

Siddheshwar Prasad, Shri
Singh, Shri D. N.
Sinha, Shri Mudrika
Snatak, Shri Nar Deo
Sudarsanam, Shri M.
Supakar, Shri Sradhakar

Tiwary, Shri D. N.
Tiwary, Shri K. N.
Uikey, Shri M. G.
Venkatasubbaiah, Shri P.
Venkataswamy, Shri G.
Vyas, Shri Ramesh Chandra

MR. CHAIRMAN: The result* of the division is as follows:

Ayes: 54; Noes 103.

The motion was negatived.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I shall now put clause 2 to the vote of the House.

The question is:

"That clause 2 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clause 2 was added to the Bill.

Clauses 3 to 6 were added to the Bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is now 5 O'clock and Mr. Joshi may raise his discussion.

17 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER in the Chair.]

DISCUSSION RE. STRIKE BY NEWSPAPERS EMPLOYEES

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE (Kanpur): Before Mr. Joshi starts his speech, I request you to ask the hon. Labour Minister who is here to make a brief statement about the negotiations, their failure or utility, so that his speech may be purposeful.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: If the Minister concerned so desires, I would

ask him. If he so desires, he will make it. Let Shri Joshi begin. But I would like to regulate the time: within one hour we have to finish. We can go for half an hour more as the maximum. (Interruption) When it was decided as one hour, we accepted some regulation of time. I will give him 10 minutes and to the others five minutes. Let us start.

श्री एस०एम० जोशी (पूना): उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, सदन के सामने आज मैं एक ऐसे मामले को उठा रहा हूँ जिसकी अहमियत को अभी बहुत मारे लोगों ने नहीं समझा है। समाचार पत्र उद्योग में जो पत्रकारों और गैर-पत्रकारों की हड़ताल चल रही है, उस से समाचार पत्र पढ़ने वालों के लिये तथा भारतीय मजदूर आन्दोलन के लिये एक विशेष समस्या पैदा हो रही है। यद्यपि मैं हड़तालों के लिये काफ़ी बदनाम हूँ, मगर मैं उन आदमियों में हूँ कि जब तक हो सके हड़ताल को हमें टालना चाहिये। अगर कोई दूसरा चारा ही न रहे, तभी हम हड़ताल करते हैं। हमारे देश की औद्योगिक प्रगति अभी काफ़ी नहीं है और हम मानते हैं कि जहाँ तक हो सके हमारे देश में हड़ताल नहीं होनी चाहिये, हमारा जो उत्पादन है, वह चलता रहना चाहिये तथा हमारी जो औद्योगिक शांति है, उसको हमें बनाये रखना चाहिये। इसलिये हमारे देश में अपने मजदूर आन्दोलनों में बहुत सारे तरीके हम लोगों ने इस्तेमाल किये हुए हैं। मजदूर

*The following Members also recorded their votes:

AYES: Shri S. M. Krishna.

NOES: Shri N. P. Yadab.

[श्रं. एम० एम० जं.श्री]

ग्रान्दोलन का एक कार्यकर्ता होने के नाते मुझे जो अनुभव है, उस से मेरा तो यह मत है कि सब से अच्छी चीज तो यह है कि हम सामूहिक सौदा करें, कलैक्टिव बारागेनिंग करें, इस से इण्डस्ट्रीयल पीस बनी रहती है और दो पार्टियों में हारमोनी भी रहती है। मगर हमारे देश में इतनी तरक्की अभी नहीं हो पाई है कि सब लोग इम तरीके को अख्तियार क, इसलिये दूसरे तरीके भी अख्तियार किये जाते हैं, लेकिन इन दूसरे तरीकों में वक्त बहुत जाया होता है, वेज बोर्ड में कितना वक्त जाया होता है इस का उदाहरण हमारे सामने है— दो साल तक उन लोगों ने एजीटेशन किया, उस के बाद वेज-बोर्ड बना। वेज बोर्ड बनने के बाद दो साल उस का फैसला कराने में लगे, नवम्बर से लेकर अब तक यह झगड़ा चला और अभी भी उस का फैसला नहीं हो पाया है—इस से जाहिर है कि कितना समय इस में लग जाता है। मजदूर आज गैर-बराबरी की लड़ाई लड़ रहा है, ऐसी हालत में दूसरे तरीके भी हम लोग इस्तेमाल करते हैं— जैसे एडजूडिकेशन का तरीका— लेकिन यह भी वक्त जाया करने वाला तरीका है। इस में बड़े बड़े मालिक लोग सुप्रीम कोर्ट तक चले जाते हैं और इस तरह से मजदूर को राहत नहीं मिल पाती है। इसलिये इन सब चीजों को दृष्टि में रखते हुए सामूहिक सौदा सब से अच्छा है, उस से बढ़ कर अच्छी चीज कोई नहीं है, मगर वह सम्भव नहीं है। जब यह सम्भव नहीं है तो फिर वेज बोर्ड अच्छा है, वेज बोर्ड में मालिकों के प्रतिनिधि होते हैं, मजदूरों के प्रतिनिधि होते हैं और शासन के भी प्रतिनिधि होते हैं तथा जो फैसला सर्व-सम्मति से करते हैं उस पर अमल करना सब लोगों का कर्त्तव्य हो जाता है।

अब उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, आपको मालूम होगा कि जो फैसला वेज बोर्ड ने किया नान-जर्नलिस्ट्स के बारे में, वह यूनेनिमस फैसला

था तथा उस को यूनेनिमस बनाने के लिये मजदूरों को बहुत कुछ छोड़ना पड़ा। उस के बाद हुकूमत ने जो आर्डर निकाले, उस में उन्होंने उस को और भी ढीला कर दिया। इतना सब होने के बाद भी वह अमल में नहीं लाया गया और इससे एक बहुत बड़ा खतरा मजदूर ग्रान्दोलन के लिये पैदा हुआ है। आज तक जितने वेज-बोर्ड बने, उन में शायद ऐसी स्थिति कभी नहीं आई होगी कि इस तरह से वेज बोर्ड के फैसले को ठुकराया गया हो। इस लिये कानून के जरिये अगर हम इस पर अमल नहीं करा सकते हैं तो आगे चल कर मजदूरों का विश्वास वेज बोर्ड पर से उठ जायगा।

मैं इस चीज को मन्जूर करता हूँ कि जो हमारा समाचार-उद्योग है उस में नान-जर्नलिस्ट्स के लिये जो वेज बोर्ड बना है और जो फैसला उन्होंने दिया है, वह फैसला कुछ हद तक ऐसा हो सकता है कि उस को अमल में लाने में कई जगहों पर मुश्किलें हैं। लेकिन पी० टी० आई० के लोगों के साथ हम ने बैठ कर समझौता किया, पूरा वेज-बोर्ड हम को नहीं मिला, लेकिन फिर भी हम ने समझौता किया। यू० एन० आई० के साथ भी हम ने समझौता किया, लेकिन ये जो बड़े बड़े मालिक लोग हैं, उन लोगों ने छांटे लोगों की आड़ में अपने स्वार्थ को सम्भालने की कोशिश चलाई है और चीखना शुरू कर दिया, मगर हमारे मजदूरों ने ठीक तरह से काम लिया, जो छोटे लोग हैं, क्लास 4, 5 और 6 उन को छोड़ दिया और क्लास 1, 2 और 3 से कहा कि हमारे साथ समझौता करो। समझौता करने के बाद जो एग्जीमेन्ट हुआ, उस एग्जीमेन्ट के लिये ये कहते हैं कि वह रिक्मेंडेटरी है एक सदस्य पर लाजमी नहीं है। दूसरी बार जब बातचीत आरम्भ हुई तब भी मालिकों ने कहा कि समझौता रेकमेंडेटरी होगा। इन सब बातों से क्या फायदा है, यह तो वक्त को जाया करना है, इसी लिये उन लोगों ने अपनी हड़ताल की।

यह हड़ताल पिछले सात दिनों से चल रही है, लेकिन इस के बारे में हुकूमत की तरफ से क्या हो रहा है ? मैं सरकार से पूछना चाहता हूँ ।

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, यह गैर बराबरी की लड़ाई है । वेज बोर्ड जब हमने कायम किया है तो हम यह भी जानते हैं कि ये बड़े बड़े मालिक लोग उस के निर्णयों को अमल में भी ला सकते हैं । उन के लिये यह कोई बड़ी बात नहीं है क्योंकि ये जितने पेपर्स हैं इन को काफी मुनाफ़ा होता है । मेरे पास आंकड़े हैं—इंडियन एक्सप्रेस, टाइम्स आफ इण्डिया या दूसरे जितने बड़े बड़े पेपर्स हैं स। के पास काफी मुनाफ़ा होता है इतना मुनाफ़ा होने के बाद भी अगर ये वेज बोर्ड को अमल में नहीं लाते हैं तो इस का क्या नतीजा निकलेगा । मेरे पास 1963, 64, 65 में इन पेपर्स को कितना फायदा हुआ है, उस के आंकड़े हैं—टाइम्स आफ इण्डिया—52 लाख रुपये, स्टेट्समैन—30 लाख रुपये, हिन्दुस्तान टाइम्स —31 लाख रुपये, हिन्दू—19 लाख रुपये, इण्डियन एक्सप्रेस—29 लाख रुपये । अगर ये लोग वेज बोर्ड को अमल में लायेंगे तो इन को कितना पैसा देना होगा ? टाइम्स आफ इण्डिया को 52 लाख रुपये में से 14 लाख रुपया खर्च करना पड़ेगा, स्टेट्समैन को 30 लाख रुपये में से 15 लाख खर्च करना होगा, हिन्दुस्तान टाइम्स को 31 लाख रुपये में से 9 लाख रुपया खर्च करना पड़ेगा, हिन्दू को 19 लाख रुपये में से 6 लाख खर्च करना पड़ेगा, इण्डियन एक्सप्रेस को 29 लाख रुपये में से 12 लाख रुपये लगाने होंगे । जिनका धन्य फायदेमन्द है वे अगर वेज बोर्ड को, जिसका फैसला यूनेनिमस है, अमल में नहीं लाते हैं तो मजदूर आन्दोलन कैसे चलेगा मेरी समझ में यह बात नहीं आती है ।

17.07 hrs.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

जब से इन लोगों का झगड़ा शुरू हुआ है कितनी तकलीफ़ कर्मचारी लोग उठा रहे

हैं मजदूरों को कितनी तकलीफ़ हो रही है, इस में कितनी पेचीदगियां आ गई हैं, एक को स्टेचूटरी और दूसरी को नान-स्टेचूटरी रखने से वे चोग सुप्रीम कोर्ट तक जा सकते हैं, इन के पास पैसा है, गरीबों के पास पैसा नहीं है वहां तक जायेंगे तो उस में वक़्त जाया होता है—इस तरह से यह धन्धा नहीं चलेगा, मैं चाहता हूँ कि हुकूमत इस के बारे में अपनी पोजीशन साफ़ करे । मैं आपको बताना चाहता हूँ कि लोगों को कितनी तकलीफ़ें हो रही हैं, मेरे पास इण्डियन एक्सप्रेस के कर्मचारियों का एक पत्र आया है, उन्होंने लिखा है—

"I am glad to see from the teleprinter that you MPs are taking up the matter of the Wage Board (Journalists and Non-journalists) very vigorously; In the Indian Express at Sassoon Docks a peculiar and disgraceful thing took place yesterday. The ground floor water supply was cut off. You can imagine the state of the lavatory. Mind you the workers are not allowed to move out of the ground floor. This should be enough to incite the workers but knowing fully the management's plan of a lock out and looking for a chance to level charges against the workers, the press boys were not drawn into the trap. Imagine a worker denied water. But after all the example of Napoleon's army who drank horses' urine is before us."

We are not going to yield, he says.

आप आन्दाज लगाइये कि इससे कितनी बिटरनेस रहेगी । इसलिये मैं कहता हूँ कि हमारी हुकूमत को वात करनी चाहिये हम जानना चाहते हैं कि हुकूमत की इस के बारे में क्या राय है, क्या हुकूमत यह ममझती है कि जो कुछ एम्प्लायर्स कर रहे हैं वह उचित कर रहे हैं । अगर यह अनुचित है तो हुकूमत ने आज तक उनकी भांगों को पूरा कराने के लिये क्या कदम उठाया है । यह एक बहुत बड़ा मामला

[श्री एस० एम० जोशी]

है जिस का संबंध पूरे देश से है। कल की सिपथेटिक स्ट्राइक पूरे देश में कामयाब रही। लेकिन उस के बारे में यहाँ तक प्रचार हो रहा है पी० टी० आई० की तरफ से और गवर्नमेंट की तरफ से कि स्ट्राइक फेल हो गई। लेकिन इस तरह आखिरी बन्द करने से स्ट्राइक तो खत्म होगी नहीं बल्कि स्ट्राइक चलेगी। आप को एक एक के साथ बात करने के लिए तैयार हो जाना चाहिए अगर मजदूरों की फेडरेशन बात करती है। लेकिन मैं जानना चाहता हूँ टाइम्स आफ इंडिया के बारे में हुकूमत ने क्या कदम उठाए? वहाँ के संचालक मंडल में दो हुकूमत के प्रतिनिधि हैं एक डाक्टर हजारे और दूसरे श्री भट्टाचार्य और तीसरे एक जज की नियुक्ति की है नाना साहू कुंटे की जो कि चेयरमैन हैं। मैं पूछना चाहता हूँ कि आप लोगों ने क्या कदम उठाए हैं मजदूरों को न्याय दिलाने के लिए? यहाँ पर समाजवाद की बात बहुत की जाती है। लेकिन क्या समाजवाद का यहाँ मतलब है यह मेरी समझ में नहीं आता। मंत्री महोदय के लिए मेरे दिल में काफी सम्मान है। मैं उन की इज्जत भी बहुत करता हूँ। उन्होंने कोशिश भी बहुत की। लेकिन जो बड़े नेता बैठे हुए हैं गृह मंत्री, उप-प्रधान मंत्री और प्रधान मंत्री उन से मैं जानना चाहता हूँ क्या उन्होंने प्रेस वालों को बुला कर कुछ कहा? अगर नहीं तो फिर मजदूरों के लिये क्या चारा रह जाता है? क्या हुकूमत उन की सहायता करेगी? मैं मानता हूँ कि कुछ दिक्कतें उनकी भी हो सकती हैं। लेकिन उन को दूर करने के दूसरे रास्ते भी हो सकते हैं। पहले तो उन को कह देना चाहिए कि तुम इस को 100 फीसदी अमल में लाओ। अगर उस में दिक्कतें हैं तो उम के लिए वालंट्री आक्टिवेशन के लिए तैयार हैं। अगर वह न मानें तो आप के पास जो सेक्शन हैं उसे आप को लगाना चाहिए न कि मजदूरों के खिलाफ आल इंडिया रेडियो से प्रोपेगंडा किया जाय। आप को तो इस के बजाय आल इंडिया रेडियो

से श्रौद्योगिक शांति का प्रचार करना चाहिए जब कि आप बड़े बड़े सरमायेदारों का पक्ष ले रहे हैं।

दूसरो चीज यह है कि आप उन को ऐडवर्टिजमेंट देते हैं। क्या सरकार यह नहीं कह सकती है कि यह नीति है अगर उम के ऊपर अमल नहीं करोगे तो तुम को ऐडवर्टिजमेंट कतई नहीं मिलेंगे? लेकिन जैसा कि अंग्रेजी में कहते हैं टेलर मेड जन्टिलमेन होते हैं वैसे यहाँ भी पब्लिक मेड लीडर रहते हैं। आप विरोधी आचार संक्यों डरते हैं। जन्ता आप के पीछे हैं। आप को उन के लिए लड़ना चाहिए। लेकिन आप यह चीज मानेंगे नहीं।

अन्त में मैं दो तीन गवाल मंत्री जो स पूछना चाहता हूँ। आप बताएं कि हुकूमत की राय क्या है? मजदूरों की जाँ लड़ाई है जो उनकी मांग है वह उचित है या नहीं और अगर उचित समझते हैं तो फिर गवर्नमेंट की तरफ से आप ने क्या कदम उठाए हैं? और अगर वह लोग नहीं मानेंगे तो आगे चल कर आप क्या करने जा रहे हैं? इस में गरीब की तरफ जाएंगे या सरमायेदारों की तरफ? जब हम अपने को समाजवादी कहते हैं और यूनानिस बेज बोर्ड है फिर भी उस को अपने पैरों तले रौंद रहे हैं। अगर हुकूमत कुछ नहीं करेगी तो फिर मैं कहता हूँ जो बड़े बड़े मोनोपलिस्ट हैं वह आप के ऊपर हावी हो जायेंगे। और फिर कोई दूसरा रास्ता नहीं रह जायगा।

MR. SPEAKER: This is a one-hour discussion. I can understand it takes 15 to 20 minutes or half an hour more, but if it takes two or three hours, naturally the House will be thin and Members will also be tired. Shri Joshi has taken 15 minutes.

SHRI S. M. JOSHI: I have taken only 13 minutes.

MR. SPEAKER: That does not matter. I would like hon. Member to be brief. Even if other Members take 5 minutes each, it will take two hours. I would only appeal that it will be easier for us to have more discussions if we limit our time.

SHRI N. DANDEKER (Jamnagar): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think, in this matter it is necessary to get our focus right. My hon. friend, Shri S. M. Joshi, has been continually harping upon a proposition which, I regret to say, is incorrect, namely, that the report was unanimous. The wage board consisted of seven members and it will be interesting to the House to know that there were as many as five who recorded minutes of dissent; two of the employees' representatives, two of the employers' representatives and one, whom I regard as the most important one, an independent member, Mr. Brahmayya, whose reputation as a knowledgeable person in matters of this kind is well established and well-known.

What exactly is the trouble with this Wage Board's report? The main trouble is that it completely threw overboard two of its own terms of reference and ignored entirely the Supreme Court decision on the question of the capacity of the employers to pay. In the first place, the Board paid no regard to one of its terms of reference, namely, that it should take into account the circumstances relating to the newspaper industry in the different regions of the country; that is to say, here obviously can and must be differential wage structures depending upon the circumstances prevailing in the different regions of the country; but the Wage Board ignored this. Secondly, the Wage Board was required to take into account the prevalent rates of wages for comparable employment in those regions. Now, it is obvious even to the ordinary layman that comparable employment to non-journalist workers of the newspapers, dailies and weeklies and so on, are the people in the printing industry generally. There are, for instance,

Government presses all over the country. What are the terms and conditions and the pay scales in Government presses and in other presses? There are a number of other associated and similar industries where these terms and conditions of comparable employment were completely ignored.

Thirdly, the most serious defect is that the wage board ignored totally the question of the employers' capacity to pay. We cannot dismiss the problem of capacity to pay by merely saying that it is true some of the newspapers may not be able to pay but that they should be able to pay by tightening their organisation. An excellent summary of these objections, in principle and in fact, to the recommendations of this Wage Board are contained in a very brief paragraph of the Minute of Dissent by Mr. Brahmayya which I would like to read. It says:

"Even as regards the daily papers, in view of the present economic conditions, one should attach the highest importance to their capacity to pay. I am anxious that our recommendations should not result in crippling the finances of the newspaper industry. Viewed in this light, I am of the opinion that, generally speaking, the scales of pay (taking into consideration also the span of service and the maximum pay) are on the high side. I may cite, as examples, the salaries and allowances recommended for clerks and drivers. The employees in the newspaper industry may not expect special consideration, other things remaining the same. In other words, the wage level in the general industry should be the guiding consideration for the fixation of emoluments in a particular industry subject to special considerations, if any, on merits."

The first point that I wish to make, therefore, is that this whole situation

[Shri N. Dandeker]

has arisen because the Government has behaved in an utterly irresponsible manner in accepting, in toto, the recommendations of the Wage Board which wholly ignored three basic principles of formulating wage structures. I would like to illustrate this by just two or three examples of the proposed new scales of pay compared with old scales of pay, where you have the fantastic position that the new pay scale starts at a point higher than the maximum level of the old scale of pay. At one time, I was in the cement industry and I have had occasions to argue scales of pay before wage boards. But never, in my experience, has it ever been the practice to suggest new scales of pay where the minimum of any proposed scale exceeded the maximum of the existing scale. So I would like to give you one or two examples of what this Wage Board has recommended. For example, in the *Statesman*, the Mono-operator's present scale of pay ends at Rs. 311 but the new scale begins at a minimum point of Rs. 330; in the case of Motor Driver in the *Free Press*, his scale ends at Rs. 214 at present, but the new scale begins at a point higher than this maximum at Rs. 245; in the case of Colour Etcher Learner in the *Times of India*, the present scale ends at Rs. 233, but the new scale begins at Rs. 100 higher, i.e., at Rs. 330. So, you have this kind of fantastic wage Board recommendations. Naturally, the burden would be impossible to bear, and here are again certain examples of that. I am reading from the report; I am not giving my own figures. Certain figures are given of the profits and of the capacity to pay—of the profits made and of the burden of the new imposition. *Amrit Bazar Patrika*, one of our leading papers, a paper that has played a tremendous role right through the whole century, makes a profit of Rs. 9½ lakhs—this is the average of 1963, 1964 and 1965. Now the burden imposed is Rs. 11 lakhs. That is to say, it cannot pay even if all its profits went to payment of these

wages and left nothing at all for any kind of return on capital or reserves or any improvement of machinery or reorganisation or anything. I have got here a large number of such instances. They will be found at page 61 of the Report and are listed there in considerable detail.

What then is the problem in that case? The problem, I suggest, is that the Government, with utter lack of responsibility, having sat for four months on the report of the Wage Board which itself took 3½ years to produce that report, have merely dithered almost everything that the Wage Board, by a majority minus these dissenters, and another majority minus those dissenters, and yet another majority minus yet other dissenting persons, has recommended. That kind of report has been endorsed wholly by Government with inevitable consequences such as we see today.

Coming to the recent negotiations and the strike it is astonishing to see what actually happened. Even those newspapers which accepted the negotiations and the agreement and which paid in accordance with this agreement are nevertheless having the strike. It is not a question of the papers who declined to pay 70 per cent. At present I am not concerned with them. It is astonishing to me that those who did pay 70 per cent of the anticipatory increases under the Wage Board have also been undergoing strikes. It makes nonsense of negotiations and all kinds of agreements.

It was well known at the time when the discussions were taking place that the particular newspaper association which was dealing with this matter was not representative in the sense of undertaking a binding agreement but was in a position to negotiate as far as was practicable. Then, Sir, about the subsequent negotiations, we know they are going on. I would not like to tread upon the delicate situation

that exists today, by narrating the details of the present negotiations. But I will say this. I know of no responsible newspaper—and that includes the *Times of India* to which Mr. Joshi referred—that has refused to negotiate on a unitwise basis. Each newspaper is prepared to negotiate and pay according to its own capacity to pay. That is precisely why negotiations have to be on a unitwise basis where you have several categories of newspapers,—categories of dailies, weeklies and other periodicals, each spread over seven classes. The terms and conditions and the financial position of these are so tremendously diverse that it is quite impossible to have what you might call one organisation for collective negotiation, with all the newspapers held responsible for any decision taken by such a negotiating body.

In any event, I wonder why this strike has been continuing in spite of the payment of 70 per cent by some newspapers, and in spite of the willingness of all newspapers to negotiate on a unit-wise basis.

Now, Sir—and this will be my last point,—I do not suggest that it is so, but I have an awful feeling that there is here some connection to black-out of news. What news is being blocked that is of the utmost gravity and importance today? I am wondering what is happening between Russia and Czechoslovakia.... (*Interruptions*) We have no news about it. I am perhaps asking a rhetorical question, because I cannot understand what in human reason justifies the continuance of the strike when people are prepared to negotiate, when employers are prepared to negotiate on a unit-wise basis, and some are prepared to negotiate even while the strike is on while others say 'We will negotiate if they will call off the strike'. Frankly, I see no reason at all why the strike should continue. I am almost compelled to suggest to the Minister to give it statutory effect to the Wage Board recommendations. Let the peo-

ple go to court and have it thrashed out there. Or let him refer the matter to adjudication. But for heaven's sake, let not this strike, which then becomes illegal, continue.

SHRI SHANTILAL SHAH (Bombay North West): I speak before the House with some experience of the newspaper business. I have been the Managing Trustee for the past 20 years of a public charitable trust *viz.*, the Saurashtra Trust which today runs 4 daily newspapers, in Bombay, Surat, Rajkot and Bhuj. It runs a bi-weekly, a weekly for women and does many other things.

Some years ago we had a labour dispute in our institution. It was referred to adjudication. At that time this non-journalists' wage board and journalists wage board were pending. Instead of fighting, I now find much to my regret, I agreed that the Working Journalists' Wage Board and the Non-Journalists Wage Board awards would be implemented by us. I had never expected to get this wayward and absurd award and since we had agreed we have implemented the awards. Therefore, let it not be said that I do not know. I am speaking with practical experience, not just theoretically. I have practical experience of having implemented the award (*Interruption*). Please listen. I am going to tell the consequences.

The non-Journalists' Wage Board mentions at page 24:

"The Saurashtra Trust newspapers have for the years 1963-4-5 made an average loss of Rs. 42,000".

It is a public charitable trust. We cannot borrow. Nobody will lend. We have no new share capital to raise. For three years we have lost Rs. 42,000 per year. Then this report says: that as a result of this award, our annual recurring burden will increase by Rs. 1,78,000, that is to say the loss which was Rs. 42,000 will now be a loss of Rs. 2,20,000 per year.

[Shri Shantilal Shah]

How are these newspapers to run? It is all very well for Shri Joshi to say what he has said. He had the experience. We had a Marathi daily newspaper and we had a dispute. Shri Joshi would not agree to the compromise I had suggested. He himself started a newspaper. Let him remember the *Lokmitra*. It started with my staff of *Lokmanya*. He could not run it even for a few months. We ran it for a few years. He could not run it for as many months.

SHRI MADHU LIMAYE (Mongyr): Advertisements.

SHRI SHANTILAL SHAH: It is a question of management of business.

This Wage Board Award has neglected a fundamental point mentioned in the terms of reference.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: The strike is against the big newspapers.

SHRI SHANTILAL SHAH: It is very easy to say that. I am going to tell you the consequence. As soon as this is over, we are the victims. I do not want their sympathy and I do not want their interference (*Interruptions*).

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: Why does he say this? We know his character very well.

SHRI SHANTILAL SHAH: While making the recommendations, the Wage Board did not take into consideration the prevalent rates of wages for comparable employments. What are the comparable employments? Most of the newspapers have got in addition to the newspaper non-journalists, employees in what is called the job department. Now, can you have one wage for a hand compositor in the newspaper and a different wage for a hand compositor in the job department? Can there be a different wage for a mono operator in the job department and for a monooperator in the newspaper department? It is impossi-

ble. Therefore, the non-journalists in the small newspapers and the non-journalists in the job department have to be paid the same wages. The result has been this. I have got today from our Bombay office information that our wage bill has been increased by Rs. 3,30,000 and not by Rs. 1,74,000 only. Our loss for the year ending March 31, 1968, which is not the whole year's loss, is Rs. 2,65,000 in Bombay. There is similar loss in other places. We have already paid retrospectively Rs. 2,18,000, and from 1st July, the additional annual increments will amount to Rs. 66,000. How am I going to meet all these losses? When you give a higher wage to operators in the *Times of India*, what reply am I to give to my other operators? Both are doing the same work.

It is very good to say that you are against the big newspaper. The next attack is going to be against us. This Wage Board has not laid down for how many hours of work these wages are to be paid. In some establishments the hours of work are eight, in some they are seven. Are the workers doing seven hours work and eight hours work to be paid same wages? Even the Labour Ministry does not give a reply. (*Interruption*)

You have only a one-sided view. I know where the shoe pinches and how, and I am stating facts.

In Bombay, till recently there was Mr. Saleem Merchant's Award in operation. Under that award, compositors were divided into three classes. The mono-operators and the lino-operators have always been paid traditionally according to their output. If he composes so much, he is paid so much. This Wage Board has wiped out all incentives. A good and a bad compositor are now paid the same wages. A man who does good work without mistakes is paid the same wages as a man who does bad work

with mistakes. How are we then to increase efficiency, how is the efficient man to be rewarded?

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU (Diamond Harbour): I do not know why the Government did not include him in the Wage Board.

SHRI SHANTILAL SHAH: If Government had done it, the result would have been much better. These gentlemen do not know how newspapers are run.

In Bombay city, as against a dozen presses, which print newspapers, there are a hundred presses which only do job work. For example, we print the Marathi and Gujarati edition of the American Reporter, i.e., American Sandesh, American Vartahar. We also publish Mr. Piloo Mody's March of the Nation and lest our communist friends get angry, I may say, we also print Soviet literature.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: Still you are making a loss? You should wind up your show.

SHRI SHANTILAL SHAH: The position is this. If anybody invites tenders, against these hundred presses where the wages are still the old traditional wages, how am I to compete and run my business when I have to pay more than double those wages? As soon as this session is over, it is going to be my first business to see whether we can run newspapers or close them down. I have got calculations made. Under this Award, the gratuity which we have to pay comes to Rs. 7,00,000.

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRI HATHI): Which is your class?

SHRI SHANTILAL SHAH: Class V. It is much worse for Class VI. The Government can say that this requires re-negotiation, but the present Award cannot be enforced. Those like me who have implemented it are very

sorry that we did so and I find it so to my regret. I have shown by figures that it is unworkable, not only in my press. No press will be able to do it.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: Sir, you should say that personal cases should not be pleaded on the floor of the House. He is pleading his own case. That is not allowed.

श्री बलराज मधोक (दक्षिण दिल्ली) :

अध्यक्ष महोदय, लोकतन्त्र में समाचार पत्रों का हित महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका है और इसमें विशेष प्रेम को फीर्थ स्टेट कहा जाता है। परन्तु दुर्भाग्य का विषय है कि हमारे देश के अन्दर आज समाचार-पत्र नद हैं और जो जनमत का शिक्षित करने के और जनमत को व्यक्त करने के सब से बड़े साधन है वह आज देश में बन्द पड़े है। इस के कुछ कारण हैं अर्थात् पत्रकारों और समाचार-पत्रों के अन्य कर्मचारियों के बीच में तथा समाचार-पत्रों के संचालकों के बीच में कुछ झगड़े हैं। यह बड़ा खेदजनक स्थिति है और इसको जल्दी ठाक करना न के हित में है।

परन्तु हम को विचार करना होगा कि यह समस्या पैदा क्यों हुई। हमारे यहाँ अलग अलग वर्गों के लिये वेज बोर्ड बनाये जा रहे है और वह वेज बोर्ड एक ही प्रकार का काम करने वाले कर्मचारियों के लिये अलग अलग वेतन तय करने हैं। इस प्रकार हम देखते हैं कि एक वेज बोर्ड एक इंडस्ट्री के लिये टाइपिस्ट का वेतन 300 रु तय करता है और दूसरा वेज बोर्ड दूसरी इंडस्ट्री के टाइपिस्ट का वेतन 150 रुपये तय करता है। मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि टाइपिस्ट और टाइपिस्ट में क्या अन्तर है? यह जो नीति है अलग अलग इंडस्ट्री के लिये, अलग अलग वेज बोर्ड बनाये की, यह बुनियादी तौर पर गलत है। हमारे सारे देश के लिये एक ही वेज बोर्ड होना चाहिये जा कि एक प्रकार के कर्मचारियों

[श्री बलराज मधोक]

के लिये न्यूनतम वेज तय कर दे। उदाहरण के लिये अमरीका में उन्होंने यह तय किया हुआ है कि संयुक्त राष्ट्र अमरीका में न्यूनतम वेतन ढाई डालर प्रति घंटा होगा। मगर मैंने वहां देखा कि जो लोग स्टोल इंस्ट्रू में काम करते हैं उन्हें एक घंटे के लिये पाँचे चार डालर मिलते हैं। ढाई डालर तक तो मिलेगा हाँ चाहे किसी इंस्ट्रू का टाइम्पिस्ट हो या दूसरा वर्कर हो। इसके सिवा उसकी कार्य क्षमता, उद्योग की उपलब्धि की क्षमता, उस के काम करने का ढंग तथा उस के अन्दर कितनी वारगेनिंग कैपसिटी है, इस के आधार पर उसका वेतन ढमकता है।

परन्तु हमारे यहाँ अजो हालत है। एक ही तरह के कर्मचारी लेकिन जो फिगर्स आये हैं उनसे मालूम होता है कि उनके अलग अलग वेतन तय किये गये हैं, इस के कारण कठिनाई पदा हो रही है। आज वेज बोर्ड ने निश्चय किया है कि एक समाचार पत्र के ड्राइवर को इतनी तन्ज्वाह दी जाये और इतनी तन्ज्वाह प्रिटर को दी जाये। लेकिन यहाँ पर सारा प्रिंटिंग का काम समाचार-पत्रों के प्रेस में ही नहीं होता है। देश में दूसरे प्रिंटिंग प्रेस भी हैं। अगर एक प्रिंटिंग प्रेस में एक मोनो-प्रिटर को 300 रुपये मिलते हैं तो सरकारो प्रेस में उसको 100 रुपयों मिलें? इगलिये ब्रिन्यादी तौर पर यह नाति गलत है।

सारे देश के लिये एक वेज बाँडें तय कर दिया जाये और वह मिनिमम वेज निश्चित कर दे। उसके बाद जो अलग अलग इंस्ट्रूज हैं वहाँ के कर्मचारी नेगोशियेट करें। जितनी उस उद्योग की क्षमता होगी वेदावार की और जितने अच्छे कर्मचारी होंगे, उन के हिसा से उन के वेतन तय हो जायेंगे। इस मामले में सब लोगों को

एक ही रस्से से बांधना ठीक नहीं होगा। जो कर्मचारी मेहनत करने वाले हैं, अधिक एफिशिएन्ट हैं, उनको अधिक मिलना चाहिये, दूसरे लोग जो इतने एफिशिएन्ट नहीं हैं उनको कम मिले। लेकिन मिनिमम वेज तो तय होनी ही चाहिये, यह तोति आपको तय करना पड़ेगा। यह जो कठिनाई पैदा हुई है वह इसी लिये है कि अलग अलग इंस्ट्रू के लिये अलग अलग वेज बोर्ड तय किये जाते हैं। एक वेज बोर्ड तय करे कि इस प्रकार के स्तर के कर्मचारी का न्यूनतम वेतन इतना होगा। उसके बाद अलग अलग क्षेत्रों के लोगों की कास्ट आफ लिविंग के आधार पर अलग अलग क्षेत्रों की अलग अलग इंस्ट्रू के आधार पर कार्यक्षमता के आधार पर, मुनाफे के आधार पर नेगोशियेशन के द्वारा यह वेतन कम या अधिक किये जा सकते हैं।

जहाँ तक इस समय का सवाल है वेतन बोर्ड ने जो कुछ तय किया है वह सर्व-सम्मत नहीं था। उसके बाद नेगोशियेशन चले, तब चोत चली। उसके बाद कुछ तय हुआ। भले ही वह स्ट्राइक के अंत पर तय हुआ हो लेकिन जो फैसला हुआ तीन महोने पहले, सरकार को देखना होगा कि उस पर अमल हुआ या नहीं। अगर अमल नहीं हुआ तो सरकार का यह देखना फर्ज है कि उस पर अमल होता है। लेकिन अगर अमल हुआ है उसके बाद भी कर्मचारी गड़ड़ करते हैं तो उनको दण्ड दिया जाये। अगर संचालक गड़बड़ी करते हैं तो उनको भी दण्ड दिया जाये। इस के अंत में सरकार को न तो आर्गोनाइज्ड लेबर की तरफ देखना चाहिये और न आर्गोनाइज्ड कैपिटल की तरफ। इस देश का सब से बड़ा दुःख यह है कि यहाँ कामन-मैन का

कोई पूछता नहीं है। जो बुनियाद है उस को कोई पूछता नहीं। कर्मों प्राय-नाइज्ड लेबर अपना बात मनवाती है और कर्मों प्राय-नाइज्ड केपिटल अपना बात मनवा लेता है। सरकार दोनों के हाथों में खेलती है। मैं चाहता हूँ कि सरकार न उद्योगपतियों के चक्कर में आए और न ही ट्रेड यूनियन के देश के हित में जो है, आम कर्मचारियों के हित में जो है उसको करें। इस मामले में सब से बेहतर तो यह होगा कि पिछली बार जो फैसला हुआ था उस पर अमल करवाने की कोशिश की जाए। अगर उस में कठिनाई है तो मैं चाहता हूँ कि इसके बारे में पंच-फैसला करवा लिया जाए। कोई जज मुकर्रर किया जाए, कोई आर्बिट्रेटर मुकर्रर किया जाए और उसके सामने जो समाचार-पत्रों के मालिक हैं वे भी अपना पक्ष पेश करें और कर्मचारी भी करें और फिर उस पंच फैसले को दोनों पक्ष मानें। अगर झगड़ा चलता रहता है और पिछला जो फैसला था वह लागू नहीं होता है और उसके फलस्वरूप अखबार बन्द रहने लगे तो यह ठीक नहीं होगा।

17.46 hrs.

[उपरोक्त महोदय गठित हुए।]

दूसरी बात मैं यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि पंचफैसले के साथ इस बात का भी विचार हो कि क्या सारे समाचारपत्रों की पेइंग क्षमता एक समान है? मैं जानता हूँ कि अगर एक बात को सभी समाचारपत्रों पर लागू किया गया, एक दर लागू की गई तो कई समाचारपत्र बन्द हो जायेंगे। यह तो वही बात होगी कि जो मुर्माँ अंटे देती है उसी को मार दो। यह अकलमन्दी की बात नहीं है। हम चाहते हैं कि सभी समाचार-पत्र चलते रहे। समाचारपत्र हिन्दुस्तान टाइम्स या टाइम्स आफ इंडिया ही नहीं हैं। जिन की क्षमता अधिक है

उन से अधिक लो, जो छोटे हैं, जिन की क्षमता कम है, उन से कम लेना होगा, उनका हमें विचार करना होगा। कर्मचारियों के साथ हमारी सहानुभूति है। हम उनके साथी हैं। हम चाहते हैं कि वे काम करें, उनको लिविंग वेज मिले, उनको काम के मुताबिक भत्ता मिले। जो मालिक हैं उनको भी मैं अपील करता हूँ कि समाचारपत्र सारे देश के लिए हैं, उनका हित सारे देश का हित है और देश का हित उनमें निहित है, इसलिए मिल बैठ कर कोई हल इसका निकाल लिया जाए। एक जगह बैठ कर नैगोशिएट करें, मिनिस्टर साहब बीच में बैठ जायें और तय कर लें कि जब तक फैसला नहीं होता है हम नहीं उठेंगे। अगर आपस में बैठ कर फैसला नहीं होता है तो मैं चाहता हूँ कि किसी को पंच बना लिया जाए और उसको कहा जाए कि चौबीस या अड़तालीस घंटे के अन्दर अन्दर वह अपना फैसला दे दे ताकि समाचारपत्र चालू हो सकें।

SHRI K. R. GANESH (Andaman and Nicobar Islands): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I rise to support the demands of the non-journalists employees of the newspaper industry and condemn the adamant and intransigent attitude of the employers who have refused to implement the recommendations of the Wage Board. In spite of all the arguments that have been advanced by some hon. Members about the capacity of the industry to pay or not to pay, I wish to bring to the notice of the House that there are three or four basic issues involved in this dispute. The first question is that a High-powered Wage Board was appointed by the Government of India which went into this question in detail. Some hon. Members are putting before this House that this question should be re-examined. Sir, it has been the experience of the workers and the employees in this country that when a Wage Board or an adjudication machinery is constituted, it takes about two or three years to

[Shri K. R. Ganesh]

decide the issue, and then the employers, normally and ordinarily, appeal against the decision even if it is the unanimous decision of the Wage Board or the adjudication machinery. Then the whole question gets complicated and a strike takes place. This is the basic problem that the Government has to tackle because we have built up machinery for settlement of disputes. We have the Wage Boards, the adjudication machinery and various other machinery, and this is a very progressive thing that this Government has done. Now, what has been the experience? Even the unanimous recommendations of the Wage Board and the adjudication machinery are not being implemented by the employers and the employers always take recourse to either not implementing the decisions or going to the Supreme Court.

The second basic issue involved in this question is that on April 23, 1968 the Indian and Eastern Newspaper Society and the All-India Newspaper Employees Federation entered into an agreement. The employers have gone back on that agreement and they say that the agreement is not mandatory but only recommendatory. I think, Sir, the crux of the dispute lies in this particular question: that an agreement was reached and that agreement laid down that 70 per cent of the difference in wages which the employees were getting and which has been recommended by the Wage Board will be paid, and it has been laid down as to when and how it will be paid. It was an interim agreement. The employers are now interpreting this by saying that it is not mandatory, but only recommendatory. This basic fact has brought about the present strike.

The third basic issue involved is the capacity of the industry to pay. Here some hon. members have trotted out arguments which mean that most of the papers will go bankrupt if this is implemented. But the basic

fact remains that the principal organisation of the employers agreed to pay 70 per cent of the difference. 30 per cent was to be negotiated later on.

SHRI LOBO PRABHU (Udipi): It is not only the capacity of the papers to pay but the capacity of the readers to pay.

MR DEPUTY-SPEAKER: If I permit clarifications to be sought when a member is speaking, there will be no end to it.

SHRI K. R. GANESH: The bigger employers are also taking the plea of the smaller newspapers. It is quite possible that in a wage board award of this nature covering a very wide area, some newspapers may not be able to pay. But the employees, organisation has openly said that they are prepared to see that the smaller newspapers are exempted from this. The question now is of the monopoly press. This monopoly press, which is controlled by finance capital and which has got linked up with industry and which is controlling the major part of the thinking process of the intelligentsia and the literate people of this country has not supported and spared this Government. Time and again it has been the biggest wrecker of national policies whether it is public sector non-alignment or controls. Therefore appeal to Government to bring forward legislation to implement the recommendations of the wage board.

SHRI KIRUTTINAN (Sivaganja): Sir, on behalf of the DMK, I rise to support the demands of the non-journalists who are on strike. Newspaper industry is the most important industry in the world. It is the instrument through which one can see the functions of the whole world. Newspaper is the screen through which we can see the true picture of a country or a nation or a region.

For the past one week, our country is in the dark. Most of the newspapers are unable to come out due to this strike. Most of the newspapers are owned by the capitalist and big business people and so, the Government is not in a position to enforce these business people to come to a decision.

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH (Nandyal): What about *Dinathanti*? It is a chain newspaper. The DMK Speaker of Madras is connected with it.

SHRI KIRUTTINAN: Sir, due to the dispute among the employers and the employees, to fix the wage level a Wage Board was constituted. That wage board has submitted its report. Whatever may be the recommendations, they were unanimous. Now the owners of the newspapers and the representatives of the newspaper owners say that the proposals of the Wage Board are unrealistic.

Shri Ganguli, the President of the Indian and Eastern Newspapers Society, had pointed out that the Wage Board proposals were "unrealistic, perverse and incapable of implementation". What has this Government done so far? What is the use of constituting a wage board? Nowadays the wage board has become a convenient tool through which the problem can be easily postponed by a certain number of years. This is the usual tactics of this Government.

This Government is also an employer. Even this Government itself was hesitating to implement the wage board's recommendations regarding its own employees. Then, how can this Government force the private people to implement the recommendations of the wage board?

The Ministry of Labour has constituted wage boards for not less than 17 industries, but no machinery has been provided to enforce the implementation of the wage board's re-

commendations. Legislation should be passed to give effect to the recommendations of the wage boards.

As far as this case is concerned, Shri Ganguli said that the Labour Ministry by making "the initial mistake" of accepting the Wage Boards recommendations has landed the newspaper industry in a crisis. The employers are incapable of saying like this. But our Labour Minister says in his statement:—

"As explained by me in this House on earlier occasions, the recommendations of the Non-Journalists Wage Board are not enforceable statutorily and implementation has to be secured through persuasion and advice."

I do not know how far their advice and persuasion are going to succeed in this problem.

So I dare extend my condemnation over this Government. Condemnation of an institution cannot be misconstrued as denunciation of an individual. Even now the Government can take much initiative and force the employers to accept the Wage Board's recommendations without fail. If it is not done, I request the Government and ask the hon. Minister whether he would be ready to stop giving advertisements and newspaper quotas to those papers who do not implement the Wage Board's recommendations.

SHRI ANANTRAO PATIL (Ahmednagar): Sir It is very unfortunate that the newspaper employees, both journalists and non-journalists, are compelled to go on strike not once but twice within three months. The prominent newspapers of the metropolitan city are not coming out for the last seven days and the journalists and non-journalists have to roam about without work. The Labour Minister has made two statements on the floor of the House but these two statements have

[Shri Anantrao Patil]

not satisfied anybody, neither the Members of this House nor the members of the press.

Sir, today the day dawned without newspapers and people like me were very restless without newspapers. I was reminded of the words of Mr. Jefferson, the late President of America, when he said, "I will prefer a press without a government". This Cabinet prefers a government without a press.

The position is very unfortunate. The deadlock is still there and the Minister says that he is trying to resolve the deadlock by bringing both the parties together. But both these parties are accusing each other and putting blame on each other. I would like to know from the Government what are the concrete steps taken by them to bring the parties together and to have a solution of this problem. Who is responsible for this deadlock? Is it the employees or the employers or the Government? I say both the Government and the employers are responsible for this deadlock.

I heard both Shri Dandekar and Shri Shantilal Shah with patience. I do not want to do that jugglery of facts and figures which Shri Dandekar has done. I also belong to a newspaper. Shri Shantilal Shah said that his paper is in class 5 and so he is not much affected. My newspaper, as you know, is a small newspaper, a medium-sized newspaper, and it is also run by public charitable trusts with which the present Minister of Information and Broadcasting was associated and we are running this newspaper, in the last 10 years, in loss. Still, when there was an agreement on 23rd April, we immediately started the implementation of the wage board's recommendations for non-journalists workers. Some people will ask: How could we do this? It was beyond our capacity. The small newspapers and the medium-sized newspapers have not the capacity to pay wages which have

been recommended by the wage board. But still to run a newspaper, in this newspaper industry, if we do not treat both the constituents, journalists and non-journalists equally, if we do not have the wages as per the recommendations of the wage board, according to their work, it is very difficult to pull on.

What happened after the recommendations of the wage board? As the wage board recommendations for journalists were statutorily binding, immediately, all the newspapers implemented them. But for non-journalists, we were waiting for the Government to give us a signal. These two important constituents were trying to pull not together but in different directions. That had a very bad effect on the newspaper industry. The big newspapers under class 1, 2 and 3 said that they were not in a position to pay. I would like to draw the attention of the Labour Minister to the warning given by the Press Commission 15 years ago about this industry. These big newspapers are not making money but they are minting money. Instead of utilising 40 per cent of space for advertisements as recommended by the Press Commission, they are utilising 60 per cent to 70 per cent space. Take, for instance, the *Times of India*, the *Indian Express*, the *Lok Satta* or any other newspaper. 70 per cent space is consumed by advertisements. What are the charges? Their rates of advertisement are higher for Government advertisements as well as for commercial advertisements.

Then, Shri Dandekar and Shri Shantilal Shah quoted the figures of profits. Shri S. M. Joshi also quoted the figures of profits and out of them, they say, they are not in a position to pay. We, the small newspapers which run in loss, are able to pay. We prefer to pay because we think that in this country, during the next

25 years, the future is for the language papers and the district papers. The Government should come forward to help those newspapers.

About the ownership and the control of the newspapers, the Press Commission had recommended the diffusion of ownership and that the chains and groups should not be encouraged. But this Government did nothing during the last 20 years, right from Mr. Diwakar to Mr. K. K. Shah. All the Ministers did not pay attention to the newspaper industry. Why? If I may say so, they are afraid of the big magnates, the big guns, the owners of the press, because they want the press to toe the line. As the independent and patriotic newspapers are not toeing the line of Government, the Government is not prepared to touch the big newspapers. This is not good for the sake of the country and for the freedom of the press. I would request the working journalists federation and the employees union not to come in the way of small newspapers, not to urge upon them to implement hundred per cent the recommendations. They can urge upon the big papers, classes 1, 2 and 3, but not the small newspapers. I will make a request to the Government: if you have no other source to make them pay, then stop their advertisements, cut their newsprint quota. (*Interruptions*).

18 hrs.

SHRI H. N. MUKERJEE (Calcutta North East): I am glad that for a change we have heard two fine speeches from the Congress benches, and the Chair having been constrained to ration our time in a rather miserly fashion, I would not waste the little allocation which I have got by expatiating on my admiration for this wonderful brain-wave with which Mr. Dandekar mysteriously capped his devil's advocacy on behalf of press barons, and I would not waste my sympathy for the tale of woe which was conveyed to us by our friend,

Mr. Shantilal Shah, speaking on behalf of those who run the organisations. But, I think, as far as this House is concerned, we have to take note of the serious nature of what is happening in the country today, namely, that the country is without its newspapers for several days in succession. If you have any idea in regard to safeguarding the image of this country as democracy, then surely something has got to be done about it. In regard to what we ought to do, the thing should be as clear as day-light.

This is an example which we are witnessing of the blatant use of the power of big money to brow-beat the workers in the newspaper industry. If I just recall a few dates—this case has been hanging fire so long only on account of this ugly attitude of those whom Mr. Dandekar befriends—the Wage Boards were set up in November, 1963 and February, 1964—nearly five years ago. The employers, the defenders here, adopted dilatory tactics and went back on earlier commitments. The final recommendation of the Wage Board came out in September, 1967. That is to say, the workers were waiting all the while. The Government, always ready to help money-bags in distress, made some pro-employer modifications in November, 1967. But Mr. Dandekar's friends were not to be satisfied so easily. They went to the Supreme Court. It is a curse for this country that talent can be purchased, that talent can be exploited, by people who have got money at their disposal, that cases can be argued in the Supreme Court with a view to depriving the common worker of a little additional increase in his emoluments. But that is the state of things which we have in this country. The result was that we had a token strike on the 24th January. Then there was an attempt at settlement—tripartite meetings—in February. The talks broke down in March, 1968, and there was notice of an indefinite strike on

[Shri H. N. Mukerjee]

the 31st March. Then what happened? On the 23rd April, 1968, there was some idea of a settlement maturing. The I.E.N.S. agreed with the Federation of the newspaper industry to pay 70 per cent of the difference between the existing and the recommended wage, and the idea was that a negotiated settlement would be concluded in a month. That was something like a silver lining in the cloud, but the employers went back on the agreement. They said, it was not binding, and the talks broke down. So, what is all this? I know it for a fact, and the Minister knows very well, that in Calcutta recently...

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The hon. Member may try to conclude.

SHRI H. N. MUKERJEE: I would conclude in a couple of minutes. Mr. Dandekar had 15 minutes...

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER. No; that is not correct.

SHRI H. N. MUKERJEE: I am concluding in a couple of minutes.

The Minister knows very well that in Calcutta in the case of the poor cinema workers, the minimum wage had been fixed seven years ago, but the employers never accepted it: they went to court, they kept everything hanging fire, and then by securing the employees' defeat in small chunks, they have won a pyrrhic, very temporary victory.

What do we want to do about it? Shri Dandekar has praised the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*. Luckily, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* is coming out and the *Jugantar* is also coming out. But are we going to allow these money bags, these press barons, these Tatas, Birlas, Dalmai-Jains, Martin-Burns and Goenkas who go against the basic national policies of this country, to exploit their position as newspaper proprietors in order to carry on their nefarious design? Are we going to

allow them to get away with it? Could not the Minister say that he is going to have a settlement that he is not going to let these workers wait for ever and ever, that he is going to come forward with some sort of legislation so that the Wage Board awards can be enforced, so that the wage board award in the case of non-journalist employees should be enforceable? That is something which he ought to do. In the meantime, if some kind of settlement can be arrived at by repeating the idea of 70 per cent payment of the difference between the present wage and the recommended wage and discussions in regard to the remainder, I hope something can be done. That is what I expect the Minister to do. That is what the country would expect the Minister to do. The vile doings of these barons cannot be tolerated for any further length of time. If we are going to tinker with wage board decisions, what is going to happen? You are going to have the Engineering Wage Board decisions in the picture. Are you going to have countrywide manifestations of workers' discontent? That is the writing on the wall. So you must see that you take steps which are indicated at the present moment.

SHRI D. C. SHARMA (Gurdaspur): I think today is the testing time for Indian democracy and anyone who lets down Indian democracy today in terms of the workers will be doing immense harm to this country not only tomorrow but also the day after tomorrow.

It is not a case of a few workers who are termed as non-journalist workers. It is not a case of a few persons who are employed in those presses. It is a case of the fundamental right of Indian citizen to have a living wage and to have a wage which has been granted to them by a wage board appointed by the Government of India. Can the Government of India go back upon the recommendations of the Wage Board?

One member made a fun of the minority report and of the many reports that were to be found in the wage board report. He referred to one Brahmayya. Brahmayya may be living in the top world, but we are not living in the top world. We are living in a world where people have to eat, to live, to educate their children and to have a living wage and a subsistence wage. Brahmayya may be living in the land of Brahma. But we are living in this country.

Therefore, I would submit that taking everything into consideration, the majority report of the wage board must be given legal sanction here and now and there should be no going back upon it.

My hon. friend, Shri Hathi, is a very fine person. I have great regard for him. I respect him. I think he is one of those noble persons who are easily carried away by ignoble persons: I would submit very respectfully that he should not yield to the blandishments of press barons. He should not be brow-beaten by those persons who are called money-bags. He should not yield to those persons who are thought to be in charge of these big newspapers.

What are these big newspapers doing for us? What are they doing for our country? They are only making profit. It is a kind of industry.

Mr. B. G. Horniman looked upon the press as a mission, but now Birlas and Tatas look upon it as a money-making machine.

I hope Mr. Hathi will not yield to these persons and will give the non-journalist workers some kind of happiness. I hope he will tell them that he is with them and not with those persons. Let him not waver, let him not try to please both the sides, let him come out openly, frankly and unreservedly on the side of the workers.

SHRI P. RAMAMURTI (Madurai):
We are now dealing not with the case of the small newspapers. I am absolutely certain that the Federation is prepared to understand these peculiar difficulties that the small newspapers have and make enough concessions to them. Therefore, we are not concerned with all those questions.

It is true that the Wage Board's recommendation has not been unanimous. We are now concerned with the recommendation of the majority. For my friend Mr. Dandeker, Mr. Brahmaiah is an independent person who Brahmaiah is an independent person is well known for his independence. I do not know how many people in this House have ever heard of the name of Mr. Brahmaiah. He is certainly well known in the business world with whom he has been very intimately connected for many years as an auditor. I know that gentleman. For Mr. Dandeker and the class he represents, Mr. Brahmaiah may be the personification of independence, but as far as the people of this country are concerned, their class does not represent the people of this country. That is all I would say, I would not say anything more.

He also forgets that there was another independent member on that Wage Board, Mr. Siddheshwar Prasad, who is now Deputy Minister. He was not the employers' representative, nor the employees' representative. But he would not quote him, he would quote only Mr. Brahmaiah. I do not want to go further into that.

He pointed out how the employers have been nothing but sweet reasonableness, but may I ask him a simple question? Why is it that the employers who are supposed to be the embodiment of sweet reasonableness did not lift their little finger from the month of November when the Government accepted the Wage Board Report with certain modifications in favour of the employers, who implemented even partially, one-fourth, one-eighth or one-tenth? It required a

[Shri P. Ramamurti]

strike and the threat of a strike for them to come forward to negotiate. I charge these people not only with dishonesty and perfidy, because when they came out for negotiation after the April strike they did not say they were not the representatives of the newspaper industry, but having entered into negotiation and agreed to implement 70 per cent as an interim measure, they issue a statement that their agreement is only recommendatory. Is it any wonder that the employees think that the employers are nothing but a set of perfidious people for whom nothing but the sordid interest of their profit matters.

This morning, these people circulated a note to all members of Parliament, and I will read some gems from it. It says:

"The Supreme Court has held that unreasonable inroads into the profits of the industry might drive capital away from fruitful employment and even affect prejudicially the formation of capital itself. Therefore, it is the contention of the newspapers that all available surplus cannot be utilized to pay increased wages."

Who is to decide that? Mr. Brahmaiah must decide that. Nobody else can decide that. I cannot understand it. Here is the majority report which says that these people can afford to pay this, that it is not an unreasonable inroad into their profit, but they say it is. Why? Because Mr. Brahmaiah has said that, "Brahmayya is our authority, he is our Brahma". That is the type of their argument. It is nothing but perfidy on their part. Now they say: We are prepared to negotiate, unit by unit. Why did not they take that position in April when they came up for negotiation? The Bombay textile millowners say: we are not prepared to discuss the question of wages with the union that represents the entire textile workers of Bombay, but we shall enter into ne-

gotiations unit by unit. Were they to say so, will any trade union accept it? Having failed in their attempt to cow down the employees, they find today that they could not come before the common people of the country to justify their position and so they say: we are prepared to discuss unit-wise. No; it could not be done. It is an attempt to tear down into pieces the trade union movement and to see that the bargaining power of the employees is completely decimated. That is a manoeuvre of the employers and therefore this cannot be done.

The hon. Minister is saying: we cannot bring an Ordinance because Parliament is sitting. I am absolutely certain that if the hon. Minister were to bring in any motion giving statutory recognition to this matter, I am sure that this House will pass it within a matter of two minutes; it will not take more than that....

SHRI N. DANDEKER: No.

SHRI P. RAMAMURTI: The Swatantra Party may oppose but an overwhelming majority of the Members of this Parliament will pass legislation giving statutory recognition to the recommendations of this board. We shall sit overtime if necessary. May I refer to the simple proposition put forward by my friend Mr. Joshi. When the employers are so very recalcitrant why should he be so solicitous to the press barons and give them advertisement after advertisement. Stop these advertisements and say; unless you are prepared to negotiate on a collective basis with the employees, we shall not be giving any more advertisements. The Government has got many other ways of bringing pressure on them so that they can be made to see reason.

श्री प्रेम चन्द वर्मा (हमीरपुर) :
उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, बहुत सी बातें कही गईं

हैं, मैं उन को नहीं दोहराऊंगा, मैं छोटी सी सिर्फ दो बातें कहना चाहता हूँ। सब से पहली बात तो मैं यह कहूँगा कि आज जो झगड़ा है, उस झगड़े का सब से बड़ा कारण हमारी सरकार है। क्यों है ? इस लिये है कि जब हम बोर्ड बनाते हैं, एन्कवायरी कमीशन बनाते हैं, एडवाइज़री कमेटी बनाते हैं, कन्सल्टेटिव कमेटी बनाते हैं, जब कमेटियाँ और बोर्ड बनाने लगते हैं, तब यह नहीं सोचते हैं कि इस का परिणाम क्या होगा। जब बोर्ड बन जाते हैं और उन की सिफारिशें आती हैं तो झगड़े पैदा होने शुरू हो जाते हैं। अगर पूँजीपतियों के खिलाफ कोई बात उस में आ जाती है, तो पूँजीपतियों का दबाव हमारी सरकार पर पड़ने लगता है और तब सरकार पिछली तरफ देखने लग जाती है कि हम क्या करें, इन की सिफारिश मानें या न मानें।

इस मामले में भी वेज बोर्ड ने यही बात की है, वेज बोर्ड ने जर्नलिस्ट्स और नान-जर्नलिस्ट्स की दो कैटेगरीज़ बना दीं, ताकि अखबार के लोग आपस में बंट जायें—यह उन पूँजीपतियों के लिये सब से बड़े फायदे की बात है, इस में वे सुप्रीम कोर्ट तक चले जाते हैं।

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, आपको मालूम होगा कि इस से पहले एक प्राइस शेड्यूल का मामला आया था, तब भी वे सुप्रीम कोर्ट तक गये और सारे का सारा मामला रद्द हो गया, जिसकी वजह से तमाम स्माल एण्ड मीडियम न्यूज पेपर्स उन का मुकाबला करने के नाकाबिल हो गये, इसी तरह से प्राइस वेज का मामला आया, उस में भी वे सुप्रीम कोर्ट तक चले गये और वह मामला रद्द हो गया, इसी तरह से अब यह वेज बोर्ड का मामला चला है।

इस वक्त सरकार को इस मामले में पूरी ताकत से काम लेना चाहिये और वह

ताकत वही हो सकती है—जैसा मेरे दूसरे दोस्तों ने कहा है—मैं हाथी जी का मशकूर हूँ, उन्होंने इस काम में बड़ी कोशिश की है, उन्होंने पूरा यत्न किया है कि वे आपस में फँसला करें, लेकिन वह फँसला नहीं हो सका। इसका मतलब यह नहीं है कि उन अखबार वालों के पास, उन पूँजीपतियों के पास, जैसा मेरे एक दोस्त ने कहा है कि इतना वे दे नहीं सकते हैं, मैं उन से पूछना चाहता हूँ कि टाइम्स आफ इण्डिया के पास 1950 में दो या तीन अखबार थे, आज उस के पास दो दर्जन अखबार चलते हैं। तो वह अखबार कहां से आ गए ? इतना पैसा कहां से आ गया ? जब वह 100 से 125 रुपये भी मजदूरों को नहीं सकते हैं तो फिर चैन आफ न्यूजपेपर्स कैसे बनने जा रहे हैं ? सरकार का काम है कि चैन आफ न्यूजपेपर्स को बन्द करने का यत्न करे वे सारे के सारे आज गरीबों को लूट रहे हैं और मजदूरों को कुछ नहीं देते हैं।

इस के अलावा मुझे यह कहना है कि वेज बोर्ड ने जो सिफारिशें की हैं उन को या तो आप कानून बना दें या फिर जैसा कि मेरे दोस्त ने कहा है इस को सारे का सारा तोड़ कर पार्लियामेंट में लाएं और यहां पास कराएं। आप टाइम्स आफ इंडिया के मजदूरों की तुलना दूसरे अखबारों से करना चाहते हैं। लेकिन आप टाइम्स आफ इंडिया का दूसरे मीडियम अखबार वालों से कैसे मुकाबला कर सकते हैं ? वे अखबार उतना कमा नहीं सकते हैं। वेज बोर्ड में छोटे और बड़े अखबार का फर्क रखना ही होगा। क्योंकि अगर ऐसा नहीं करेंगे तो फिर छोटे अखबार नहीं बल सकते हैं। इसलिए जो भी सरकार फँसला करे उस पर सब ले कि जो फँसला करने वाले हैं उस से पीछे नहीं हटना होगा। इस को मुलजाने के लिए सरकार पूरे जोर से और जल्दी से जल्दी कदम उठाए।

SHRI SURENDRANATH DWIVEDY (Kendrapara): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I do not think I can go into the history of the whole case within the limit of five minutes that you have put. The whole question is this. It is our experience that to avoid these difficulties the Government appoint Wage Boards, and since there is no statutory obligation, the employers do not implement the Wage Board's recommendations. It is the moral responsibility of this Government to see to it that the recommendations of the Wage Board are implemented. In this case, I would not urge this if the Government themselves have not accepted the recommendations of the non-Journalists Wage Board.

AN HON. MEMBER: Modified.

SHRI SURENDRANATH DWIVEDY: They have modified both the awards, but yet they have accepted it. And they have also failed in their attempt; whatever attempt Mr. Hathi might have made, he has failed miserably to convince and reason with the employers that they should honour these recommendations. They have even gone back on that little settlement there was some months back. It is very good for Mr. Dandekar to come at this late stage to plead their case and to ask for a unit-to-unit negotiation. But I want to ask him one thing: when the Society sat with the Minister and with the employees to discuss this question and agreed to pay 70 per cent difference in wages, they did not raise this question at that time. They did not say that "we cannot sit with you for collective bargaining." Now, it is too late in the day to come and argue in that fashion and to say so. The whole question is, they know it for certain that since there is no statutory obligation they can do as they like. As I understand, there is no difficulty whatsoever—whatever one might say—that so far as the big newspapers are concerned, they are not in a position to pay according to the recommendations of the Wage Board. Let them come for-

ward with a statement that they do not make profits and it is not possible for them to do this. I can understand the scare created by Mr. Shantilal Shah—

AN HON. MEMBER: Not Mr. K. K. Shah!

SHRI SURENDRANATH DWIVEDY: Mr. K. K. Shah is also connected with some newspapers. But the whole question is, I would not support the non-journalists if they had also included the small newspapers. They have not done so. They have completely excluded them and they say, we realise their difficulty. I understand from Mr. Ramamurti that the editor of the Hindu, Mr. Kasturi, who travelled with him today, says that he is prepared to honour all these recommendations, but what is standing in the way is the society.

SHRI P. RAMAMURTI: He has already given a statement in writing to the Labour Commissioner of Madras where he has offered to implement it in full. Now he is going back.

SHRI SURENDRANATH DWIVEDY: Mr. Dandekar has not disputed the figures quoted by Mr. Joshi. He did not say that the implementation of the wage board recommendations is beyond the capacity of these newspapers. In spite of implementing the recommendations, they would still make immense profits. I do not know what Mr. Hathi is going to say, but he is as much responsible for the present state of affairs as anybody else. They should have settled it then and there when they said that whatever agreement was arrived at, it was not mandatory but only recommendatory. They should have taken some steps then itself. They have delayed it long enough. I would have preferred promulgation of an ordinance when Parliament was not in session to see that the recommendations are implemented. It is not difficult even now. I am sure Parliament will support the Government if they bring forward a

legislation to see that the recommendations are implemented. I would not have supported the demands of the workers if I was not convinced. But I am convinced about it after going through the figures. All the figures quoted by Mr. Dandeker are all here given by the society. When my friend asked Mr. Dandeker, "What is the comparable wage in a job press and newspaper press?", he did not reply to it. He only said, I do not yield, because it is not given here. So, I once again request the Government not to delay it further, but bring forward legislation to implement the recommendations of the wage board.

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH (Nandyal): Sir, the entire country is blacked out today. The important newspapers are not coming. The chain of newspapers that have come to stay in our country have not only increased their riches enormously but they have also increased their influence. They have got a stranglehold over public opinion in this country. This is a matter that should concern every citizen who believes in democracy and free thinking. It is incumbent on the employers to implement the recommendations of the wage board. But they have gone back giving certain excuses which are not convincing to the MPs or to the general public. I earnestly make an appeal to the hon. Minister that this matter must be gone into thoroughly.

Here there seems to be one difficulty. Whatever some of our friends may say, the small and medium newspapers and their workers will not be affected because they know the financial ability of these newspapers. They do not bother them because they know what will be the repercussions. The newspapers will be closed and they will go out of employment. They know their responsibility.

Shri Shah had made out a very good case that an employee who is in Bombay living in the same conditions

works in a big newspaper and another works in a small newspaper. If the wage is different from one employee to another employee, conditions being the same, how can he be able to meet this? So I can only suggest that the Wage Board recommendations should be implemented in toto. With whatever legislative powers and legal sanctions that are there at the command of the Ministry, he has to implement it.

He must also give a serious thought to these employees who are working in small and medium newspapers. I am also prepared to throw a suggestion that there is nothing wrong to subsidise the small and medium newspapers if it goes to improve the working conditions of the employees working in these newspapers.

I would also earnestly appeal that every effort from now on should be made to encourage the language papers, the small papers and the medium papers which truly reflect public opinion and the democratic functioning of the country. I would boldly suggest that he should take this occasion to see that this monopoly of the big newspapers which is to the detriment of the country is broken.

SHRI J. B. KRIPALANI (Guna): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I had no intention of taking part in this discussion, but when I heard my friend, Shri Ramamurti, I was tempted to give my views about it. I am afraid, he, his friends and Shri Dandeker, are all wrong in the analysis of this quarrel.

With this quarrel the Government is intimately connected. It does not want that we expose the scandals of the Government here and that that should appear in the press. They are very anxious about it. They also want that nothing of our shouting, nothing of our raising the voice of disorder, nothing of our going out of the way and asking questions for 20 minutes should be recorded in the papers and that our constituents

[Shri J. B. Kripalani]

should read that we are active people. This is all a conspiracy hatched between the Government and these papers.

All the speeches that have been made have gone off the rails. The Government is interested in it and so the Government is not going to bring about a settlement of this issue. It is vital to their interests and it is also vital to our interests. Nobody has suffered more by this strike than we of the Opposition party because what have the Congress Benches to talk about which can be reported, unless it is a Ministers speech? It is all *fika*.

You cannot help it. We cannot help a conspiracy between the capitalists and the Government. In so many things there is such a conspiracy in order to dam us so that the few lines that are given to us may not be given. Therefore they are willing to sacrifice the many lines that are given them. They might talk sense or nonsense. We might talk all sense, but we get two or three lines. But they are willing to sacrifice those great advertisements for themselves provided we are denied the few lines.

So the grievance is not of the employees; the grievance is of the Members of the Opposition parties. Therefore, the Opposition parties are, naturally, taking cudgels and they want the settlement to be brought about as soon as possible so that their few lines may be reported. Otherwise how are they going to stand for the next elections? I do not know why Shri Dandekar, being in the Opposition, should support these capitalist newspapers. He does not see that this conspiracy is against the Swatantra Party also, against all the Opposition parties. So, this question is not going to end as long as this conspiracy between the Government and the capitalist newspapers is going to last. That is all I have to say.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister.

SOME HON. MEMBERS rose—

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have extended time by more than 35 minutes.

SHRI DATTATRAYA KUNTE (Kolaba): A reference was made to me in person. I should be given time. I have already written to the Speaker. The moment a reference was made to me, I wrote to the Speaker. If you do not want to give me chance, it is your choice.

SHRI SHIVAJIRAO S. DESHMUKH (Pasbani): I propose to refer to him again.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It will be simply on a personal explanation. I will permit him.

SHRI SHIVAJIRAO S. DESHMUKH: If he is going to reply to a reference made to him, I am going to say many things about the *Times of India*.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: At some other occasion.

SHRI DATTATRAYA KUNTE: Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member Shri S. M. Joshi, who raised the discussion about the strike in the newspaper industry made certain reference to me because I happen to be the Chairman of the Bennett Coleman & Co. If he had not made that reference, I would not have asked for your indulgence. Not that I would not have liked to speak, but I would not have pressed for it.

Shri S. M. Joshi made a reference saying that here is a man who has been appointed as the Chairman of this Company by court. This clearly indicates that I have no personal financial interest in the Company of which I am the Chairman. Coming to

the thing, whether I as Chairman did apply my mind to this or not, I might tell the House that, as a matter of fact, about this particular strike, the Secretary of the union in our establishment was having talks with the General Manager on the evening of the 22nd, on the eve of the strike, and the General Manager was trying to settle the whole question. I must make it clear to those who might not know that I have spent many more years in trade union work than the chairmanship of this Company which I happen to hold because of the order of the court. I know the difficulties of the workers. I have been telling my General Managers that whatever might happen to other papers, we must try to settle on our basis.

Then, Shri S. M. Joshi made a reference to the paying capacity. First of all, he quoted figures for the years 1963, 1964 and 1965. He made a reference to the burden of the establishment to the tune of Rs. 14 lakhs. Well, those are correct figures for those years. Whether the profits have gone down, I am not going to refer to that. I am going to refer to another thing. In addition to journalists and non-journalists, in this establishment, there are about 15 per cent. of the total workers in the job Department who are not covered by any of these wage boards, statutorily or otherwise. The union has all along been asking the management to consider the case of these workers. In this particular case, though there is no wage board about it, I have indicated to the General Manager that we must consider the case of these workers to a certain extent, though the management will not be able to manage to the full extent.

Another thing is this. Last week after the strike started—the Labour Minister will bear me out—I talked to him here in this House. I told him, "When my General Manager was negotiating on the eve of the strike and when we are prepared to negotiate so far as our unit is concerned,

why don't you do that? I am prepared to settle as far as my establishment is concerned." This is what I told him. Then I learnt that the General Manager came to Delhi at the instance of the Labour Minister. After he came here, they met the Labour Minister, and I am told—if the Labour Minister has any other story to tell, I am prepared to hear that—that he promised, he said... (Interruptions)

SHRIMATI SUCHETA KRIPALANI (Gonda): Who prevents any individual unit from coming to terms with its workers? Nobody prevents.

SHRI DATTATRAYA KUNTE: I am prepared to talk to the Union, but the Union has told the General Manager . . .

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Mr. Kunte, you have to conclude in two minutes.

SHRI DATTATRAYA KUNTE: Yes, Sir; I will finish.

The General Manager was told by the Secretary of the Union, "Talk to the Federation; now I have closed the door". Therefore, this is the position. I am explaining the position about the unit with which I am concerned.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: Why not talk to the Federation?

SHRI DATTATRAYA KUNTE: Coming to the point, the General Manager came here, and he was told, "All right, there will be talks at unit level". He was prepared to talk at unit level. I am again prepared to talk at unit level. We have implemented the award and the agreement of 23rd April and 70 per cent is being paid; therefore, there is no hardship. This is the position in which I stand.

SHRIMATI SUCHETA KRIPALANI: I want to ask him a question. Is it not a fact that, in implementing the recommendations of the journalists Wage Board, the position in Bennett Coleman & Co., has been such that the

[Shrimati Sucheta Kripalani]

Journalists' wages are frozen. The are getting a peculiar salary: the basic salary may be Rs. 250, but the personal wages may be Rs. 2,000 and so forth. There is great discontentment among the employees of Bennett Coleman & Co. If he can settle it, it will clear the atmosphere for the settlement of the present crisis.

SHRI SHIVAJIRAO S. DESHMUKH: The payments to the Directors of Bennett Coleman & Co., were fixed as Rs. 6,000 only two years back. Now they are supposed to be a few lakhs of rupees. The payments to Directors could increase from Rs. 6,000 to Rs. 14 or 15 lakhs, but the wages of poor journalists cannot increase even on the basis of journalists' Wage Board award.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: These questions are not relevant now. We are not relevant now. We are not discussing Bennett Coleman & Co. now. That discussion, we will have on some other occasion. (*Interruptions*) Now, the hon. Minister.

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRI HATHI): I have heard all the views expressed by the members. On the one hand, the representative of the workers' side, Mr. Joshi, blamed the Government for not having done anything . . .

SHRI S. M. JOSHI: Effectively.

SHRI HATHI: Yes.

On the other side, Mr. Kunte, Mr. Shah and others blamed by Government and the Wage Board . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Siding them?

SHRI HATHI: I will let you know. You heard Mr. Kunte whether I am siding them or you or anybody else.

Out of the various employers, we have one here, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Times of India,

Mr. Kunte, and he made some personal observations. He made some reference to me also. I shall explain.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: He also ignored the Federation.

SHRI HATHI: The question is this. He says that he was prepared to negotiate on the day before the strike, i.e., 22nd. The agreement of 23rd April says, "To enter into negotiations immediately to settle the dispute at issue in connection with the recommendations of the Wage Board for non-journalists employees and their implementation, to complete negotiations within a period of one month from the date". 23rd April was the date of the agreement: one month would be 24th May. But this happened only in July—20/7 or 19/7. Why could negotiations not be completed before one month was over? Even now I say this. If he is prepared, let him declare here and now that he is prepared to implement hundred per cent the recommendations of the Wage Board.

SHRI DATTATRAYA: I am prepared to negotiate.

SHRI HATHI: He says that now after reating all the difficulties saying that it is recomendatory and not binding—I am replying to Shri Kunte alone—

'I am prepared to negotiate'. Let him now say that he is prepared to implement it 100 per cent and I am sure everybody will agree.

SHRI SHIVAJI RAO S. DESHMUKH: That will also ensure his election next time.

SHRI HATHI: To say that he is prepared to negotiate till the last minute of the strike and then say that the manager came and met me and so on is something I cannot quite appreciate. Yes he met me. I shall even explain the position. I am not

going back on what has happened. In fact, on 23rd April, they were to go on strike—I am replying to Shri Joshi and others—and we were working upto 12.30 that night trying to arrive at a settlement. An agreement was reached at that time. The agreement was that 70 per cent should be paid as interim pending a settlement. Within one month, this settlement should be negotiated. One month had passed. In between, this controversy has arisen saying that it will be recommendatory and not binding. Therefore, the Federation of the workers took objection to this. 'On the one hand, we are entering into an agreement at the national level; on the other, you say that it is not binding. How can there be this position?

Now there was again a deadlock. I again intervened and said, 'Yes, it is true that when both the central organisations enter into an agreement, it should be an agreement and should be binding.' But the IENS said that they have no legal sanction, 'How can we implement it or enforce it?' There is certainly force in that point. But there also I tried to intervene and suggest a via media. I said "All right you come to the negotiating table. They try to negotiate. At the time, when you reach agreement or about to reach agreement, you go back to your constituents and ask, 'How many of you are prepared?' and then in the agreement that is recorded, say that the IENS representing the following come to this agreement". That means that it will be binding only them. I did not want to bind them all on behalf of those who were not agreeable. That via media was suggested. On the 17th July the negotiations started. Again on 20th, the negotiations failed, because they only went from 70 to 75 per cent. The progress that was to be done in three months was not done, and ultimately they reached the figure of 75, to which the workers were not agreeable. I again tried. On Friday, Saturday and Sunday I met them and tried to see if it was possible for me to settle it.

With great respect to Acharyaji, I would say that there was no collusion whatsoever. I knew it was said in a lighter mood. But it would be too much for me to say of the remark of an elder member that it was a lighter mood.

It has pained me that I have not been able to effect a settlement. I have wasted a number of hours and tried to persuade both the employers and workers. But it could not be done.

Then take the question about this implementation and the capacity of small newspapers. Shri Shantilal Shah referred to the small newspapers and said 'What will they do?' We have seen categories of newspapers. This quarrel is only in regard to 1, 2 and 3; it has nothing to do with 4-7. In regard to those newspapers, I have even discussed with the workers. They have not gone on strike and I can still assure the house that I will make them reasonable. In regard to classes 4 to 7, there will be difficulty.

The question is only so far as the bigger newspapers are concerned who have the capacity to pay and who are not paying. I say this even now; if they can convince me that they have not the capacity, I am still prepared to argue with the workers that they should not go in for it. But they have the capacity to pay.

SHRI SHIVAJI RAO S. DESHMUKH: They have no will to pay.

SHRI HATHI: That is a different matter. Therefore, that disposes of the question of whether they have the capacity to pay or not.

Then the question arises about the various categories. Shri Dandekar brought out the point whether the scales of pay are higher in the same region and in different regions. Out of the number of categories, there are three or four categories which

[Shri Hathi]

were cited. Of these, in the case of two we have already amended because we have gone through it. If one or two other categories are left out, that can also be a matter of negotiation.

I do not want to go into the merits of this. It can be settled. We have already changed two, for which they are blaming us saying that these are pro-employer changes which we have made. These are the categories which we have changed. If there are one or two left, that is also a matter which can be negotiated.

The whole question is: are we solving this or not? Or is there going to be a deadlock continuously and for ever? How can we solve it? So far as the Government side is concerned, it should be understood very clearly that there is a wage board recommendation accepted by Government and announced by them. We have to abide by it. There is no question about it. But if there are difficulties, parties can settle by negotiation. That is why I have been trying. I still make this appeal. Let there still be negotiations and discussions. Let us not break them on the plea of minor formalities, whether it will be at the plant level or unit level or Federation level. After all, there are the six newspapers and workers who have settled among themselves.

So far as the plant level is concerned—I am replying to Shri Kunte—it is true that the employers met me and then I said, 'Yes, I will put it to them'. I did so, but they said, 'Why should the Federation not have the status? All the time they have done it.' Merely standing on status, prestige and formalities is something I am not in favour of.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: Why the Federation be by passed? Suppose I call Shri Kunte as Kunte and not BKD Secretary.

SHRI DATTATRAYA KUNTE: I would not feel sorry.

SHRI HATHI: Ultimately a solution has to be reached. Why was the Hindu negotiating?

Then the question of small newspapers comes.

The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* is a small, class 3 newspaper. It has implemented it. Other newspapers of classes 4 to 7 want to have an agreement now. I agree with Shri Shah that there are cases of fitment and adjustment which will have to be done. But these can be done at the plant level. I have no objection. Once having agreed to the general principle of accepting or paying or what the basis should be, some cases of adjustment and fitment can be done at the plant level. So I do not think there will be any difficulty.

The whole question before us is the strike which is the major question which we are all concerned. We should all co-operate and see that the strike is withdrawn and workers resume their work.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: The major question is the fate of the Wage Board.

SHRI HATHI: The Wage Board is a non-statutory wage board. It has been deliberately kept so. We set up 22 wage boards. We have got the final recommendations of 14 already. In most of these cases, implementation has been going on smoothly. In some cases, coal, iron ore, limestone and so on, there have been some difficulties. But by and large this is being done. Because both the workers and the employers and the industrial relations machinery try to bring the parties together and settle it. This has been done. I have been hesitating all this time to make it statutory because it will lose the collective bargaining power; it will mean that there is no Union, no organisation which can go to the employer and negotiate and bargain for wages; it should be only

legal and then only our conduct will be legalised and then only we can function. But as Shri Dandeker has suggested, if the parties cannot settle by negotiation and discussion, Government will have no alternative but to make it statutory and assume the powers so that the recommendations can be implemented. That is the only way out.

We have a Wage Board for the journalists. What happened to that? They have gone to the High Court and the Supreme Court. The courts have luckily ordered that they should continue to pay according to the Wage Board recommendation till the case is decided. That is something whereby the workers do not suffer, but there it is a question which can be decided in a few months. In the Supreme Court I know that they will take a view which will be certainly legal, just and responsible, I have no doubt about it, and therefore I am not going to comment on it. After all, every party has the right to go to the court of law, but the question is whether it creates bitterness or goodwill, whether it will add to good and cordial relations. Can we not settle it otherwise? So, my appeal is that if it is necessary it will be done, but yet let us not merely say good-bye to negotiations.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: How long are you going to wait?

SHRI HATHI: I am not waiting. I am telling all those like Mr. Kunte who can influence. Let Mr. Kunte announce here and now that he is implementing 100 per cent the Wage Board recommendations.

Therefore, the courses open to the Government would be these. We can refer to adjudication, but that would mean three, four or five years. On that there would be appeal to the High Court and Supreme Court, and of course, the workers cannot wait so long.

Then, it can be referred, as Mr. Joshi suggested, to arbitration, provided it is very quick and final. We can examine it if both parties agree. But failing all this, the only course open would be to have powers with the Government, so that this can be implemented. That is all that I have to say.

SHRI P. RAMAMURTI: I am reading the terms of the agreement that was entered into on 23rd April:

"The parties agree to enter into negotiations immediately to settle the disputed issues connected with the recommendation of the Wage Board for non-journalist employees in their implementation; to complete negotiations within a period of one month from the date."

The parties are the President of the Indian and Eastern Newspaper Society and the All India Newspapers' Association. At that time they never made a report that the negotiations would be entered into unit-wise. Is it correct, because you were there?

SHRI HATHI: Yes.
 13.58 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Wednesday July 31, 1968/Sravana 9, 1890 (Saka).