

good books because of their long-standing movement for the betterment of their service conditions.

Sir, I would request you kindly to see that this debate is continued on the next day, so that I may get an opportunity to come forward with other examples as to how these ordinary people, poor peasants are being cheated and how the propertied people are being given guarantee by the Constitution, whereas you do not care to consider the cases of the poor and the ordinary people.

I commend this bill and request you to continue the debate

MR CHAIRMAN There is now no motion before the House for the adjournment of the debate; and, therefore, I cannot take that into consideration at all.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA: That was my submission, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There was no motion. Moreover, you have to take the consent of the Speaker

THE MINISTER OF WORKS, HOUSING AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI K RAGHU RAMAIAH): If you adjourn, it will have to be balloted again

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA: If so, what is the fate of this amending Bill? Mr Chairman, Sir, don't give your ruling. Kindly tell me

MR CHAIRMAN The hon Member, in the course of his speech, has made a request that the discussion may be prolonged to the next day, or that the debate may be adjourned.

SHRI K RAGHU RAMAIAH: We have absolutely no objection to adjourn the debate on this, provided the consequences that follow from

this, according to the rules, will be taken with grace by the mover.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA: I agree to your proposal to adjourn.

SHRI K RAGHU RAMAIAH: I beg to move:

"That the further debate on the Constitution (Amendment) Bill be adjourned"

MR. CHAIRMAN The question is—

"That the further debate on the Constitution (Amendment) Bill be adjourned"

The motion was adopted.

16.34 hrs

EMPLOYEES' PROVIDENT FUNDS AND FAMILY PENSION FUND (AMENDMENT) BILL

(Amendment of sections 1, 2, etc.)

SHRI P M MEHTA (Bhavnagar) I beg to move*:

"That the Bill further to amend the Employees' Provident Funds and Family Pension Fund Act, 1952, be taken into consideration."

There is widespread unrest and discontent among the industrial workers of this country in regard to the shortcomings and maladministering of the present Act, viz., the Employees' Provident Funds and Family Pension Fund Act, 1952

The workers and the trade unions have constantly made a demand for some changes so as to meet the very purpose of the Act as well as the needs of the workers under the

*Moved with the recommendation of the President.

[Shri P. M. Mehta]

changing social order and new conceptions.

The House will recall, and the hon. Minister will also recall, that the Bill to amend this Act was brought forward in this House by the then Labour Minister, Shri Raghunatha Reddy, in August 1973. The amendment was then moved with the limited objective of making the provisions penal in regard to misuse of provident fund amount. If one looks at the speeches made by the hon. Members of this House during the course of the debate on that Bill, one will come to the definite conclusion that a consensus has emerged and members without exception, while supporting that Bill, expressed dissatisfaction regarding the administering of the Act and also made demand for a comprehensive Bill to amend the law more meaningfully.

Here I would like to state the impact of that amendment which was brought forward by the Labour Minister in the month of August 1973. According to the Minister the arrears recoverable from the employers at that time were of the order of Rs. 19.60 crores as on 31st March 1973. The arrears as on 30th September 1975, according to the information available to me, stand at Rs. 20.64 crores. It is interesting to note that at the end of 31st March 1972 also the arrears were of the order of Rs. 20.64 crores. In other words, the arrears as on 30th September 1975, is the same as the arrears on the 31st March 1972.

Taking this into consideration, the maladministering of the Act and the shortcomings of the Act, I have proposed some further measures, including penal provisions, in this Bill. It is a positive and constructive approach to the problems and defaults of provident fund amount by the employers. The second para of the

Statement of Objects and Reasons attached to my Bill reads as follows:

"Default in payment of provident fund contribution by the employer has become an everyday affair and the employers are tempted to utilise the provident fund amount as working capital and that too, without paying any interest and as such, more stringent penal provisions for default in payment including charging of interest, damages, penalty and punishment of fine and imprisonment, and association of responsible trade unions for more effective implementation of the Act is sought to be achieved by this Bill."

I have also proposed refund of the total accumulation together with interest on the completion of the stipulated period, say 20 years. This will create confidence and provide an incentive to the workers to save more and more and invest with Government.

Further, I have suggested a higher rate of contribution and a higher rate of interest on the provident fund accumulation. As you know, the rupee has to great extent lost its value and the eroding process is constantly going on. If the present position continues, then at the fag end of his active service, the worker will be very much adversely affected. He has to fulfil his social obligations like children's marriages, college education, etc. in his fifties. So, if the total accumulation is repaid after the expiry of 20 years of service, that will be very useful to him for discharging his family commitments and social obligations in a better way. Similarly, a higher rate of contribution and higher rate of interest will ensure more savings by the worker and more contribution by the employer, and consequently a larger total amount at the end of the stipulated period. This will be a very good incentive to the workers with small incomes to save regularly in their provident fund account.

The cumulative effect of all these measures will be that Government will be able to contain inflation and its evil effects. This has also been made clear in the Statement of Objects and Reasons.

Another important feature of the Bill is that it will bring all establishments with ten or more workers within its purview. Similarly, I propose a comprehensive substitute definition which covers all types of remuneration in one definition, that is, 'return of the labour put by the workers in money value'. All this will be covered under one definition. So, it is a comprehensive definition of the term 'wages'.

Too much is said about the participation of the workers in management. Here, I propose to appoint honorary office-bearers of the trade union as inspectors of this Act. This will give a vigilant supervision which will expedite the whole process of working and the functioning of the Act. It will prevent corruption and mal-practice on the part of the authorities. Therefore, I have proposed to appoint honorary office-bearers of the trade union as honorary inspectors. This is a new feature. If the Government accepts it, then it will smoothen the administrative functions under this Act.

You are aware of the situation that the recession has started. Thousands of workers are laid-off. 13 textile mills have been closed down. This news did not come out because there is a censorship, and the Government, at present, does not want to give this news to the people. Therefore, nobody knows whether 13 textile mills have been closed down. There is a proposal for taking over the closed units by the State Governments, but the Government of India is not paying any heed to this problem. I will give you one example. There is one mill called Priya Laxmi Mill of Baroda.

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI RAGHUNATHA REDDY): It is the State Government which wanted to take them over.

SHRI P. M. MEHTA: Certainly. You take them and hand them over to the State Government. The question is who will take them over? They could be taken over only under the Industrial Development and Regulation Act and that could be operated only by the Government of India; that is under the jurisdiction of the Government of India. Therefore, I think the State Government has proposed about it. If you take them under the ID&RA and hand them over to the State Government of Gujarat, they are prepared to run those units, because they are economically viable units.

In my home town, there is a factory called Bhavnagar Vegetable Products which has been closed down. This plant is producing vegetable oil. It has got capacity of 100 tonnes a day. It is a big factory.

They have also got a solvent extraction plant with a capacity of 100 tonnes a day. About a thousand workers were working in that plant. That has now been closed due to trade losses and other things. The Gujarat Government has also proposed to take over that unit and hand it over to the State Government. But nothing has been done so far by the Government of India.

Why I refer to these things is that all this creates problems for the workers. They are laid off. They are not getting the wages; they are not getting their provident fund dues. It creates untold suffering for the workers who are thrown out of employment as a result of the closure of the units.

In the same way, there is a recession in the automobile industry. In jute

[Shri P. M. Mehta]

mills, thousands of workers have been laid off. So is the case with engineering industry. The units run by the National Textile Corporation are also facing the crisis and they are on the verge of closure. This is a very serious situation.

The people of this country are not enabled to know the real economic situation. The economy is not reviving as the Government claims. On the contrary, it is on the way of crippling. Therefore, in such a situation, the Government should come forward with a progressive piece of legislation. Let them provide better social security under these circumstances. This is a social security legislation. Here, I have proposed a few things, to enhance the rate of provident fund, to enhance the rate of interest, to refund the provident fund dues at the expiry of a stipulated period, say, 20 years and to provide stringent measures for default. Today, the employers are utilising this amount as the working capital without paying any interest.

I have got the figures also. In the year 1972, at the end of 31st March, the arrears were of the order of Rs 20 crores and odd. At the end of 30th September, 1975, it is Rs. 20.64 crores. It has increased by a few lakhs of rupees. It has not decreased. So, it obviously requires a re-thinking in all these matters, stringent penal provisions, so that the employer is not tempted for any default.

We must admit that it is only the poor working class who is regularly contributing to the provident fund account and, by doing that, they are making small savings from their small incomes. If this is increased, as I stated earlier, it will also help the inflation containing process and its evil effects which hit the workers and poor classes.

I have also proposed the enlargement of the purview and covering of the uncovered sectors in this Act. As I was going through the previous debates on the last Amendment Act, I saw that the Labour Minister had expressed a desire to come forward with a comprehensive Bill. In the light of this, I hope the Government will accept this amendment to the Act. With these words I commend my motion to the Hon. House.

MR CHAIRMAN: Motion moved:

"That the Bill further to amend the Employees' Provident Funds and Family Pension Fund Act, 1952, be taken into consideration."

श्री राज नारायण शर्मा (धनबाद) :
सभापति जी, यह एम्प्लॉयज प्रोवीडेंट फंड और फैमिली पेंशन फंड बिल, 1974 जिसे अभी माननीय प्रमन्न भाई मेहता ने उपस्थित किया है यह जैसा कि हम के उद्देश्यों में लिखा हुआ है, बहुत ही अच्छे उद्देश्यों को रख कर के हम सदन के सामने लाया गया है। इस बिल के साथ साथ, अगर सरकार इसे कबूल कर ले, कोल्माइन्स प्रोवीडेंट फंड वाले बिल को भी साथ साथ अमल करती तो बहुत ही उत्तम होना। जैसा कि अभी आप के सामने रखा गया 1973 में जब पनाल्टी के प्रीवेंशन को कड़ा बनाया जा रहा था उसी समय सदन के हर कोने में हम तरह की भांग घाई थी और यह सारे पहलु जो आज हम बिल में हैं इन सारे पहलुओं के ऊपर सरकार का ध्यान आकर्षित किया गया था और सरकार ने भी हम सदन में कहा था कि अभी जल्दबाजी में हम सब प्रीवेंशन करने जा रहे हैं केवल पनाल्टी का या सजा देने का, लेकिन एक कामप्रोहिबिटिव बिल सदन के सामने उपस्थित करेंगे और उपस्थित कर के उस को पास करावेंगे। मुझे यह नहीं अभी जो बिल उपस्थित

हुआ है उस के ऊपर सरकार का क्या खर्च होगा, लेकिन यह बिल जो उपस्थित हुआ है सरकार के वायदों को बहुत कुछ अपने में इनकॉर्पोरेट करता है। मेरी समझ में इस में और भी इनकॉर्पोरेट करने की जरूरत है या दूसरे बिन्दु को भी लाने की जरूरत है। लेकिन उस में से बहुत अंशों को यह बिल इनकॉर्पोरेट करता है। आप जैसा देखेंगे कि जो 'नाल्डी' का प्रोवीजन 1973 की अगस्त में किया गया था उस प्रोवीजन के दावजूद भी जो बकाया था वह रकम घटी नहीं। और वह प्रोवीजन दो बिलों में किया गया था—कोलमाइन्स प्रोविडेंट फंड और एम्प्लॉइज प्रोविडेंट फंड। यहां तो खेरियत है कि बकाया रकम ज्यादा नहीं बढ़ी, केवल 20 करोड़ 62 लाख से 20 करोड़ 64 लाख हो गई, दो, ढाई साल में, बल्कि कहिए ढाई साल में। लेकिन वहां पर तो उस समय 11 करोड़ था जो अब लगभग 20, 22 करोड़ हो गया है। इस समय एम्प्लॉइज प्रोविडेंट फंड के अन्दर लगभग 65 लाख वर्कर्स कवर्ड हैं और कोलमाइन्स प्रोविडेंट फंड में तो केवल 5 लाख वर्कर्स हैं। 5 लाख रेटायर्ड्स का लगभग 20 करोड़ के उपर एरियर हो गया है और यहां तो 65 लाख रेटायर्ड्स की लगभग वहां रकम है यानी लगभग 20 करोड़ रुपये के और इस 20 करोड़ में से भी 10 करोड़ रुपये की ऐसी रकम है जो एक ही उद्योग टैक्साइल्स की है और टैक्साइल्स उद्योग में भी अधिकतर वे टैक्साइल्स वाले हैं जो अपने आप को सिक डेवेलपर किये हैं और सिक मिलों की हैमियत से आते वे सरकार के कब्जे में हैं। मैं तो यह चाहूंगा कि सरकार उन को सिकनेस दूर कर के जल्दी से जल्दी इस रकम को रियेलाइज करने का प्रावधान करे तो यह अति-उत्तम होगा।

17.00 hrs.

सभापति महोदय, इस में एक प्रावधान यह भी किया गया है कि अभी जो वर्तमान कन्ट्रीब्यूशन का दर है सवा छः परसेन्ट या 8 परसेन्ट, उस को बढ़ा कर 10 परसेन्ट कर दिया जाए। इस तरह की मिफारिश नेगटल कौन्सिल आफ लेबर को भी है। जिस समय उन ने यह मिफारिश की थी, तो बहुत छात्रवीन की थी और जो त्रिदलीय समिति थी, उस समिति ने यह मिफारिश की थी कि प्रोविडेंट फंड के कम से कम कन्ट्रीब्यूशन की दर को बढ़ा कर 10 प्रतिशत कर दिया जाए और उन्होंने यह भी मिफारिश की थी कि जिस कारखाने में 10 से अधिक आदमी हों, उन के ऊपर इस को लागू किया जाए। इस बिल में भी इस तरह का प्रावधान किया गया है। पेंसेंट्री वाले प्रावधान को कहां तक लागू किया गया है, मुझे पता नहीं क्योंकि अगर लागू किया गया होता तो ये रुपये अभी तक वसूल हो गये होते। एम्प्लॉइज प्रोविडेंट फंड वाले बेट, वाच एण्ड सी का तरीका अख्तियार किये हुए हैं। इस को पास किये हुए दो साल का वक्त हो चुका है लेकिन अभी तक बेट, वाच एण्ड सी चलता है या उस दिशा में कोई कदम उठाने जा रहे हैं, इस का मुझे पता नहीं है। लेकिन मैं यह पता हूं कि कम से कम कोलमाइन्स में तो बिल्कुल ही कदम नहीं उठाया गया है और लोगों को चुप्चाप खूब दे दी गई है क्योंकि अब कोलमाइन्स में भी मर देन 99 प्वाइन्ट समथिंग जो प्रोविडेंट फंड हैं, वे सारे पब्लिक सेक्टर में हो गये हैं और वे राश्वह नहीं करते हैं खास तौर से लेबर डिपार्टमेंट के किस भी आफिसर को, किस भी पदाधिकारी को चाहे वह डाइरेक्टर-जनरल, माइंस सेफ्टी का ही, रीजनल लेबर कमिशनर का हो

[श्री राजनारायण शर्मा]

या कोन-भाइस प्रोविडेंट फंड आयनाइजेशन का हो। ये सारे प्रायोजनस प्राज कोल इंडस्ट्री के एम्प्लायर्स के सामने हेल्प्सेस स्पेक्टेटर्स बन कर रह गये हैं और कुछ कर नहीं पाते हैं। तो मेरा ऐसा क्याल है कि सक्ती का जो यह प्रोजेक्शन है, उस को सक्ती से लागू करना चाहिए और सरकार को चाहिए कि उस के हाथों को मजबूत करे।

इस में यह भी प्रावधान है कि कम से कम इन्टरेस्ट 9 परसेन्ट दिया जाए। सभापति जी, अभी अगर पोस्ट आफिस के फिक्स्ड डिपॉजिट में रुपया जमा करते हैं तो 10 परसेन्ट इन्टरेस्ट दिया जाता है और अगर बैंक में कोई लोन लेता है, इट इन एन गुड एन बैर मनी, तो वह भी 19, 20 परसेन्ट की बात करने हैं। यह जो तो परसेन्ट का सुझाव है यह भी कम है। कारण यह है कि अभी कम्पलमरी डिपॉजिट स्कीम जो आपने चालू की है उस में बारह परसेन्ट इन्टरेस्ट प्राविडेंट फंड की रकम पर देने की बात सरकार ने कही है। वही बारह परसेन्ट यहाँ पर भी प्राविडेंट फंड की रकम पर क्यों नहीं दिया जा सकता है

एक्युमुलेशन का पीरियड जो है, क्वालिफाइंग पीरियड जो है जिन में जो इम्प्लायर का जेयर लिया जा सकता है वह भी बहुत लम्बा है। बकाया रकम नेप्स हो गयी है एडमिनिस्ट्रेटिव चार्जिज के भलावा और वह उनके काम में नहीं आती है। उस पीरियड को भी घटा कर कम किया जाना चाहिए। यहाँ तो बीस बरस है, वहाँ पंद्रह बरस है। इसको घटा करके पाँच सात बरस कर देना चाहिए। इस अवधि के बाद वे एम्प्लायर का जेयर पाने के हकदार हो

जाने चाहिए। यह प्रावधान इस बिल में नहीं है। मैं चाहता हूँ कि सरकार इस बिल को कबूल करे तो इस प्रावधान को भी अपनी तरफ से एमेंडमेंट के तौर पर रख कर और—जब करके कबूल करे।

जहाँ तक धानरेरी इन्वेस्टिंग का इस में प्रावधान है, आप आज तो ज्वॉयंट मैनेजमेंट काउंसिलें बना रहे हैं पार्टिसिपेशन ग्राफ बर्कज इन मैनेजमेंट वाले सिद्धान्त को हम लोग बहुत पहले ही कबूल कर चुके हैं, मैं कहना चाहता हूँ कि इस तरह का प्रावधान भी होना चाहिए कि यूनियन के पदाधिकारी इनके प्राविडेंट फंड के एकाउंट को इम्पेव कर सकें और उसी प्राविडेंट फंड के साथ कर सकें जिससे कि प्राविडेंट फंड इम्पेव करने हैं। साथ ही इनको यह भी छूट रहे कि जैसे प्राविडेंट फंड इम्पेव उनको प्रासीक्यूट कर सकते हैं इनको भी इस तरह का राइट प्रासीक्यूट करने का रहे। इस तरह के मजबूत प्रावधान होने से जो आज डेफाल्ट होने हैं और ऐसी एरियर जमा हो जाते हैं व नहीं होंगे और उनको पूरा छूट होगी कि जब चाहें इस कानून के अन्तर उनको कठपुटे में खड़ा कर सकते हैं और उनके खिलाफ प्रासीक्यूशन लाच कर सकते हैं। मैं समझता हूँ कि प्रासीक्यूशन वा प्राविजन भी और ज्यादा स्ट्रिजेंट होना चाहिए। उन पर फाइन होना चाहिए। उनसे इन्टरेस्ट नहीं बल्कि जैसे बेंचिज एक्ट के अन्तर बेंचिज को जिस तरह से रिमलाइज आप करते हैं इस को भी पार्ट ग्राफ बेंचिज समझ कर बेंचिज एक्ट को इसके ऊपर भी लागू प्राधिकार करना चाहिए और साथ ही साथ पेंशिली का प्राविजन होना चाहिए।

बिल के मुद्दे का मैं समर्थन करता हूँ और आग्रह करता हूँ कि अगर सरकार का यह कमिटेमेंट है पहले का तो सरकार को चाहिए कि अगर इस बिल का प्राकल्प ठीक न हो तो दूसरा बिल वह प्राकल्प को ठीक करके तुरन्त सदन के सामने लाए और उसको पास करवाए।

श्री श्रीहनुमान् इन्स्टाल (बैरकपुर) : मैं इस बिल का समर्थन करता हूँ। साथ ही जो माननीय सदस्य ने कहा है उसका भी समर्थन करता हूँ। उनकी जो आर्गुमेंट्स हैं वे भी ठीक हैं। मैं दो तीन बातें खास तौर से कहना चाहता हूँ।

दो बड़ाई साल हुए आपने पनिशमेंट देने का, सजाएं देने का उनको जो प्राविडेंट फंड का पैसा न दें बिल आपने पास करवाया था। इस बिल के पास होने के बाद हमने देखा कि वही पुरानी चाल है। यह जो प्राविडेंट फंड डिपार्टमेंट है उसी तरह से यह चल रहा है जैसे पहले चलता था। गिजनल कमिशनरों से जब हमने पूछा कि क्या बात है कि जब यह कानून बन चुका है आप उनको सजाएं नहीं दिलाते हैं, जो इम्प्लायर डिफाल्ट करते हैं उनको सजाएं क्यों नहीं दिलाते हैं तो वे कहते हैं कि हमारे पास तो यह पावर नहीं है, हमारे पास तो यही पावर है कि हम पिट्टी लिख दें और उसका जवाब मंगा लें। इससे जों एक्वाटेज है वह मालिक लोगों ने ही उठाया है। आज बर्कर का कंटीब्यूशन वह हर महीने काट लेते हैं। अपना पैसा और बर्करों का पैसा जमा कर के वह अपने कारोबार में लगाते हैं। यहां तक कि बर्करों को यह नहीं मालूम होता है कि हमारा पैसा कहां जा रहा है। मैं एक मिसाल देता हूँ। बंगाल में मेरी कांस्टीट्यूएन्सी में सरखा जूट मिल है। उसने 29 लाख रुपया प्राविडेंट फंड का

भारा है, वह रकम जमा ही नहीं की। जब प्राविडेंट कमिशनर द्वारा पूछा गया कि क्या बात है, तो कहा कि हमारा हिसाब नहीं हुआ है। मैंने यहां कंसल्टेटिव कमेटी में यह सवाल उठाया, तब उसकी इन्क्वायरी हुई और 6, 7 महीने के बाद पता लगा कि 29 लाख रुपये का गवन किया गया। प्राविडेंट का ट्रस्टी बोर्ड मालिक के हाथ में है। मालिक बर्करों से कहता है कि हमने पैसा मारा है, तुम्हें जो करना है कर लो। उसी मालिक ने जूट कापॉरेशन के जूट को भी बेच दिया जो कि गोदाम में जमा था और वह सारा पैसा खा गया। उसने बर्करों की एक महीने की बेज भी नहीं दी और कारखाने को लाक-आउट कर दिया है। इस बात को 6, 7 महीने से ज्यादा हो रहे हैं। मैंने स्टेट गवर्नमेंट और सेंट्रल गवर्नमेंट को बहुत चिट्ठियां लिखी हैं, लेकिन अभी तक इस मसले का कोई सौल्यूशन नहीं हुआ है। मेरे कहने पर अब उसको प्रासीक्यूट किया गया तो उसने अदालत में कहा कि मैं इन्स्टाल-मेंट में रुपया दे दूंगा और कोर्ट ने इस बात को मंजूर कर लिया। उसने दो इन्स्टाल-मेंट 75 हजार रुपये के दिये। जब हमने पूछा कि बाद में क्या होगा तो उसने कहा कि बाद में देखा जायेगा। उसने यह भी कहा कि तुम कोर्ट में गये, अब मैं देखूंगा कि तुम कैसे पैसा लोगे।

एक नया फाइव स्टार होटल खुला है जिसका नाम रीज होटल है। उसने प्राविडेंट फंड काटा, मगर पैसा जमा नहीं किया। उसने न अपना पैसा जमा किया और न बर्करों का कंटीब्यूशन। उसके बाद वह लाक-आउट कर दिया। जब बर्करों ने इस बारे में आवाज उठाई तो प्राविडेंट फंड कमिशनर ने कहा कि पैसा ही जमा नहीं हुआ है, उसका नाम लिस्टेड ही नहीं हुआ है।

[श्री मोहम्मद इस्माइल]

क्योंकि प्राविडेंट कमिशनर की तरफ से सख्त कार्यवाही नहीं की जाती है, इसलिए डिफाल्ट करने के लिये मालिकों की हिम्मत बढ़ती है। अभी तक एक भी आदमी को एम्प्लॉयी सजा नहीं दी गई है जिससे एक मिसाल कायम हो। लेबर मिनिस्ट्री भी वीले तौर पर काम कर रही है। वर्कर्स का पैसा उसी तरह बरबाद हो रहा है और उनको लूटा जा रहा है। डिपार्टमेंट की तरफ से टाइमली ऐक्शन नहीं लिया जाता है। पहले यह सिस्टम था कि प्राविडेंट फंड का हिसाब वर्कर्स को दिया जाता था और उन्हें स्लिप मिलती थी। अब 5, 6 महीने के बाद भी वर्कर नहीं जानते हैं कि उनका पैसा जमा किया गया है या नहीं और अगर जमा किया गया है तो कितना। अगर वर्कर अपने प्राविडेंट फंड के बारे में पूछते हैं तो उनको कहा जाता है कि डिपार्टमेंट में जाकर पूछिये। अगर वह डिपार्टमेंट में जाते हैं तो उनको कहा जाता है कि वह चिट्ठी लिखें। वर्कर्स भ्रष्टाचार में रहते हैं कि उनका पैसा जमा हुआ है या नहीं और इस तरह उनका पैसा मारा जाना है। वर्कर्स को दो-तीन महीने में ही मालूम होना चाहिये कि उनका पैसा जमा हुआ है या नहीं और अगर जमा हुआ है तो कितना।

आज-कल मालिक प्राविडेंट फंड का पैसा ले लेते हैं, एक-दो सौ से भी कई ले लेते हैं और फिर लाक-आउट या क्लोजर कर देते हैं। कहते हैं कि पैसा नहीं है। श्रम प्रोसीजर की वजह से वर्कर्स को पैसा नहीं मिलता है।

इंडिया फंड नाम की कम्पनी को गवर्न-मेंट ने टेक-ओवर कर लिया। मालिक ने प्राविडेंट फंड का पैसा जमा नहीं किया था।

टेक-ओवर करने के बाद गवर्नमेंट ने कहा कि चूंकि मालिक ने पैसा नहीं दिया, इसलिए वह तो खर्च—मालिक खा गया, तो खा गया, जब से हम ने टेक-ओवर किया है, तब से देखेंगे। इस तरह अभी तक वर्कर्स का पैसा हासिल नहीं हुआ है। बाखिर उन लोगों का पैसा कौन दिलवायेगा? इस तरह हजारों वर्कर्स का पैसा मारा गया है। आज इस इम तरह की घाबली हो रही है।

इस्पेक्टर मालिक क घर जा कर मैनेजर से मिलते हैं। मैनेजर उन को कुछ पैसा दे देता है और वे चुचचाप चले जाते हैं। हम ने कई बार चिट्ठी लिखी कि इस्पेक्टर हमारी प्रेजेंस में जाये। हम ने यूनियन के वर्कर्स से कहा कि वे खड़े रहें, ताकि उन की मौजूदगी में इस्पेक्टर बात करे। तब मालिक इस्पेक्टर को टेलीफोन कर देता है कि वर्कर्स को मालूम हो गया है, चार पांच दिन के बाद आना। इस्पेक्टर चार पांच दिन के बाद जाता है, और फिर यह रिपोर्ट दे देता है कि मालिक हिसाब भेज देगा।

अब इस बात की है कि इस्पेक्टर हर एक फैक्टरी में जाये। बहुत से मालिक रजिस्टर दिखाने से इन्कार कर देते हैं। इस्पेक्टर बहुत डरे हुए हैं। अगर रिजनल कमिशनर से शिकायत की जाती है, तो वह मालिक को फार्मली लिख देता है कि वह रिपोर्ट सबमिट करे कि कितने आदमी हैं, कांट्रिब्यूशन दिया है या नहीं, वगैरह। इस तरह एक लम्बा प्रोसीजर चलता है। इन्वेस्टिगेशन का कोई इन्तजाम नहीं है। जैसा कि सजेक्शन दिया गया है, वर्कर्स के जो करोड़ों रुपये जमा हैं, उन का सूद उन को देना चाहिए।

जो डिफाल्टर हैं, उन को सजा दी जाये। जो कारखाने लाक-आउट हो गये हैं, उन को सर्टिफिकेट दिया जाये, ताकि उन की प्रापर्टी

को बैंक कर पैसा बसूल किया जा सके। भाव-कल सर्टिफिकेट का प्रोसीजर बहुत लम्बा है। वह दो तीन वर्ष तक चलता है—पहले एनक्वायरी होगी, फिर सर्टिफिकेट दिया जायेगा और तब माल की कुर्की कर के पैसा बसूल किया जायेगा। बलीजर हो या लाक-आउट हो, वर्करी के पैसे की गारंटी होनी चाहिए। इस बिल में इस बारे में कोई प्राविजन नहीं रखा गया है। ऐसा प्राविजन रखना चाहिए।

ट्रेड यूनियनों को रिप्रेजेंटेशन देना तो दूर उन की चिट्ठियों का जवाब तक नहीं दिया जाता है। तब पार्लियामेंट के मੈम्बरो को लिखना पड़ता है। तब कही जवाब आता है। ट्रेड यूनियनों का रिप्रेजेंटेशन जरूर होना चाहिए।

कोलमाइन्ड प्राविडेंट फंड में शुरू से ही सब में ज्यादा घाटली रही है। इस बारे में एक काम्प्रिहेंसिव बिल लाया जाना चाहिए, ताकि प्राविडेंट फंड का सारा इन्वन्शम एक तरीके से किया जा सके और वर्कर्स के रैसे का प्रोटेक्शन हो। 20-पायंट प्रोग्राम की बहुत चर्चा की जाती है, लेकिन हम ने देखा है कि इमर्जेंसी के बाद भी वही रफतार वेढ़गी सी, जो पहले थी, वह अब भी है। तो इस को कम से कम मंत्री महोदय को बदलना चाहिए। जो वर्कर्स के पैसे जमा हैं वह उन को दिलाने के उपाय किए जाने चाहिए। इन शब्दों के साथ यह जो बिल है इस का मैं समर्थन करता हूँ और आशा है कि मंत्री महोदय भी इसे मानेंगे।

SHRI P. G. MAVALANKAR (Ahmedabad): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I wish to support the Bill which my friend Mr. Prasannabhai Mehta has brought before the House today.

In this Private Members' time, we get an opportunity of focussing the

attention of the House and through the House of the country, on some of the pressing problems facing the motion and it further gives us an opportunity of looking at the problems from a non-partisan angle.

After all, there are many areas in our national life which need not be looked at from any partisan angle or party-political attitude. One must look at them as national problems. Therefore, I welcome this opportunity of participating in this Debate.

I wish to congratulate my friend Mr. Prasannabhai Mehta for bringing this legislation.

The Minister of Labour himself is also known for his progressive outlook and socialistic ideas if I may say so, but I wonder whether he will be honest enough to tell us in regard to the implementation of some of those ideas and convictions into actual practice.

Sir, in this country and, I think, in many other countries of the world, Labour as such have had not a very fair and honest and honourable treatment, not only at the hands of the governments, but, if I may say so, also, at the hands of the public at large. It is from these angles also, Sir, that I feel that a move like the one Mr. Prasannabhai Mehta has brought here, deserves our congratulations and our welcome.

Sir, if you look at the provisions of the Bill, you will find that in some respects it goes very much ahead in the right directions, and perhaps the Minister is in a better position than I to tell us that that perhaps in some other respects, although, it may theoretically seem to go in the right directions; there may be some difficulties, administrative or otherwise. The Minister will be able to tell us as to what they are. Therefore, I do not want to

[Shri P. G. Mavalankar]

go into the details. But what I wish to suggest is that a time has come in our country when a comprehensive legislation (dealing with various aspects of good industrial relations and good industrial democracy) should be presented to this House and we are enabled to have an opportunity to discuss them and an opportunity to pass them as early as possible. I know that the Minister has been promising us again and again that that Bill is on the anvil and it is coming. But I do not know when this consideration will be over and when the actual legislation will come before the House, covering various aspects, in a comprehensive way.

Sir, the previous speakers who took part in the Debate on this Bill told us how workers' ignorance, illiteracy and their general overall backwardness (a kind of backwardness which is built in, in the general social ethos of our country) have been exploited by the employers. And, Sir, what is worse, and what makes me very pained is this further fact that the Governments—I am not talking of this Government or that Government, Government of this party or that party, but Governments in general, both State Governments and our Federal Government—do not seem to have taken a realistic, radical, urgent view of the matter, to solve some of these problems, from the point of view of doing justice to the workers and wage-earners in this country.

The attitude still is, if I may say so, employer-minded rather than employees-minded.

I remember the late Prof. Lessor Harold Laski, in one of his aphorisms or maxims having said that 'Men who live differently think differently.'

Until and unless people who live as employees and people who live as

wage-earners—by and large a class of exploited people, harassed people, of this category—go into the various cadres and establishments, fight through their representatives in Legislative Assemblies and Parliament, fight for their causes there, to pressurise the Governments of the day, to bring in the necessary legislations, Sir, I am afraid, we shall not have done much in regard to the amelioration of the conditions of workers.

Therefore, the question at root is how to hit at the attitude or mentality or approach of the employers. There are so many malpractices; not only the provident fund is being allowed to be accumulated but the workers also do not get those amounts. And before the worker gets that amount, several factories and industrial units are closed down! In the meantime, the employers have already eaten up the legitimate share of the contribution of the workers.

Sir, the working of the Provident Fund Commissioner's Offices in our country is far from satisfactory. The accumulation is there; the arrears are there and the workers do not get their rightfully saved moneys from the employers or from the Provident Fund commissioners when they need them especially in terms of—I would not say merely in terms of marriage or social festivities but in terms of education, in terms of health and medical care of the members of their families.

So, Sir, I would suggest that if the idea of social security as Lord Beveridge put it in England years ago almost at the end of the Second World War that everybody should be secured and ensured from the cradle to the grave is to be put into practice, if not from the cradle, at least from the adult age till his age of retirement, then let our employers and workers be properly secured and looked after in terms of some of these benefits.

I do wish to tell the Minister that he must bring forward some kind of legislation covering not only this particular field but also all such relevant fields of labour and industrial relations in a comprehensive way so that we do not have to come again and again through such piecemeal legislation. Take, for example, the question of repayment of provident fund. Why should the worker not be entitled to receive his amount back after the expiry of, say 20 years? Why should he still look at the amount but not get it when he needs it, especially after he has retired or when he is about to retire? That is one aspect. The other aspect is this. My friend Shri Mehta just now referred to it. I would like to repeat that in our State there are some industrial units, such as Bhavnagar Vegetable Products, Bhavnagar and the textile mill like the Priya Lakshmi Mills, Baroda, and they are sick and closed down; why should not Central Government take the necessary steps to take these over and hand them back to Gujarat Government? I understand that Gujarat Government has already told the Centre that they are ready to take the responsibility. Then, where is the hitch? Where is the obstacle?

SHRI P. M. MEHTA: They have already forwarded the proposal.

SHRI P. G. MAVALANKAR: Therefore, I am saying that if this is done, why not the Central Government take over the sick units? The problem is that the workers suffer further because they are not only out of job when the mills are closed down but even the arrears due to them during the time when the units were working, are also not made available to the workers.

Therefore, I feel that instead of letting this bad blood, bitterness to grow between the employer and the employees, Government should come forward and take immediate steps. I say

so because I come from Ahmedabad, one of the wellknown textile centres where workers live not only in thousands but in lakhs in Ahmedabad, and surrounding areas, and indeed all over Gujarat, in factories, industrial localities and urban agglomerations—and I know that they are in a predicament with all the problems of harassments, hardships and humiliation. Here, Sir, I say that Shri Prasannabhai's Bill is in the direction of removing some of these hardships and encouraging them—the labour—to save more and encouraging the Government to take over the responsibilities to see that the employers behave. If that is so, I hope the Labour Minister, progressive as he is, will take a pragmatic, enlightened and correct view in the matter and act quickly and swiftly so that such a legislation instead of coming from the initiative of a private Member may become part and parcel of the government's own initiative in regard to a comprehensive industrial Bill.

DR. RANEN SEN (Barasat): Sir, I support this amending Bill proposed by Mr Mehta. Sir, he has simply tried to strengthen the already amended act that has been passed by this House. He has tried to plug certain loopholes and tried to extend the scope and thereby tried to strengthen it.

Sir, as most of the points have been covered by the previous speakers, I will say only a few words. If the coverage is enlarged from twenty to ten that would mean that the Government which is in need of small savings the purpose of small savings would be served to some extent. Secondly, if the total emoluments of a worker are computed for the contribution then, Sir, again small savings increase. In the Fifth Five Year Plan report we have seen how the provident fund amount is taken into consideration as part of the small savings in the interest of developmental plan. Therefore, the purpose will be served

[Dr. Ranen Sen]

if the coverage is widened. Then not only a large number of workers will get benefitted but also some more amount will get accumulated in the provident fund if the contribution rate is increased and/or if the total emoluments are taken into consideration for the payment of provident fund. Therefore, from this point of view it is important not only for the working class but also for the nation because the country will get a large amount of money which is needed for national development.

Secondly, when the compulsory deposit scheme was introduced then it was said on behalf of the Government that the workers will—if more money is available to them—spend it and that will create inflation whereas if the workers are made to contribute in the compulsory deposit scheme then they will also get certain amount of interest, say 11 per cent or 12 per cent, and that in the long run will help the workers. Though the trade unions did not like that argument still, Sir, being a trade unionist yourself you will realise that if that particular argument is applied here then actually thereby the inflation will be curbed to some extent. If by deducting a portion of increased C.A. and wage in the CDS inflation can be curbed then also this way the inflation can be curbed to some extent. I am giving the same argument which the Government has given so far.

Then my next point is that even after two and a half years of the amending Act the whole administration of provident fund has not been geared up to meet the exigencies of the situation. I was not aware of the arrears of money but both Mr. Sharma and Mr. Mehta said that the arrears have increased and not decreased. It is for the Minister to refute or accept that the whole provident fund administration has flopped. Sir, the purpose

of the amending Bill which was passed in the middle of 1973 has been frustrated by the machinations of the employers with the connivance of the provident fund authorities. I know there are certain organisations which have gone against the interests of the workers. Mr. Ismail is not here.

AN HON. MEMBER: He is there.

DR. RANEN SEN: Your organisation of so-called employees is a vehicle of corruption. They are part and parcel of that corrupt administration.

SHRI MOHAMMAD ISMAIL: Not in Bengal.

DR. RANEN SEN: Bengal is not something above heaven. Now, what about Bengal!

I come from Bengal. I know how those fellows are behaving. Therefore, the whole thing should be geared up and tightened up. How is it that the arrears are increasing? Shri Sharma said that it is increasing. At least, it is static. It is Rs. 20 crores and something. Now it is high time Government took special care to see that the arrears are liquidated and the property of the employers who are responsible for it should be attached. Not only should penal measures be taken, not only should they be jailed, but if they say 'We do not have money', they should not only go to jail but their property also must be attached. It is the poor workers' money.

At the same time, I must say, going through the Bill hurriedly, that one point is not included in it, a point which is also very important. Provident fund is contributory. That means the workers pay and the employers pay. When the earlier Bill that was passed here was under discussion, I had made the argument: 'for defaulting in the workers' contribution, you have introduced certain penal measures, but

if the employers' contribution is not paid by them, what happen?' It is the bounden duty of the employer to pay his contribution. Shri Raghunatha Reddy has gone a long way at least to do this, that if the employer eats up the workers' contribution, he is hauled up as a criminal offender. At the same time, it is a contributory fund, the employer has to contribute his share. This point should be kept in mind. I am afraid this is not quite clear in the amending Bill Shri Mehta has brought forward. I strongly feel that now 's the time when these two things should be equally dealt with.

Here I would quote—not verbally—what the Prime Minister said when she spoke before the National Apex Body. You were there, I was there and Shri Raghunatha Reddy was there. She said that now the employers could not take shelter behind the fact of there being a little financial difficulty facing them, 'for years before you have minted millions'. Whether she used the words 'minted millions' or not, I do not exactly remember, but she said 'You have earned profit, you have earned money, but at the first touch of a little industrial difficulty, you close down your factory and refuse to pay the workers their wages for six months or so'. She very clearly said this, and the employers were in discomfiture. I quite remember it, though I cannot quote, the exact words she used. So now is the time to attend to this aspect. I fully support what is said by Mr. Mohammed Ismail in this respect. There is lay-off, closure or lock-out and in the bargain, the workers' money, everything, vanishes into thin air. Government should take very strong measures to prevent this.

One of the steps to be taken should be to see that corruption does not exist, to see that the workers' money and the employers' money is not eaten up by the employers. For this, in the administration of the Fund, workers' participation is very necessary. This

should not remain a slogan or phrase, but should be made a reality. Naturally all the workers cannot participate, their representative unions should participate.

I do not want to inflict a long speech. I support this Bill. Before I sit down, I would say this to the hon Minister. If he agrees with the spirit of the Bill, he should take a constructive stand. There may be scope for improvements here and there. He should not take a stand on ceremony and say 'Well, this has come from a member of the Opposition, I will think it over'. Without taking that stand, he should take a very constructive stand. As Shri Mavalankar said, there are some common areas of agreement. Let us stand on that and see how far we can go ahead.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI (Chirayinkil): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I do not have much time to speak on this Bill. But I support the spirit of the Bill. I must congratulate the Minister and the Office of the Provident Fund for the efficient way in which they are clearing the arrears since emergency. We find that no such complaints are coming from the union leaders like Dr. Ranen Sen. I find that there is all round progress and the corrupt practices among the employees are not there. Of course, here and there they have been encouraged by some elements. But since the emergency we find that there is a big change and I believe in West Bengal alone where there was a large number of arrears, there is a big change. Here the arrears cleared during the period of emergency are more than 150 per cent compared to the previous year. During the previous year about one lakh arrears were cleared but during this year about 2.5 lakhs have been cleared. So, there is a considerable change in this organisation. I am very proud to say—I am the President of the Kerala Unit of this organisa-

[Shri Vayalar Ravi]

tion—that there is no complaint received in the Kerala branch. That means it is very efficiently functioning.

Here I want to mention one lacuna. Even for a small matter the Provident Fund Commissioner has to go to the Ministry for clearance. Sir, this Organisation is an autonomous body constituted under an act of Parliament. Some powers may be vested with the Commissioner so that he can dispose of certain cases at his level. Otherwise what happens is that he has to go to the Ministry even for a small matter. If more powers are given to the Commissioner, this organisation can work more efficiently.

Sir, if you see the Bill, you will find that it is for the benefit of the workers and the family members of the employees. Now, in the Bonus Act itself we have reduced the number of persons employed in a factory to 10. What is the sanctity attached to this number? Of course, by reducing it to 10 it will cover a large number of workers. Likewise as recommended in the Bonus Act, here also it should be reduced from 20 to 10 and I hope the Minister will understand the spirit behind this suggestion. Another point is that in certain areas, certain workers do not want to be covered under this scheme. They do not want this to be imposed on them. I hope the Minister will consider this point also.

Sir, the period of 20 years is a fairly long period. It is a deposit. I do not know when you cannot pay interest at the rate of 9 per cent per annum as the banks do.

Lastly, the Bill says about the co-operative sector. The co-operative societies are infra-structure of our economic activities in the rural areas. Today lakhs and lakhs of people are employed in this sector. But these employees are not covered. These em-

ployees are getting a low salary, that is about Rs. 100 to Rs. 150 per month. Co-operative societies are spread over the country. If these workers are also covered, then it will benefit a large section of population. In this connection, I would also request that the discipline should be maintained among the employees so that it will avoid complaints from the trade union leaders. I do not understand the purpose behind opening sub-offices for this purpose. You should not open sub-offices simply for the sake of opening them at several places. It will create more problems for you. The minister understands what I mean. In Bengal or Bombay it may be necessary because there may be 1000 to 2000 officers. But if it is a small office, just for the sake of pleasing somebody I hope the minister will not resort to such actions.

With these words, I support the spirit of the Bill.

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI RAGHUNATHA REDDY): Sir, it is no exaggeration if I say that I have been educated by this discussion on the various aspects of the provident fund scheme, the way the organisation is expected to work and the way that legislation is to be enacted. I must compliment the mover of the Bill for the trouble he has taken in drafting the Bill. I know the difficulties of a private member in drafting a Bill. I am deeply impressed by the way he has drafted the Bill. But I must say that though I find some area of agreement with what he has proposed in the Bill we ourselves are trying to formulate proposals on the basis of the various recommendations on the subject. If Mr. Mehta allows us the opportunity to draft the Bill, I assure him that we will be benefited by the valuable suggestions made by hon. members who have participated in this discussion.

It is no consolation for us to say that arrears are stagnant. It is a very agonising phenomenon and I myself have been feeling very unhappy about it. But very vigorous efforts have been made in this direction. I will give some figures. On 31-3-1972 the total arrears stood at Rs. 20.66 crores, the share of textiles being Rs. 12.7 crores and that of the engineering industries being Rs. 2.49 crores. On 31-3-1973 the total was Rs. 19.61 crores, the share of textiles being Rs. 11.9 crores. On 31-3-74 the total was Rs. 19.6 crores, the share of textiles being Rs. 10.62 crores. On 31-3-1975, the total was Rs. 19.34 crores and the textile industry had a major share amounting to Rs. 10.45 crores. The National Textile Corporation comes into the picture here because they have got a major share in the textile industry. You know the circumstances in which the NTC had to take over various sick mills. We are having a meeting on 27th of this month to discuss the repayment scheme of NTC. I hope we would be able to arrive at some reasonable agreement and work out a fruitful scheme to clear the arrears.

Hon. members will appreciate that on 31-3-1975, the increase was about 64,712 and the total coverage was 76,03,124. But on 30th September 75, the corresponding figures were 65,431 and 77.5 lakhs respectively. So, though the arrears appear stagnant, the increase in membership should be understood in the context of recovery of arrears and the actual amount deposited with the provident fund commissioner.

Under the present Act, the appropriate State Government has got the power to exempt certain undertakings on certain conditions. Nearly 20 years ago, in the fifties, some undertakings have been exempted and in their case, the arrears are more. I am happy Dr. Ranen Sen had been frank and critical about the way in which the West

Bengal organisation has been working, not only the provident fund organisation but others also. The amount of P.F. dues are as follows: Bengal Potteries Rs. 41.84 lakhs, Alexandra Jute Co. Rs. 22.44 lakhs, Bengal Immunity Co. Ltd. Rs. 16.95 lakhs, East Bengal Engineering Co. Ltd. Rs. 5.17 lakhs, Kalvin Jute Co. Ltd. Rs. 71.7 lakhs, Kardah Co.—25.62, Kinnison Jute Co.—27.65, Meghna Mills—23.25, National Company—70.41. I am mentioning only some of the chronic cases.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What has been in the way in not initiating action?

SHRI RAGHUNATHA REDDY: Proceedings have been initiated. Every prosecution notices have been given. But what has happened in that article 226 of the Constitution is being very liberally used and if I may say so, with great respect, is being misused. When the issue was taken up with the Bengal Potteries in 1975, immediately they went to the High Court and got a stay order. In West Bengal, there is a chronic situation as far as legal matters are concerned and it is very difficult to appreciate the procedures of the courts. I am a lawyer but I did not come across such type of law anywhere. The fact remains that the companies frustrate any step of the Commissioner of Provident Fund in recovering the arrears. The hon. Members were pleased to allow to enact stringent provisions in the Act. But notwithstanding the stringent provisions, article 226 of the Constitution is being involved. For example, the National Jute Co. has got 70 lakhs of arrears. They have got the stay order and the repayment has been fixed by the High Court. If this article 226 of the Constitution would not have been used very liberally, probably by this time, we could have recovered a substantial amount of arrears that are due to the Provident Fund Commissioner. I may say with great respect that I believe in the judicial review of the

[Shri Raghunatha Reddy]

administrative action. But the indiscrete exercise of this article 226 of the Constitution may lead to a situation where the judicial review itself has to be restricted. I do not like any restriction on power but a situation might arise at least with respect to welfare legislation, with respect to provident fund where weaker sections of society are concerned, that something will have to be undertaken, because I believe that as long as inequality exists in terms of income between a person and a person, article 226 would work in favour of the rich man and the poor man will not get any help. And in the case of government organizations, while the entire Government is prepared to support such measures, if even Government's efforts are frustrated, it is a matter for deep concern and exercise of judicial conscience of the judges themselves. This is the situation in which arrears have come up. Some of the suggestions which the hon. Members have made, as I had said in the beginning, are worth considering, and speaking at least for myself, I will have the benefit of the valuable suggestions made. I am working on my suggestions; and in this context, the debate on the provisions given in the bill which Mr. Prasannbhai Mehta has drafted, will be taken into account. I hope Mr. Mehta will not put me to embarrassment by pressing this bill; I hope he will withdraw his bill.

SHRI P. M. MEHTA: I am very much thankful to all the hon. Members who had participated in this debate and whole-heartedly supported this bill to amend the Employees' Provident Funds and Family Pension Fund Act, 1952. I am also grateful to the hon. Minister who appreciated the spirit of the Bill as well as the drafting of the provisions. I am thankful to him for giving an assurance that they are thinking of coming forward with a comprehensive bill and that they are

in the process of drafting such a bill— if I have understood him correctly. And he has also asked me, appealed to me, to withdraw the Bill and not to press for the same and put him to an embarrassing position. Certainly, Sir, the intention of my bill is not to embarrass anybody. It is, as rightly pointed out, to accelerate the process. After all, Sir, the laws have their own history; and it is a continuous process. As and when the requirements of the society require that some new enactment must be provided by the State for their social security and for the furtherance of their interests, Government, *suo motu*, must come forward with such enactments. Now, Sir, if I recollect correctly, the hon. Minister has also assured the House during the debate on the previous Amendment Bill of this Act in the month of August 1973....

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, order. It is now 6 O' clock. Is it the pleasure of the House that the Member be permitted to continue?

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

SHRI P. M. MEHTA: I will finish in 2 or 3 minutes. I was saying that the hon. Minister had assured the House at that time also that Government would come forward with a comprehensive Bill; but somehow or the other, they have failed to come forward with such a comprehensive bill. I would, therefore, simply ask the hon. Minister as to when they would be bringing in this comprehensive bill, as per their planning.

18 hrs.

SHRI RAGHUNATHA REDDY: — it is to be a comprehensive bill, it must be comprehensively worked out.

SHRI P. M. MEHTA: How long will it take?

SHRI RAGHUNATHA REDDY: I can assure you that I am working on it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is that assurance not enough?

SHRI P. M. MEHTA: The Minister has, therefore, assured the House that he is working for the comprehensive Bill; so, since I can take it that he will bring in this comprehensive Bill as early as possible, I do not press for my Bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is.

"That leave be granted to Shri P. M. Mehta to withdraw the Bill further to amend Employees' Provident Funds and Family Pension Act, 1952."

The motion was adopted

MR. CHAIRMAN: The motion is adopted. Now he has to withdraw the Bill.

SHRI P. M. MEHTA: I only said that I do not press for the Bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN: After the motion is voted, he has to withdraw the Bill.

SHRI P. M. MEHTA: Keeping in view the assurance given to the House and in order to accommodate the Government and the Minister, withdraw the Bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The House stands adjourned to meet again at 11 A.M. on Tuesday.

18.02 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Tuesday, January 27, 1976/Magha 7, 1997 (Saka).