो सकता है कि हमारी कोशिश एक साल नहीं तो डेढ़ साल के अन्दर कामयाब हो जाय। यहीं नहीं बल्कि मैं तो इसलिये भी यह चाहता हूँ कि अगर खेत के मजदूर की मजदूरी मुकर्रर हुई तो कोई सरकार इस बात से भी इन्कार नहीं कर सकेगी जो खेत की पैदावार का भी वह भाव मुकर्रर करे। जिस से काश्तकार को कुछ बच सके। जहाँ देश की नीति बनाने में देश के मजदूर का हाथ होगा वहाँ देश की नीति बनाने में उन आदिमियों का भी ज़रूर हाथ होगा

जो मुश्किल से पांच एकड़, दो एकड़ और तीन एकड़ और सात एकड़ के मालिक हैं। मैं यह अवश्य मानता हूँ जो खेत के मजदूर की हालत उन से कमजोर है जिन के पास चाहे दो एकड़, या तीन एकड़ ज़मीन है। दो एकड़ और तीन एकड़ ज़मीन वाले की अवस्था उन के मुकाबले में अच्छी है। जैसा मेरे लायक दोस्त रथनास्वामी ने कहा देश के अन्दर लोगों के जीवन स्तर में बहुत फ़र्क है।

देहात में एक काश्तकार की ज़िन्दगी के स्तर के अन्दर और यहाँ सन्ट्रेटिक्ट के बड़े अफ़सर के स्तर के अन्दर, जो ४ हजार तक तनख़्वाह लेते हैं, कितना फ़र्क है इसका आप खुद अन्दाज़ा कर सकते हैं। तो मैं इसलिये भी यह चाहता हूँ कि यह जल्दी मुकर्रर हो।

इस के साथ ही जब खेत के मजदूर की मजदूरी मुकर्रर हो तो आप को इस बात पर भी ग़ौर करना पड़ेगा कि खेत की जो पैदावार है उस के लिये भी ऐसा भाव मुकर्रर करें कि जिस से उस के लिये वह फ़ायदेमन्द हो।

अब मैं हाउस का ज्यादा समय न लेते हुए आख़िर में फिर दोबारा यह नम्र निवेदन करता हूँ कि मेरी बड़ी ख़्वाहिश है और मैं चाहता हूँ कि माननीय मंत्री महोदय इस को ५३ नहीं सन् ५२ ही मुकर्रर करें और अगर हो सके तो, जैसा कि डाक्टर राम सुभाग सिंहजी कहते हैं, चुनाव के पहले ही कोई तारीख़ मुकर्रर की जाय, वह शायद और भी अच्छा हो।

श्री नाडगिल : ज़मींदार फिर मत नहीं देंगे :

श्रीधरी रजबीर सिंह : काश्तकार की कौन सुनता है फिर भी इस के साथ साथ वह

[ चौधरी रणबीर सिंह ]

इस बात पर भी गौर करें कि जो दिन रात मेहनत करते हैं और मुश्किल से ज़रा सी, थोड़ी बहुत, खेत के मज़दूर की सहायता लेते हैं, क्योंकि जब काटने का वक़्त होता है तो वह काट नहीं सकते तो जिस ने बोया और जिस ने दिन रात मेहनत की और रखवाली की, उस को भी पूरी मज़दूरी मिलती है या नहीं।

**Mr. Chairman:** Is the hon. Member supporting the Bill or opposing the Bill?

**Ch. Ranbir Singh:** I am supporting the Bill with some amendments in my mind.

**Shri Meeran (Madras):** To be more appropriate—with mental reservations.

**चौधरी रणबीर सिंह :** जैसा मेरे लायक दोस्त ने कहा, मैं उन को यह बताना चाहता हूँ कि मेरे दिमाग़ में कोई रिजर्वेशन नहीं है। मैं उन को बताना चाहता हूँ कि मेरी भो उतने ही जोर की ख्वाहिश है जितनी कि शायद उन की हो। मेरी तो ख्वाहिश है कि दो साल नहीं, एक साल नहीं, ४ महीने में ही मज़दूरी मुक़रर कर दी जाय। मैं यह भी बताना चाहता हूँ कि यह करना कोई मुश्किल नहीं है। आप हर एक सूबे में एक एक गांव का एक महीने के अन्दर अन्दाजा लगा सकते हैं। दूसरे गांवों में जो हालत है उस में कोई बहुत ज्यादा फ़र्क नहीं होता है। उस हालत का पता लगाना, अगर सरकार चाहे, तो कोई मुश्किल नहीं है। तो जैसा वह कहते हैं मेरे दिमाग़ में कोई रिजर्वेशन नहीं है। मैं इस का समर्थन करता हूँ और मंत्री महोदय से यह प्रार्थना करता हूँ कि अगर वह ५३ नहीं तो ५२ मान लें और ज्यादा क़पा करें तो ५१ की ही कोई तारीख़ रख लें और इस को मंज़ूर करें तो अधिक अच्छा हो।

(English translation of the above speech.)

**Ch. Ranbir Singh (Punjab):** Sir, while supporting the Bill I am compelled to submit that the hon. Minister by not fixing the time-limit has not rendered a good service either to the labourers or to the country. I may say this much also that he has tried to usurp some of the rights of the Parliament because had there been some time-limit of say one or two years and had the Parliament thought it worth while to increase the same then it would have found an opportunity to discuss the same. While I think the fixing of the time-limit to be essential. I cannot do any injustice to those State Governments who recognise the importance of this question. Nobody can deny the fact that the most destitute class in this country is that of agricultural labourers and village labourers. But nobody can deny this fact also, as my able friend Shri Rathnaswamy has stated, that this problem cannot be solved, even if it be supposed for one minute that the pay level of the higher officers be brought down to Rs. 100 at once even then I think it is not possible to solve this problem. I do not think that this problem can be solved so easily. This is a great problem and cannot be solved until the production of the country is increased. I am not unaware of the fact as to why the State Governments have not been able to solve this problem so far. It hinges upon a very difficult problem and it is that the few rich persons own large industries and have large incomes but so far as the question of land owners is concerned very few of them are as poor as the agricultural labourer. It is just possible that there may be some rich Zamindars among them but after the abolition of Zamindari they are not going to remain as such. Thereafter remains the question of petty and poor land holders and the agricultural labourers. I submit that it is essential that justice should be done to the agricultural labourer. It is not only right but imperative as well. He must be helped. For this reason the other day when some other question was before the House, I had submitted that if the system of Rationing was to be extended it should be enforced on agricultural labourer because his lot is the poorest of all and he has no means to purchase commodities in the open market. One of my hon. friends has stated that their number is 7 crores while another friend gave their number as 15 crores. I submit that the number of those people whom they have to deal with also comes to 15 crores. Therefore, while you have

to consider for the welfare of these seven or 15 crores of people you cannot at the same time forget the other 15 crores. This is certainly a complicated problem. If you were to fix their wages you will also have to see at the same time whether the production of the land, which is produced with the help of agricultural labourer, gives to the landholders a suitable profit or not, and in accordance with this you will have to fix the prices of the various commodities. You cannot think otherwise and in no case cotton cannot be sold at such rates as are lowest in the whole world as you find it being sold in our country today. Then you will not be able to get cheap raw materials for your industries as for instance you take sugarcane today at very cheap rates for your sugar factories. The people who are called land holders have neither any voice nor are they in any way opposed to the fixing of their wages. I myself hold a little land as far as I am concerned I hold that it would be an wise act on the part of the Government that what to say of one year they should fix the minimum wages of the agricultural labourers even before the coming elections. Whether the Government would be able to fulfil their commitments or not would be seen afterwards. It is likely to cause a lot of difference in the fate of the elections. I can give you the names of so many legislations which though they have been passed by the Parliament have not been implemented even till today. Even if we could not achieve success in implementing this legislation then at least we would certainly succeed in showing a way to the country. It is also just possible that our attempts may bear fruit and we may succeed after a year or two. If the wages of the agricultural labourer are fixed, no Government could refuse to fix the prices of the agricultural products so that the tenants may also get some part of the profits. Where the workers will have a hand in formulating the policy of the country side by side with them the agricultural labourer and those who own hardly two, three or five acres of land will certainly have a hand in deciding the future policy of the country. I believe that the position of the agricultural labourer is worse than those who own two, three or five acres of the land, and these land holders are comparatively in a better position than the agricultural labourers. As my able friend Shri Ratnaswamy has stated there is a vast difference between the standards of living of the people of this country. You can yourself have an idea regarding the difference of standard of living of a poor tenant

living in the villages and that of an officer working in the Secretariat and drawing a salary pay of say Rs. 4,000 per mensem. For this reason too I wish that the wages should soon be fixed. While you fix the wages of the agricultural labourer, you at the same time must take into consideration the fact that the prices of the agricultural produce should be so fixed as may be beneficial to them.

Now without taking much time of the House I very humbly submit that I wish that the hon. Minister fixes the time-limit till the year 1952 instead of 1953 and, if possible, as Dr. Ram Subhag Singh has submitted the time-limit should preferably be fixed before the elections take place.

**Shri Gadgil:** Then the Zamindars would not give votes to us.

**Ch. Ranbir Singh:** Who is there to listen to the poor peasants. But anyhow the Government should consider the case of those people also who themselves work hard in the fields and take very little help from agricultural labour because at the time of harvest they cannot harvest the crops all by themselves. Hence the Government should see that those who sow the seeds, guard and protect the fields and work day and night in them also get their full remunerations.

**Mr. Chairman:** Is the hon. Member supporting the Bill or opposing the Bill?

**Ch. Ranbir Singh:** I am supporting the Bill with some amendments in my mind.

**Shri Meeran (Madras):** To be more appropriate—with mental reservations.

**Ch. Ranbir Singh:** Sir, I would like to tell my hon. friend that there is no reservation in my mind as remarked by him. I like to tell him that I am also so keenly desirous of this as he may perhaps be. I wish that instead of two years or one year the time-limit of only four months should be fixed. I also like to state that it is not very difficult to do so. It will hardly take one month's time to have a complete idea about each of the villages of each of the States. There is no worth mentioning difference between the conditions obtaining in different villages. It is not difficult for the Government, if they so desire, to have an idea of the conditions obtaining in the villages. However as my hon. friend suggests, I have no mental reservation. I support this Bill and request the hon. Minister to accept the time-limit of if not 1953 then of

[Ch. Ranbir Singh]

1952 and if he is out to please us then he may accept the suggestion and preferably fix some date in 1951.

**Shrimati Renuka Ray:** In 1948, with great enthusiasm and with great expectations this House enacted two measures, one the Employees' State Insurance Act and the other the Minimum Wages Act. The enthusiasm that this House felt about this measure has been, I am constrained to say, very much damped because of the things that have happened since. I remember saying myself that this particular legislation would be the nucleus of a charter of rights for the workers of this country. But to-day we find that about this Minimum Wages Act, regarding which we gave three clear years to the Governments, both at the Centre and in the Provinces, to bring in minimum wages for agricultural labour, nothing has been done till now. I do not want to reiterate the arguments that have already been made, in particular by our labour leaders who had put the points very clearly. I only want to say this much, that almost all Members of this House are agreed that a time-limit must be fixed in the Bill as it stands before we can accept it. But the fixing of a time-limit by itself is not enough. These three years have shown very little activity on this front. A young Member of this House Mr. Subramaniam...

एक माननीय सदस्य : वह बूढ़ा है ।

[An Hon. Member: He is old.]

**Shrimati Renuka Ray:** He is quite young. I do not mean the number of years he has been in this House. Well, he advocated a counsel which I should say, looked like one of extreme despair and extreme gloom. While he was speaking, I was wondering whether he was advocating the case for Communism, because if the difficulty is so great that it is impossible of solution and if the State Governments and the Central Government cannot overcome the difficulties and we cannot even fix a minimum wage for labour, then the only alternative that remains open is to try Communism. There is no other alternative. Therefore, I was really wondering whether he was indirectly supporting the case for Communism. If we do not go ahead with the measures necessary for bringing about a welfare state, then we cannot avoid Communism. We talk a lot about bringing about a welfare state, but whether it is the Central Government or the State Governments, when it comes to implementation, we find very little is done. I am aware of the fact that so far as this particular

legislation is concerned, the hon. Labour Minister is handicapped because of the lack of interest displayed by the State Governments. Nevertheless, I do feel that it is not good enough just to extend the time-limit and be faced with the same situation again. Some steps must be taken now to see that there is some advance so that when next year the time-limit expires, we can actually bring in the minimum wages for agriculture and not just have an extension for another year and another year again.

Now, Mr. Subramaniam in his speech said that the difficulties were so great because of the difference existing in the different villages with regard to the position of labour. But I would like to point out that whatever these differences might have been, there were three long years and that was quite sufficient time to have found out some formula by which we could have brought in this minimum wages for agriculture, and one year more is more than sufficient if there is the intention to achieve the aim. Sixty per cent. of the labour in this country is landless labour and when we talk of agricultural labour, it is this class of labour that is affected, and it is no use for certain people who have got land over a certain minimum to say that they are the only people who are slightly better off to-day—and that is a fact—and they cannot afford to give these wages to their labour. I cannot understand the argument that you must take away controls and allow the agriculturist to put up prices as he likes before he can give minimum wages to labour. The agriculturist is the only person who is reaping some benefit under the present regime, I should say.

**Ch. Ranbir Singh:** Has anyone calculated these losses or benefits to agriculturists?

**Shrimati Renuka Ray:** I am not giving way; even as it is, I have very little time. It is clear that this thing has got to be done and if any legislation has got to be passed or any changes effected in the Constitution, I am sure this House will be prepared to pass those legislations and agree to those changes. This House will be prepared to change the Constitution if that is necessary to empower Parliament in such a way that really this very much needed reform does come in and is implemented. It may be said that it is easy enough for us to say all this, but it is very difficult for the Central Government to do anything. Mr. Venkataraman suggested that the Central Government should bring out a Notification. But I do not think that would bring about much result either.

I personally feel that the only way in which the Centre could make the States play the game is to utilise the power that the Centre has, the financial power. It is an overall problem of all-India importance. It is not a question of one State or another. I know the States are faced with their own difficulties which they want to overcome. But it is for the Centre to tell the States that if they want development grants or subsidies, in matters of real importance, where we give directives, if they do not follow those directives we shall have to curtail the grants. It was so in the case of food and it is the same here also. This is a matter of primary importance. It may not seem so apparently to some of us but actually, as Mr. Khandubhai Desai pointed out, the prosperity of the country depends on the contentment of labour. And agricultural labour is the largest force of labour in this country and if this Government really means what it says, when it brings forward this legislation—even the extension of time they require we are willing to give if a time-limit is fixed—it should in the meantime get into touch with the State Governments and see to it that whatever power they have, particularly the agency of financial power, they use it to make the States conform to and bring about within a year's time minimum wages for agricultural labour.

**Shri Sarangdhar Das (Orissa):** It is very unfortunate for me to say this that all these legislations about minimum wages, fair wages and so on and so forth are nothing but show-pieces to lull the people to sleep. I say show-pieces most advisedly for this reason that we here in this Parliament pass laws which create enthusiasm all over the country, every one in the House knowing full well that the people who are to implement these laws are in the State Governments and legislatures and they will see to it that these are not implemented. That is why I say that it is all window-dressing. Mr. Subramaniam said we here are planning to grow more food while labour leaders talk of higher wages and minimum wages but I want to ask him, do you grow more food on empty stomach? I do not wish to go into wages in kind or cash that the agricultural labourers in this country are getting. Enough has been said about it. But I wish to point out that even the one, two or three acrewalla agriculturist or cultivator is also an agricultural labourer. His paddy or wheat or other grains are finished by the end of Baisakh or Jaith and thereafter he has to work just the same as the landless labourers. I do not wish

to go into the disputed fact of the percentage of the people who are agricultural labourers. But I wish to point out, while many of you are discussing the food crisis which we are faced with now and while we are begging for food from America, Russia or China, that every one of us wishes that our country should produce enough food for ourselves. At the same time we are breeding at a rate that it becomes impossible with the present per acre yield to supply enough food to every body. Also we know that the land under cultivation or even the fallow land is in the hands of people like you and me who belong to the higher castes of society, not only Hindu but also Muslim and the rest of the people labour for us. Because they labour, we are able to feed ourselves well and grow stout and strong and we have time to talk about culture, while those toiling millions who produce the food for us do not have enough even for two meals a day for themselves. Do you expect these people to produce more?

I also wish to point out that the per acre yield of every crop in India is the lowest in the world. In paddy, Japan and China produce three or four times more than we do. These are yields that have to be improved in order to have sufficient food for the whole country and this cannot be done unless the people who actually till the soil are well fed and contented. I do not plead for the down-trodden, as they are called, for this reason, namely, that the Members of this House have a habit of calling socialists and labour leaders as mischief-mongers. But I am pleading for the Members of this House themselves, for the people of this country and for the production of sufficient food. That is why it is necessary to fix the minimum wages for agricultural labourers as soon as possible.

[SHRIMATI DURGABAI in the Chair]

Mr. Subramaniam says that the minimum wages will be considered as maximum wages but I would urge him to concede the minimum wages first and then leave it to those labourers to fix their maximum wages as in every other field they have done. The agricultural labourers are an unorganised body: they are scattered all over the country and they are not vocal. Consequently we all pooh-pooh the idea of giving a better living to this category of labour. Because of the agitation and the strength of the union movement, which has been strengthened by some of our friends here because we know their strength and

[Shri Sarangdhar Das]

what they can do, because we know how they can strike and tie up every thing, their demands are considered and conceded. But when it comes to agricultural labourers, those ignorant, uncouth rustics, who are not vocal, their demands are laughed at. But a time is coming, if you do not concede their minimum requirements, if the Government which claims to be *mabap* Government and wants to establish a welfare State does not concede the minimum wage and does not use any kind of pressure that is possible under the Constitution and waits until the Constitution is amended, unless they use some kind of pressure, as Mrs. Ray pointed out just now, on the State Governments to see that they fix minimum wages for agricultural labour within a measurable period of time, say a year or two, then the time is coming when those labourers themselves will take the land itself from you and me, because you and I own the land, not these labourers. The Minister himself may be a lawyer living in cities and may never have cared about lands but most of us own lands. Here I do not mean to say, as Mr. Subramaniam alleged that there is an impression, that representatives in the State legislatures are in anyway inferior persons, but in a State legislature, whether they are representatives or

4 P.M. nominated people, they have after all a narrow outlook. Here in Parliament where brains from all quarters of the country come and clash with each other, there is a broader outlook, and using that outlook we can pass legislation and see to it that production increases by proper implementation of the ways and means for improving it. Simply saying, "Produce more, or else you die", will not do. Those days are gone. The labourers, because of very low wages, all over the country are running away from the fields to the nearest towns, to wherever there are factories. It does not necessarily mean that all do get jobs in the factories or other enterprises, but the tendency for the last three or four years for labourers has been to run away from the villages to the towns. I know how in my place plenty of big cultivators, land-owners owning 50 to 500 acres are lying helpless; their land is lying fallow because they cannot get labour. This is the aspect to which I draw the attention of the House, and the Minister particularly. I am not pleading for these

hungry people—which has already been done by other speakers—I am pleading so that the whole country

will get enough food. Consequently, I think, this is a more important matter for you to pay attention to than simply say that it cannot be done now, that it must be put off.

I therefore oppose this Bill for postponement of implementation of the minimum wage legislation. I particularly oppose the clause which leaves the extension of the time-limit to fix agricultural wages to the discretion of State Governments. If we pass the Bill in its present form it will mean freedom to the State Governments to put off its implementation from year to year and from decade to decade until some revolution comes, as Mrs. Renuka Ray has said and as another speaker from South India has said.

Shri Gadgil: Nearly ten speakers have participated in the discussion and I think most of the points covered are quite common. What the Bill really desires to do is, firstly, to extend the time up to the 31st day of March, 1952 so far as the employments in Part I of the Schedule are concerned. Secondly, so far as the employments in Part II are concerned, the Bill, as it stands, seeks to give complete discretion to the various States. And one more amendment to the proviso is that the scheme, instead of making it compulsory to be introduced in the entire territory of the State, can be introduced by stages and by areas.

Now, so far as the history of this legislation is concerned, the House is probably aware of the fact that as early as 1946 the Bill was introduced and was circulated by executive order, for eliciting public opinion. Then in November 1946 it was referred to a Select Committee. It was ultimately passed in the year 1948. It is true, no doubt, that in the original Bill a time-limit was fixed and it was expected that within that time-limit the State Governments would be able to do something with respect to Part I as also Part II. In the course of today's discussion there has been some misrepresentation about the State Governments. I want to inform the House that so far as the State Governments were concerned, I cannot say they were reluctant or unwilling or indifferent. As a matter of fact, so far as the employments in Part I are concerned, considerable progress has been made. I want to inform the House also that so far as the Central Government is concerned, in the matter of Madras Port, Bombay Port, Calcutta Port, and the Delhi Transport Services the Government has fixed minimum rates in respect of certain categories of workers.



**Shri Venkataraman:** What are they, may I know?

**Shri Gadgil:** So far as Madras State is concerned, they are: rice mill, flour mill, *dhal* mill, oil mill, tobacco manufactory. Then, Madhya Pradesh: tobacco manufactory, public motor transport, oil mill, cement industry, glass industry. As regards West Bengal: rice mill and flour mill. Then, as regards Punjab: oil mills, plantations, inferior employees under local authorities. The categories in Bihar are: woollen carpet-making or shawl-making, rice mill, flour mill, *dhal* mill, *biri* making manufactory, oil mill, road construction or stone-crushing, public motor transport, tanneries, tobacco manufactory. For Ajmer it is tobacco manufactory only. For Delhi it is: flour mill, *dhal* mill, inferior employees under local authorities, building construction, public motor transport, stone-crushing. Finally, Andaman and Nicobar Islands: timber operations.

So far as other States are concerned, steps are being taken and it was at the suggestion of these States that some time should be given for the full implementation so far as Part I is concerned, and hence the necessity of extending the date till the 31st day of March, 1952. So far as Part I is concerned, it offers no difficulty, but so far as fixing of minimum wage for employments under Part II is concerned, it offers a very tough problem. In the first place, the area, as has been said by one of my friends, is as wide as the country itself. Knowing full well the magnitude of the problem, an agricultural labour inquiry was instituted and it is doing its work which it has to do by certain stages. The social problems of fixing minimum wages for agricultural workers were first discussed by the Central Advisory Board which has come into operation on the passing of the Bill in 1948, and then after careful deliberation a questionnaire was drawn up and circulated from which certain data has been collected. How difficult it is may be easily visualised from the fact that there are different land tenures; different traditions and so much variation in the conditions and circumstances area-wise, class-wise and function-wise. This was illustrated very well when half a dozen Members from Madras expressed half a dozen views on one particular matter. Knowing the complexity of the problem, the Enquiry Committee is working. It is collecting data, but in the course of these two years it was not possible to collect sufficient data to justify the fixation of minimum wages immediately. Therefore, in the month of November 1950, there was some dis-

ussion with the Members of the Planning Commission and a Committee was appointed to examine the material which the Ministry of Labour had on the subject of rural wages. That Committee was appointed to consider whether valid conclusions could be drawn from it and what additional material, if any, would be required; secondly, to formulate the statistical conclusions which may be drawn from the available material and also to assess the economic consequences of legislation for fixing minimum wages for agricultural workers on the lines prepared by the Ministry of Labour. The Committee went into the whole question. Whatever material was available was placed before it. The Committee reported to the Planning Commission and the conclusions may be summarised as follows. The data available is not adequate to fix actual levels of wages district-wise and area-wise for the whole country. However, on a small scale it is possible to have some scheme. Essentially, there is difficulty in the matter of administration of this scheme of minimum wages when it is implemented. According to the findings of the Committee and also according to general knowledge, agriculture in this country is heterogeneous, individualised and on a small-scale and is very difficult of being categorised so as to conform to a uniform standard or come under a uniform treatment throughout the country. But one conclusion that this Committee came to was that the economic consequences would be beneficial on the whole.

At the same, we have to consider when we fix minimum wages in the field of agriculture what the result would be if the minimum is more than the actual; how the rise will be absorbed; whether it will be absorbed in the lower returns to the employers or whether it will be reflected in the rise in price to the community; or whether it will be reflected in further unemployment. I think it is nobody's desire that by raising the minimum wages or fixing it up without any relation to existing conditions or surrounding circumstances or other factors which are related and therefore have to be taken into consideration, we should create a situation where probably more evil than good would come out of it. The point that I want to urge is that the problem is very complicated. It is a question as to whether the scheme should be formulated and implemented throughout the country, or whether it should be implemented as I said area-wise. We have to consider what would be the consequences of both. So far as the first alternative

[Shri Gadgil]

is concerned, I have not the slightest doubt that if it is insisted that this scheme should be implemented throughout the length and breadth of this country before a specified date nothing but disaster will follow. If on the other hand we go gradually, taking into consideration the circumstances of each sector and then moving on as we gain some experience and then trying it elsewhere, also if mistakes are found trying to correct them—if we follow that policy, then we can avoid the disaster which would take place in the other case. I think that anything that is done gradually always gives better and enduring results in the end.

Even today some people ask the question—and in fact it has been asked in this House—whether there is any necessity in view of the great rise in wages at present for a measure of this type. For my own part, I am of the view that irrespective of the fact whether wages have increased or not there is necessity that this scheme must be implemented area-wise and also gradually, because although agriculture is not nationalised, if there is any factor in the economy of any country which deserves to be worked from the national interest only, it is land. Whether for the time being it is owned by many or few is of no consequence. Whether the labourers employed are more or less is less important. But the broad fact remains that this factor is of the highest consequence to the life and vitality of the community. Therefore, it must be worked in the highest interests of the country. If that is the ideal, it may not be achieved by leaving things as they are, or in an atmosphere of *laissez faire*. There must be regulation and control. What degree of control and regulation there should be and in what way they should be exercised is a matter of detail. But on the broad principle there must be agreement and if that is so, we cannot leave the question of wages merely to the sweet will of the agricultural employer. It will be found that the wages in the course of the last seven or eight years have increased so much that I might as well give the House a few figures. In Bihar, the average agricultural wage has gone up from Rs. 0-3-5 in 1939 to Rs. 1-2-9 in 1949-50. In Bombay it has gone up from Rs. 0-4-11 to Rs. 1-8-6. In Madras it has gone up from Rs. 0-5-7 to Rs. 0-15-7. In fact, the wages have increased more than the increase in the average price of articles. That being the case, it may with some amount of plausibility be said that things may be allowed to re-

main where they are. But as I said, that is not the point which should be considered. What is to be considered is the correct approach to this problem, and therefore the necessity of this Bill.

It is wrong to say that the State Governments will not do it. The State Governments are bound to carry out the directions of the Central Government, but they are also faced with certain difficulties and certain other matters, and in a federal Constitution you cannot dictate everything from above. After all, even for the purpose of carrying out the executive functions of the federal Government we have to use the agency of the States and therefore unless we have the co-operation of the States no scheme, however good it may be on paper, is likely to succeed. Therefore, I should like to say that it is not fair to blame the State Governments.

A point was made by Mr. Kesava Rao that unless something is done, it is possible that masses of landless labour will go over to Communism. I have no such fear. But at the same time I want to approach this problem, as I stated, not because it has something to do with politics, which I do not believe, but because there is some consideration of social justice involved in the same.

Mr. Kamath in his criticism, as usual, suggested that Government have not been doing anything. Probably he closes his eyes and does not want to see what the Government here and in the provinces have done. I wish he were present here to hear what I said the various States have done during the last few years.

This is all I have to say and so far as the common point, made out by most of the speakers that there must be some time-limit, is concerned, I am prepared to accept relevant amendments to that effect.

**Shri Sarangdhar Das:** May I know whether the hon. Minister is aware that quite a large number of agricultural labourers all over the country receive their wages in kind and that quantity in kind has not increased during the last eight years?

**Shri Gadgil:** I cannot say off-hand. But it seems that the traditional system of wage is fast disappearing.

**Mr. Chairman:** The question is:

“That the Bill further to amend the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, be taken into consideration.”

The motion was adopted.

**Clause 2.—** (Amendment of section 3, Act XI of 1948)

**Shri A. C. Guha** (West Bengal): I beg to move:

In part (1) of clause 2, in sub-clause (ii) of the proposed clause (a) of sub-section (1) of section 3 of the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, for the words beginning with "from such date as may be" and ending with "Official Gazette" substitute "before the end of the year 1953".

The Bill, as it has come before the House, is a record of our failure.....

**Mr. Chairman:** I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he is accepting the amendment? \*

**Shri Gadgil:** I am accepting it.

**Mr. Chairman:** In view of the hon. Minister's acceptance, is it necessary for the hon. Member to speak?

**Shri A. C. Guha:** I would like to say a few words on my amendment.

**Mr. Chairman:** Since the hon. Minister has accepted the amendment, I think the hon. Member need not be at pains to put up a case.

**Shri A. C. Guha:** But I have to carry the House with me. (Some Hon. Members: The House is with you.) So, I hope you will allow me a few minutes. The Bill, as it has come before the House...

**Shri Gadgil:** If the hon. Member, whose amendment I have accepted, makes a speech, then perhaps I may reconsider my decision.

**Mr. Chairman:** Does the hon. Member wish to run that risk?

**Shri A. C. Guha:** I am not taking any risk, because of the confidence I have in the hon. Minister's stability of mind and opinion. I do not think he would change his opinion so soon.

The Bill as it has come before the House is a record of our failures and it is also an admission of failures and lapses of Government. Earlier the hon. Minister gave us a record of the attempts of the Provincial or State Governments for the implementation of the Bill. As far as I have been able to make out, the record is not, so very convincing. Even large sectors of our industrial life have not yet been covered by the provisions of this Act. This Act which was passed in 1948 covered three categories of labourers: the industrial labour in Part I of the schedule, the agricultural labour

classified in Part II and certain categories of labour which the State Governments may include in any of the two Parts of the Schedule. Then by a subsequent amendment, we extended the time to March 1951. The Provincial Governments have not been able to accomplish the task even in regard to industrial labour within the period. Now the Government have come forward with another Bill asking for some more time. The most astounding thing in the amending Bill is that no time-limit has been fixed for the implementation of the fixation of wages for agricultural labour and it has been left to the discretion of the State Governments.

The 1921 census showed the agricultural labourers of our country as just over two crores; according to 1931 census they were three crores and 30 lakhs. The 1941 census did not give the figures of agricultural labourers. I think by now, that is, within the period of these 20 years our agricultural labour must have gone up to about five crores. Of these about 90 per cent. are casual labourers which means that they get only seasonal jobs. The House can very well imagine the miserable financial condition of the casual agricultural labour who form about 90 per cent. of the agricultural labour of this country.

It is a dangerous thing to leave this entire sector without any provision. The state of affairs only reminds us of what happened during the Industrial Revolution period in Britain and in the Western European countries. The industrial labour would be getting much higher remuneration. So there would be a rush from agriculture to industry and this uprooted humanity will be coming to the towns, leaving the rural areas and their agricultural pursuits. Such a condition in Britain in the middle of the last century gave rise to the famous theory of proletarian dictatorship of Marx. That lacuna in that theory has been rectified by Lenin by recognizing that agricultural labour is an important—and a very important—factor, they being the primary producers of wealth. So I would very much urge upon the Government and the hon. Minister to accept this amendment and to make a provision that these agricultural labourers may be covered within the benefits of this Act at least by the end of 1953. If the Government fail to do that, they will be leaving this entire mass of agricultural labourers to be reduced by the siren song of subversive and anti-social forces. If the Congress during these long years had harped upon any particular item it

[Shri A. C. Guha]

was the welfare of agricultural labour. Gandhiji had repeatedly urged upon us that the Congress had no reason to exist unless it was in effect an organisation of the agriculturists. So this Congress Government cannot deny its obligation to safeguard the interests of agricultural labour. Not only a provision in the Act will suffice, but Government has to see that the State Governments really implement the provisions of this Act and do their utmost and that the State Governments may not have to approach the Central Government at the end of 1953 for another extension of time. I would urge upon the Government that during the period of nearabout three years which my amendment would give they will see what progress is being made by the State Governments. They should take a periodical survey and see at every stage that at least an attempt is made and some progress is made in regard to the implementation of this provision. With these few words, I commend my amendment to the acceptance of the House and the Government.

**Shri Gadgil:** May I bring to your notice that in clause 2(1)(a)(i) the phraseology is "before the 31st day of March, 1952". Therefore I suggest that in the hon. Member's amendment instead of the words "before the end of the year 1953" the words "before the 31st day of December, 1953" may be substituted.

**Mr. Chairman:** I hope the hon. the Mover of the amendment is agreeable to this change.

**Shri A. C. Guha:** I have no objection.

**Mr. Chairman:** Amendment moved:

In part (1) of clause 2, in sub-clause (ii) of the proposed clause (a) of sub-section (1) of section 3 of the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, for the words beginning with "from such date as may be" and ending with "Official Gazette" substitute "before the 31st day of December, 1953".

The amendment is open for discussion. I wish to know whether any other hon. Member wishes to speak on this amendment.

**Dr. M. M. Das:** I want to speak, but it will be difficult for me to confine myself within the scope of this particular amendment.

**Shri Bharati:** I would like to have a little clarification. I would only like

to know whether the effect of accepting this amendment is that no option is given to Local Governments and that it is binding on them to have minimum wages in respect of employment specified in Part II before the end of 1953, and that the option of referring it to the Planning Commission is completely taken away.

**Mr. Chairman:** By fixing it as "before the 31st day of December 1953", I think, the effect will be not to leave it to the discretion of the State Governments and the Governments themselves fixing the date. It does not require any further clarification. I shall therefore put the amendment to the vote of the House.

The question is:

In part (1) of clause 2, in sub-clause (ii) of the proposed clause (a) of sub-section (1) of section 3 of the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, for the words beginning with "from such date as may be" and ending with "Official Gazette" substitute "before the 31st day of December, 1953".

The motion was adopted.

**Mr. Chairman:** Shri Munavalli.

**Shri Venkataraman:** May I point out that all the amendments to clause 2 will now be out of order—the amendments giving the late—because we have accepted that for the words "from such a date etc." the words "before the 31st day of December, 1953" be substituted. Therefore all the amendments giving the date will now be out of order.

**Mr. Chairman:** That is so. All the other amendments given notice of are redundant in view of the fact that the amendment moved by Mr. Arun Chandra Guha has been accepted.

The question is:

"That clause 2, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clause 2, as amended, was added to the Bill.

Clause 1 was added to the Bill.

The Title and the Enacting Formula were added to the Bill.

**Shri Gadgil:** I beg to move:

"That the Bill, as amended, be passed."

**Mr. Chairman:** Motion moved:

"That the Bill, as amended, be passed."

**Dr. M. M. Das:** I thank you for this opportunity which you have given me and which has come to me at last to express my views on this Bill. The Minimum Wages Act was passed in the year 1948. Since then three long years have passed. But during these three years neither the State Governments nor the Central Government have been able to implement all the different provisions contained in this Act. So far as non-agricultural labour is concerned, some of the State Governments have carried out the provisions to some extent. But so far as agricultural labour is concerned, not to speak of State Governments, even the Central Government has not been able to implement the provisions or fix minimum wages of agricultural labour in the Centrally-administered areas. It appears that our hon. Minister of Labour has now been convinced that it is one thing to enact a legislation but it is altogether a different thing to implement the provisions of that legislation. The pleas that have been put forward by State Governments for not implementing the provisions of this Act, especially relating to agricultural labour, are two. Firstly, they have pointed out that the provisions have to be implemented upon a very vast area, nearly the whole country. Secondly, that all the different varieties of agricultural labour ought to be brought under the purview of this provision. But I think there is a third and a most insurmountable difficulty which none of the States for obvious reasons has mentioned. Just and reasonable wages of labour cannot be determined unless and until the different factors that enter into the cost of production of the finished goods are known. A detailed knowledge of the amount of capital employed, of the depreciation of the machinery and implements and of the cost of raw materials on the one hand, and the sale prices of the finished product on the other, is essentially necessary for a determination and fixing up of the minimum wages of the labour that is employed.

So far as the agricultural labour in our country is concerned, these things have not yet been determined. No attempt has been made on the part of the Government to determine and fix the sale prices of agricultural produces of this country according to any rational and sound basis. For any particular agricultural commodity, for any particular agricultural product, any price that suits the Government has been fixed, without taking into consideration the different factors that enter into the cost of its production. The price of the money crop which has a good local as well as a foreign

market and which feeds our industries and brings a large amount of foreign exchange to our Government, has been fixed at a high rate, whereas the prices of foodgrains, the cereals which Government has to procure for the continued existence of our rationing system, have been fixed at a comparatively lower level. The result has been an upset in the balance of our agricultural economy and great resentment and discontent among certain sections of our agriculturists, especially those who produce mainly our foodgrains. The State Governments as well as the Central Government are fully aware of these facts and these are the reasons why it has become impossible for these Governments to implement the provisions of this Bill so far as agricultural labour is concerned. Attempts have been made from time to time to convince the Government about the desirability and necessity of fixing up the sale prices of the different agricultural products of our country. As early as in June 1944 the Policy Committee on Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries recommended that Government should guarantee to the agriculturists an assured market at a remunerative price for agricultural produce and that a sub-committee should be appointed to report as to....

**Mr. Chairman:** May I inform the hon. Member that the scope of speech at the third reading stage is very limited? Therefore he need not cover the whole field already covered by various hon. Members. He may just say how the provisions of this Bill, which is now to be passed, could be implemented etc.

**Dr. M. M. Das:** I want to impress upon my friends here that the question of fixation of minimum wages for agricultural labour can be taken up only after the sale prices of the different agricultural products are determined. Now this question of fixing of the sale prices of the agricultural products has been taken by the Planning Commission and therefore I wanted that this should be taken up after the report of the Planning Commission. A great injustice will be done to me if any of my friends here think that I am against this present amending Bill. I am cent. per cent. in favour of this Bill but the only thing that I want is that all available data should be collected and the conditions that are prerequisite for the implementation of the different provisions of the Bill should prevail in this country. Otherwise the passage of this amending Bill would be reduced to a mere farce as the passage of the

[Dr. M. M. Das]

original Bill—the Minimum Wages Act—had been.

**Shri Venkataraman:** The hon. Minister stated some figures with regard to the wages prevailing in Madras. I have before me the report of the inquiry into the conditions of agricultural labour to which he referred earlier in the debate. These are the figures: An average family consists of 1.3 wage earners and 0.6 helpers. You may take it as two persons and the amount which they earn in a year as a result of statistical inquiry is Rs. 179.3 out of agriculture...

**An Hon. Member:** What is the wage of the labourer is the question.

**Shri Venkataraman:** I thought we understood statistics....

**Mr. Chairman:** I hope the hon. Member will kindly bear my remarks in mind.

**Shri Venkataraman:** Because of the interruption, I had to say something else.

I am saying this because the hon. Minister made it appear that the wages have increased from five annas to 15 annas and that a certain section of opinion thought that it was not necessary to fix the minimum wages. I want to controvert that and say that it is not correct. What he has given is with regard to casual labour, which is employed very very casually. You know the type of employment that is available in the villages. For the whole of the year, he is unemployed. Therefore, it is not right to take only the average wages of casual employment. You ought to take the earnings of agricultural families during the course of the whole year and see what wage he gets. Here two members of an agricultural family together earn Rs. 177 in one year and that works per unit of one earner four annas per day on an average. Then my second point is....

**An Hon. Member:** It was one anna in 1938.

**Shri Venkataraman:** We thank ourselves that we have gone from one anna to four annas. The other sources of income come to Rs. 322 in a year, so that the result after meeting his expenditure, according to the report of the Labour Ministry itself, is that he is in debt at the end of the year by Rs. 42. Therefore, I do not want this House or the country to go

with the impression that the agriculture labourer is in any way in a prosperous condition. If anything, he is in the worst condition imaginable in this country. The other sections of labour and other sections of the population have improved but the lot of the poor agricultural labour has not at all improved. On the other hand the conditions in which he lives call for greater sympathy and greater attention both by this House and by the State Governments. I never meant to criticize the State Governments but I am bound to say that they have not shown as much enthusiasm over this piece of legislation as they have done in the case of Part I employment. Therefore, I want to urge on this occasion, when the Bill is going to be passed, that Government will not come again with another Bill, as is being predicted by my hon. friends here, for a further extension.

**Mr. Chairman:** The question is:

"That the Bill, as amended, be passed."

The motion was adopted

#### COAL MINES SAFETY (STOWING) AMENDMENT BILL

**Mr. Chairman:** The hon. Mr. Gadgil.

**The Deputy Minister of Works, Production and Supply (Shri Bura-gohain):** I beg to move:

"That the Bill further to amend the Coal Mines Safety (Stowing) Act, 1939, be taken into consideration."

**Mr. Chairman:** I think when the hon. Minister's name is put down on the order paper and when he is present here, it will be showing courtesy to the Chair as well as to the House that he should say that he has asked the Deputy Minister to deputize for him to pilot this Bill. I think the Chair and the House are entitled to that much of courtesy.

**The Minister of Works, Production and Supply (Shri Gadgil):** There is nothing wrong in asking the Deputy Minister to pilot the Bill. I may say that there was no intention to offend the Chair or the House. As you know, for the whole day, I have been working and in fairness, I should be allowed to have some relief.

**Mr. Chairman:** I do sympathize with the hon. Minister but he was just present when I was calling out his name. Actually when the Deputy Minister stood up, he just walked out and that is why the Chair took objection.

**Shri Buragonain:** This is one of the shortest of short Bills that have been brought before this House. It seeks to increase the maximum rate of excise duty that is leviable on coal. The proceeds of this duty are credited to the Coal Mines Safety (Stowing) Fund. This fund is utilised to grant assistance to the coal mines to carry out stowing operations. These operations are necessary to ensure the safety of the miners and also to avoid wastage of coal in the coal mines. These stowing operations consist in filling up with sand or other incombustible material the space left by the extraction of coal. So, this measure is designed to ensure the safety of the coal miners, particularly those who work underground.

The rate of maximum duty was fixed as far back as 1939, when the Bill was first put on the Statute book. Since then, the price of coal has risen up by more than four times; but this maximum duty has remained where it was. It has been felt within recent years that the proceeds of this duty are quite inadequate to meet the growing needs of the coal mines. It is therefore proposed in this Bill to raise that maximum rate. At the existing rates, the proceeds come to about Rs. 43 lakhs in a year. On the other hand, the expenditure that has to be incurred by the Coal Mines Safety (Stowing) Board, which is charged with the task of administering this Act, comes to about Rs. 77½ lakhs in a year. So, the Board, has, during the past few years, been actually eating up its reserves. Although, in this Bill, it is proposed to raise the maximum duty to three times the original rate, I must make it plain to the House and particularly those hon. Members who have tabled amendments seeking to raise that rate, but not to the extent that is proposed in this Bill, and assure them that it is not the intention of Government immediately to raise the rate to the maximum that is proposed in the Bill. The immediate intention of the Government is to raise it to six annas per ton on coal and nine annas per ton on hard coke. This need for carrying out stowing operations is a progressive one and it will be a retrograde step if we were to scale down the expenditure on assistance that has to be given to ensure the safety of the miners, who are working there, and also to avoid wastage of coal. After all, coal in this country is not an inexhaustible commodity and so, the conservation of coal, which is also one of the objects to be achieved by this measure, has also to be looked after.

With these few words, I commend my motion for the acceptance of the House.

**Mr. Chairman:** Motion moved:

"That the Bill further to amend the Coal Mines Safety (Stowing) Act, 1939, be taken into consideration."

There is an amendment by Mr. A. C. Guha to clause 2. Is the hon. Member moving the amendment?

**Shri A. C. Guha (West Bengal):** Yes; I would also like to speak on the consideration motion.

**Mr. Chairman:** If the hon. Member is going to speak on his amendment, it may not be necessary to speak now.

**Shri A. C. Guha:** I would like to speak on the consideration motion.

**Mr. Chairman:** And also on the amendment?

**Shri A. C. Guha:** Also on the amendment, if necessary. I cannot say that now.

**Mr. Chairman:** I would like to give full opportunity to the hon. Member. My object is not to stifle discussion. I only wanted to know from the hon. Member whether he was going to move his amendment. The hon. Member may go on.

**Shri A. C. Guha:** The purpose of this amending Bill is simply to raise the excise duty for stowing purposes from three annas to nine annas. This is an amendment to the Act of 1939. The money collected under the provisions of this Act is handed over to the Stowing Board, and as far as I have been able to gather, this House or Government have little control over the expenditure of that sum. There have been several other funds like this. The total amount thus collected and handed over to certain bodies or boards through the powers vested in the Government by certain legislations passed by this House, I think, would come to about three crores. The Central Tea Board, by way of tea excise gets about 95 lakhs or something like that. The Coal Mines Labour Welfare Fund also comes to about 90 lakhs; the Mica Mines Welfare Fund also comes to about 30 lakhs. This Fund also comes to about 50 lakhs. Now the proposal is to increase the rate from three annas to nine annas which means that the revenue collected by the provisions of this amended Act would come up to I think about 150 lakhs or something

[Shri A. C. Guha]

like that. I hope that this House has every right to see that the money collected by the provisions of any legislation passed by this House is properly spent and this House should have full opportunities to look into the affairs of the management of the Fund.

I find from the Coal Mines (Stowing) Board's report that the Board is composed of six members. Mr. N. Barraclough, Chief Inspector of Mines is *ex-officio* Chairman. There is another Mr. L. J. Barraclough.

**Shri Buragohain:** If I may interrupt, he is the same person; he is *ex-officio* Chairman.

**Shri A. C. Guha:** I have excluded the Chairman. One is Mr. N. Barraclough and the other is Mr. L. J. Barraclough, Chief Inspector of Mines more. The names are so unfamiliar that I can presume that they are not Indians, and I do not know to what nationality they belong. Another is Mr. Chanchani. Then, there are Messrs. Lala Ram Saran Das and Shrome.

**Mr. Chairman:** May I know whether the hon. Member wants to take a long time to conclude?

**Shri A. C. Guha:** Yes, I shall take some more minutes.

*The House then adjourned till a Quarter to Eleven of the Clock on Wednesday the 18th April, 1951.*