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COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS

MINUTES AND FIRST REPORT

Shri Thirumala Rao (Kakinada): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table the Minutes of the third and fourth sittings of the Committee on Petitions held during the current Session.

Sir, I beg to present also the First Report of the Committee on Petitions.

12.02 hrs.

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS—Contd.

MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT—contd.

Mr. Speaker: The House will now take up further discussion and voting on the Demands for Grants under the control of the Ministry of Labour and Employment. The hon. Minister may continue his speech.

The Minister of Planning and Labour and Employment (Shri Nanda): Mr. Speaker, Sir, yesterday, when the House rose, I was in the midst of a clarification regarding the place of wages in the cost structure of industries. I tried to make out that labour costs were not such a burdensome element in the cost structure of industries. I propose to offer some figures in support of that figures of wages and salaries as a percentage of gross output in manufacturing industries. There has been a consistent decline in the ratio of wages and salaries to the total cost of production. In 1953 it was 20.3, and in 1960 it is 15.5.

Shri Indrajit Gupta (Calcutta South West): Is this the average of all manufacturing industries?

Shri Nanda: Yes, it is the manufacturing industries. These are the Reserve Bank figures. There is another set of figures derived from the census of manufacturing industries which is more or less the same or even a little better from the point of view of the workers.

I want to point out that there is corroborative evidence of this trend from another source. It is the index of productivity and the index of money earnings. Money earnings have been increasing, naturally, but productivity has outpaced the increase in money earnings. There is an increase in money earnings to the extent of 24 per cent during this period—the period which I mentioned—as against a rise of 32 per cent in productivity during the same years. The ratio of wages to gross output which I have given relates to wages and salaries together. If we take salaries out of this figure, the wages constitute about 12 per cent. When we take the wages by themselves over a period of years and compare their proportion to cost of production the conclusion is even more convincing that wage as an element has been favourable to industry, and not otherwise.

The other aspect of it from the point of view of workers is their level of living. The money earnings may go up but, in the meanwhile, the cost of living increases. After making allowance for the increase in the cost of living, there is still a certain improvement in the real earnings of the workers. The consumer price index moved up from 100 to 117 in 1960 and 119 in 1961 since 1953 and, therefore, the increase in real earnings was just about 6 per cent in 1960 and round 7 per cent in 1961.

It leads us to another very important development which occurred during recent years, and that is the acceptance by the Indian Labour Confe-

*Moved with the recommendation of the President.

rence of a certain criterion for judging the progress of the working class standard of living towards a certain minimum, which is the acceptance of the principle of the need-based minimum wage. Every time I reiterate that this was a very significant development and that is at least a minimum goal for us to strive for. We must reach towards it as soon as possible. We have accepted the criterion of need-based minimum for judging the advance of the workers towards this minimum objective. According to the recommendations of the Indian Labour Conference, this is estimated at Rs. 120 to 125 per month in 1958. Since then, the cost of living has gone up by about 9 per cent.

Shri Priya Gupta (Katihar): Which is the base year? On what basis is it calculated?

Shri Nanda: The year is different for various purposes. I first gave the year 1953.

Shri Priya Gupta: That is also an assumed*one. What is the starting base year?

Shri Nanda: I have got figures with me, taking every year as base year. This figure relates to the acceptance of the need-based minimum by the Indian Labour Conference, and that was for the year 1958. For that purpose, the base year is 1958. Therefore, as I said, 9 per cent is the rise in the cost of living in 1961. On the other hand, the average monthly money earnings of industrial workers in manufacturing industries in 1961 was Rs. 117. Therefore, there is still a gap. But, it must be acknowledged that year after year some improvement has occurred. Again, this figure of Rs. 117 is the average of several industries which make up the whole list of manufacturing industries. The variations are wide indeed, as I found when I was looking into the various industries in the various States. The variations, both in respect of one industry to another and one State to another are fairly wide. I found that in the States they range

from less than Rs. 1,000 per capita annual money earnings to over Rs. 1,500 and in the case of industries it is between less than Rs. 1,200 to over Rs. 1,800. There is a welcome and healthy trend towards closing this gap. Every year the changes that are occurring are reducing these differences, these disparities, and nearer uniform basis is being established, I hope. The differentials in other cases are also narrowing down. From the unskilled workers, semi-skilled workers to skilled workers of various grades, the people who stood at the lower rungs of the ladder have, relatively speaking, improved their position very much during recent years, partly because, the minimum wage has, by every tribunal and in every decision about wages, increased and the dearness allowance, etc., are either flat or graded, which has given advantage to those at the lower levels.

Looking at the last period of 5 or 6 years, workers in industries which were lagging behind have gained much more.

Shri Priya Gupta: In the Railways, the biggest employer of about 12 lakhs, Rs. 56 is the minimum and 5000 is the maximum. That is the difference in the pay.

Mr. Speaker: An occasional interruption, I would allow and sometimes is appreciated also. If it is running commentary, I would not allow.

Shri Priya Gupta: It is not commentary. It is giving information.

Mr. Speaker: Not so often; not at every moment. I would not allow that.

Shri Priya Gupta: Let us be given a chance of putting at the end some questions.

Shri Nanda: There are numerous opportunities. There is the Consultative Committee for Labour where things can be brought out. The hon. Member some how forgot to mention during the previous discussion. On facts and figures, there is book on sta-

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statistics, a huge, big book which gives statistics about every conceivable occupation. If the hon. Member has not got it, here is the book: published in 1963; up-to-date statistics.

The overall position taking the period from 1956 onwards is that money earnings in 1961 roughly increased by 31 per cent and the cost of living by 20 per cent and real wages by 9 per cent. In mining the figures are much more: 38 per cent increase in money earnings and 15 per cent increase in real earnings, because mining was, relatively speaking, in an unfavourable position so far as workers' wages are concerned.

I take now the last year, that is the previous year, for which figures are available, that is 1961. Statistics in comprehensive terms are available for 1961. The advance over 1960 has not been very considerable; money earnings increased by 2 per cent in manufacturing and 4 per cent in mining. Real earnings, therefore increased by 1 per cent and 2 per cent respectively. In the year 1962 which has closed, some further headway has been made in respect of wages. Several wage boards have given their interim awards and on that account there have been considerable increase, in Cement, plantations, iron and steel, coal mines and banks: Rs. 10 per month in cement—that is the second phase of the application of the recommendation of the wage board that has been applied, in plantation, there is an interim increase of 3 N. P. to 13 N. P. per day; iron and steel Rs. 10 to 21 per month and in coal mines Rs. 7.62 to 9.25 per month from 1st March, 1963.

Shri Mohammad Elias (Howrah): What about Engineering industries where nearly 1 million workers are employed? It is important for Defence production.

Shri Nanda: I am giving the facts at the present moment. What should

be done, I am coming to that. Owing to the revision 2 minimum wages in 1962 under the Minimum wages Act, the increases ranged from 10 to 114 per cent in different industries. Also there were collective agreements which have benefited a considerable number of workers, the increase being very substantial in some of these cases. This is the position for the year 1962.

I come to the question of wage boards. Large gains have accrued through the working of the wage boards. I may state generally that we have found it a very good device, a very good method of determination of wages better than anything else we had tried so far. Previously there were the tribunals—adjudication—which covered a very large ground, gave numerous awards, but they always left a trail of discontent on either side, and implementation became a rather difficult process, a very tardy process. Somehow the wage boards have given results beyond expectations. Every wage board has given a unanimous report, interim or final, and they have been implemented, by and large, very close to 100 per cent. Wherever there has been any deficiency, there have been special reasons for the same.

The composition of the boards is very satisfactory; a judicial person, two independent persons, usually an MP, and representatives of parties. They cover a very large area, the whole industry, so that the process of standardisation is proceeding. Once a settlement takes place, it is usually a long-term settlement. It remains in force for a period of five years. Therefore, there is a sense of stability so far as industry is concerned in the sphere of wage matters. So this is a very useful method of dealing with this question.

The workers had asked for wage boards in a certain number of industries. I find that in most cases already wage boards were set up and in many of them, some results have accrued

also: sugar, cement, jute, plantations, iron and steel. It has been explained that for mines other than coal, it will be coming. Then there are chemicals and engineering. The rest of the workers are covered by the Pay Commission. So that chemicals and engineering were left out from the list of industries and categories for which the workers made the demand. Thus there has been a very substantial advance in meeting the demand of the workers in the matter of wage boards.

Shri Indrajit Gupta: Why not appoint boards for those two also?

Shri Nanda: I shall first let the hon. Member know with regard to earlier boards. In the cotton textiles they gave an increase of 8.6 to 21 per cent, sugar 38 to 117 per cent, cement 7 to 100 per cent. So a big stride was made on behalf of the workers through.

A question was asked: why not more wage boards? An hon. Member asked: why not a wage board for every occupation, even though there are only 5 persons? The hon. Member forgets that it is not a very easy thing to find suitable persons to head these boards. It is rather an elaborate procedure. I might have had to answer 'yes', if there was no other alternative method of settling the demands of workers for wage increases. There are adjudication tribunals, they are dealing with those cases. There are large numbers of workers spread all over the country in various industries. Naturally, they can only be tackled on that basis.

The question of working journalists does not figure in this list.

Shri Mohammad Elias: You were referring to establishments where only five persons are employed; what about the engineering industry where a million workers are employed throughout the country?

This is an important industry in regard to defence production.

Shri Nanda: If he would allow me to proceed, I shall deal with that also.

I am first concerning myself with the question of the demand for a wage board for working journalists. I have been in touch with the history of the demand of the working journalists for an improvement in their standards of remuneration and other things, and I know what a chequered course this demand had, how many years it took before it came to some kind of decisive stage. The working journalists were not satisfied with it, but still I must say this on their behalf they settled down to it. There were certain complaints about non-compliance, and we tried, we but did not have enough sanctions for that purpose. Later on, there have been amendments made in the Working Journalists Act, bringing in inspectors etc. Now the period of three years envisaged in the earlier decision is over. The question is: why not have a wage board for the working journalists now?

Shri Priya Gupta: But the Press Commission has recommended it.

Shri Nanda: If the hon. Member just waits for a minute or so, I will say what I have to say on the matter. I am on the subject. I have not said no, I have not said yes so far. Therefore, the question was before us that we might now have a wage board for the working journalists. During this period there had not possibly been such a very substantial change in the condition which might warrant an immediate second look into the question. That was one view. Also, after the setting in of the emergency, we wanted to just go slow with new wage boards. But there were numerous representations to Government on behalf of the working journalists, and recently they came and I had a talk with their representatives, and I asked them to give me a memorandum explaining the grounds they want to urge in support of their demand, the urgency about it. They have told me that they would

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give me a memorandum, which I have not yet received. But I have, on my own examination of the situation, come to a conclusion, and the conclusion is that the working journalists should have a wage board. But when? In principle I accept it here and now. After I receive the memorandum, the question is one of making the necessary arrangements for it, finding a suitable person, and there may be a period of time which might elapse before a wage board is appointed. But this is my positive response to it, that there will be a wage board for working journalists.

Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad: (Bhagalpur): Is not the huge profit that the monopoly press owners are getting enough proof for the necessity of a wage board without waiting for a memorandum?

Shri Nanda: I have already answered it, because I have accepted it in principle.

Shri Priya Gupta: On a point of clarification. The emergency may continue, as the Prime Minister has said, for ten or 14 years. Is this to be kept pending till then?

Shri Nanda: If it was to be kept pending for five or ten years, I would not have said that I accept it in principle. Acceptance in principle means that the necessary steps will be taken soon enough.

Mr. Speaker: If he waits only for half an hour, he will not have to wait for twelve years!

Shri Nanda: There is the question of appointment of a wage board for the engineering industry. We have been applying our mind to this subject. This is a very important industry, but it is of a very varied character, with many small units and many big units also, and the kind of product and the nature of the industry vary largely. So, the difficulty was: where to begin? It is not possible to think of lumping all

the engineering industries in one. That will not bring us any useful results. So, immediately some competent persons will sit together as a study group, look into the wage structure, the problems involved, and decide the approach towards a resolution of this problem, how to settle this question a wage structure for the engineering industry. Tentatively I say my mind is working in this way. It may not be possible to think of this at once. It should be possible to choose the most important section of the engineering industry for treatment on this basis. I would like to add that this study group will start working very soon, and at no distant date we should receive a report, and then we should decide as to which section to choose immediately for the purpose of giving them a wage board for deciding the wage structure.

Shri D. S. Patil (Yeotmal): What is position regarding agricultural labour?

Shri Nanda: I shall say something about it, though it will not be satisfactory even from my point of view.

Shri K. N. Pande (Hata): Will this include electricity concerns also?

Shri Nanda: I have said all the groups which can be considered under the heading of engineering industry will be considered in the first place for the purpose of sorting out what the problems are and how we approach, and then I shall select some of them for the purpose of a wage board.

My hon. friend has reminded me about agricultural labour. That is a subject which I do not feel very happy about. It is not something where I can offer a very hopeful record of progress. The two agricultural labour enquiry reports brought out the fact that the condition of agricultural labour had not improved very materially. That is a fact. Since then, there is no over-all figure which I can offer to

bring out what the situation now is relatively speaking.

So far as the application of the Minimum Wages Act is concerned, there has been consistent progress. More and more States have been applying that Act in a widening area. The Minimum Wages Act now covers practically the whole of the country, and there have been revisions under the Minimum Wages Act which have given increases. For example, I find now that the Minimum Wages in agriculture were revised upwards in six States, the percentage increase being: Andhra Pradesh: 18 to 33; Madhya Pradesh: 55 to 80; Orissa: 33 to 40; Mysore: 15 to 50; Punjab: 25; U. P.: 10 to 50. This may be a very large percentage, but actually, if the basic level is low, it is not very significant. As I said, I do not feel quite happy about the situation regarding agricultural labour, but the solution, to some extent, lies through the proper implementation of the Minimum Wages Act, but that will not go very far. Their problems are of a different character, depending upon the state of the agricultural economy and scope for employment. They suffer more from the fact that they do not get continuous employment. The number of days in a year in which they get employment in a year is not at all adequate and so their total family earnings are much lower than could be judged from the minimum wage rate. The solution of that problem lies somewhere else. Much more has to be done to improve the conditions of agriculture and to offer alternative employment to those people in industry. Whatever is being done is known to the hon. Members. The idea is not to bring these people to the towns for employment. They have to wait in the towns and add to the number on the live register. The big steel plants etc. are not the industries to be taken to the rural areas. Rural areas are abolished there and big industries take their place. The answer is small-scale industries taken to the rural areas. That is the direc-

tion in which we have begun to take some steps.

Shri R. S. Pandey (Guna): For lack of communication and electricity, it may take some time.

Shri Nanda: If we were to wait for the progress of electrification of rural areas for attempting expansion of small scale and other industries in rural areas, it may take a long time because the electrified villages are relatively small. Other sources of power will have to be utilised.

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh (Amravati): Gobar gas plants may be useful.

Shri Nanda: Well, you can help there. The question of bidi industry was brought up by some hon. Member here. For several years we have been struggling with that problem of lack of uniformity in the wage rates in contiguous areas. A joint board consisting of States contiguous to M. P. has been set up including Maharashtra, U. P., Rajasthan, Bihar, Gujarat and Orissa so as to tackle this problem, on a co-ordinated basis.

About wages, it is not only a question of the quantum of wages. The important thing is how far wages will go in buying things—purchasing power. There, the Labour Ministry has made a fairly good beginning about co-operative societies. There is a scheme whereby all establishments having more than 300 workers will have such a co-operative society. The employer will provide part of the share capital, accommodation, etc. To enable the workers to purchase share in consumers' co-operative stores, Government has permitted under the Employees Provident Fund scheme rules non refundable advances to the workers to the extent of Rs. 30 and from the coal mines provident fund to the extent of Rs. 20. Four hundred collieries with more than 100 workers are expected to organise these co-operative societies. 260 per cent societies with hundred consumers wings are already functioning and more primary stores would be set up

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very soon in the course of the next year or so. Seven States have already drawn up comprehensive programmes for the purpose of creating these co-operative societies.

Shri Praya Gupta: May I say that the supervision of the co-operative stores concerned should be under the direct control of the labour? There can be management's representatives. If the management's representatives have the sole control over it, there is high-handedness.

Shri Nanda: I have looked into that problem. I have gone to different places in the country where co-operative stores have been functioning successfully or otherwise. I know wherever the employers and the workers function together, where the management helps them, these stores are very successful. Here also they will have to work jointly. In addition, we are going to have wholesale stores in order to feed these co-operative societies, one in Jharia and another in Raniganj.

When one asks for more to be done, one should not lose sight of one factor. This improvement or increase has to arise out of the proceeds of the industry due to increased production. Otherwise, a very severe limit is set to any improvement that can occur in the standards of working classes. The wage boards have also laid it down very clearly that if anything more is expected, it will have to come out of increased productivity. Therefore, I want to stress it again here. This is a product of several factors. There is the question of training programmes for which the Government has assumed responsibility. I can say that very good progress is being made and maintained in respect of our training programmes. The training programmes of the Ministry have been stepped up very rapidly from 10,000 seats at the beginning or at the end of the First Plan to our 40,000 or so at the end of the Second Plan and the Third Plan target is about a lakh. It

is expected that this will be achieved in a much shorter time, ahead of the schedule. In addition to these training programmes there are several ways by which productivity can be increased. I must congratulate the working class for having accepted, as I said before, the whole principle of rationalisation and now, subject to some safeguards which have been provided by the Indian Labour Conference, that is going ahead. There is the apprenticeship scheme under the new law which has been passed by Parliament recently. That also will continue towards increasing efficiency. There is then this programme of training, within industry. Our Productivity Centre is doing very good work in that direction. Work load studies in cement industry were undertaken recently because that was the condition precedent to any further increase, though some further increases have been there. There is the job evaluation etc. One such activity of the Labour Ministry is the workers' education programme. This is a programme of great significance and great potentialities. At the moment it has made some progress and I do not think that it is good enough. The number of persons trained this year was 27,744, that is, 1962-63. Since the start of the scheme sometime back the total number trained is 52,259. This scheme has evoked a word of praise and appreciation from hon Members who spoke in this House. Of course, some comment may be made that this is not rapid enough, namely, this 52,000 in all the industries. But it is a beginning which has been made, and every year the step-up would be much more rapid relatively. I expect that in the course of four or five years the magnitude of the output of this activity will be greatly enhanced.

Certain misgivings also have been given vent to regarding this programme. Therefore I want to say a word about it. It is an autonomous board where the workers and employers are sitting which runs the scheme.

Evaluations have been carried out. There may be scops for improvement, but this education has a bearing not only on the increase in productivity, reduction in industrial unrest, etc., but on an all-round improvement in the well-being of the worker.

I shall now deal with the question of industrial relations where I must acknowledge this fact at the outset, namely, the number of man-days lost in the course of the last year has not been such as to give any comfort to us. Certain strikes took place which led to a very large wastage of man-days and for which there was no occasion at all. For example, in Kerala, in the cashew industry, more than nine lakh working days were lost. There was a 'hotel workers' strike in Bombay. There were certain other strikes also. I have received a letter from the Labour Minister of Maharashtra. He said, "What am I to do? These are no real disputes between workers and employers. workers and employers. These are political, agitational situations; people are interested in creating trouble, and all these codes, etc., do not apply there." The situation, therefore, in the course of this year has been somewhat, I should say, of a deterioration, although the figure is less than the higher number reached earlier. But I want to make a distinction in this matter. The distinction is the State sphere and the central sphere. I am responsible here for what happens in the central sphere. I am responsible here for what happens in the central sphere consistently the situation has been improving and there has no setback at all.

I can give the figures which will show how in the case of the central sector the situation has been very much better. The average in the Central sphere for the first ten months, January to October, 1962, was about 36,000. In November, it was about 3,460. In December it came down further to 1,500. Taking the earlier years also, the situation is the same. Year after year, the number of man-days lost in the Central sector has been going down.

But in the case of the States, in some States the situation has worsened for the reasons which I have given. I must say something about the machinery for industrial relations. Some hon. Members have raised several questions about it. I cannot go into all the details about those things, but I shall give one or two important facts. There was the question of discrimination in respect of INTUC and others. I can state with very great confidence that so far as the Central sphere is concerned there is no discrimination whatsoever. I have got figures to show how the INTUC, the AITUC and all the organisations have been dealt with equitably. They have had their share in respect of the grant of adjudication. Even in the particular case of the West Bengal Government, regarding which the hon. Member raised the question, I have figures for the previous year. I find that they were not being denied adjudication. I am not able to say anything about the recent situation, except that I received a letter from the hon. Member, Shri Indrajit Gupta. I wrote to the West Bengal Government and I have received an answer. They say that all these allegations are unfounded. I cannot pursue that controversy here. We can go into it further later on. But I can say with a great amount of satisfaction that this machinery of implementation has been strengthened and has improved from year to year both in respect of the number of cases of non-implementation which has been going down and also the period it has consumed in the process either of conciliation or, later on, of reference to adjudication or the period taken in settling the cases and giving the award. In all these cases the period is being reduced. I would not go into the figures. I can supply them later on to hon. Members so that they may have a very clear idea how in these things progressive improvement is occurring.

Recently, we have taken another step. Previously two months was the limit set for the conciliation cases,

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but we have reduced it to one month. It is in the matter of delay, that there was the chief grievance and grouse on the part of the working classes.

Shri K. N. Pande: Is it about the central sphere or the State sphere?

Shri Nanda: I have precise information for the central sphere. In regard to the States, we also notice an improvement, but that is uneven. In some States things have improved very much and in other States not so much. I can only write to them and try to see that things are improved.

Shri A. N. Vidyalkar (Hoshiarpur): These figures are not given in the report. They may be circulated to members.

Shri Nanda: Whatever figures I have, I shall give them to Members. There was some reference to the public sector. I must say that I have not had a very easy time with the public sector. I found resistance to improvement, to acceptance of certain principles, certain ways of dealing with the working class, the idea of joint management councils the code of discipline idea, etc. But there also,

Shri Priya Gupta: Resistance from whom?

Shri Nanda: From persons newly occupying these positions.

Shri Priya Gupta: What about the administration?

Shri Nanda: The administration at the plant level and the people in charge of all those things have very good intentions; they thought possibly all these new-fangled things might spoil the situation in the public sector.

Shri Priya Gupta: Is it beyond your purview to examine it—how the machinery in the public sector is functioning?

Shri Nanda: I had meetings with the secretaries, with the managers and

with the Ministers concerned and at every stage some advance was made since I am finding that step after step the difficulties are being removed and the situation is becoming better. Therefore I hope that whatever residue of non-acceptance.....

Shri Priya Gupta: In the meeting of the Whitley Councils.....

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. He is not allowing the Minister to proceed at all. I have warned him twice. He has had a chance of speaking as well. There were many interruptions also. He is making a running commentary.

Shri Priya Gupta: Will you give me a chance after he ends his speech?

Mr. Speaker: I cannot promise now. Let him listen to the Minister's speech and then I will see.

Shri Nanda: I cannot go into all details.

Shri Priya Gupta: Many incorrect statements are being given.

Mr. Speaker: The Minister is giving statements according to him, and not according to the hon. Member.

Shri Priya Gupta: There is nothing personal.

Shri Nanda: I do not understand his point.

Mr. Speaker: He might continue with his speech.

Shri Nanda: I shall give him satisfaction. He can ask me questions and I shall give the answer in other ways. I said there is a continuous, perceptible, substantial improvement in the public sector regarding all these matters—implementation, acceptance of these new schemes, etc. Whatever remains to be done, I propose to deal with them in another conference. I want to bring together the workers and the people in charge of the public sector undertakings at another conference so that we can go over the whole ground. Maybe that when

people have a talk across the table with one another these difficulties can be resolved. We have taken this step of associating the representatives of the public sector in the I.L.C. That was done for the first time in the last Indian Labour Conference and I think this is a process of education which is bound to go very far.

Shri Priya Gupta: When the hon. Minister says that he held meetings with the representatives of the unions, the unions' men were nominated by the General Managers and the unions did not send their men.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Minister may sit down.

Shri Priya Gupta: May I put the question now?

Mr. Speaker: Has he got my permission? If he is to go on without asking my permission, then what is to be done?

Shri Priya Gupta: I am asking your permission, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: The Minister can proceed now.

Shri Nanda: The fact is that General Managers were called. That is one part of it. That was a new step. So far as representatives of the Ministry are concerned, they are always associated along with the Labour Ministry in these conferences.

There was a question raised about contract labour. This is about the working conditions and housing. Both regarding contract labour and housing, my answer is, we have made very great advance so far as the first is concerned, we have made very good progress and we have made some advance so far as the second is concerned. A clear policy has been accepted that we should move towards the abolition of contract labour. In some situations, it cannot be abolished and there it must be regulated. We have made very good progress in respect of the coal-mining industry on a bi-partite basis and the implementation

also is proceeding fairly well. There may be some other spheres in which contract labour is still there and we would try to deal with them.

The other thing is about housing under the subsidised industrial housing scheme, we have built a large number of houses and some of them are still not occupied. That is rather a gloomy aspect of the situation. We make investments and they are not occupied. Maybe the rents are too high, but the rents are not even half of what they would be according to the economic basis. They are subsidised.

Shri R. S. Pandey: So far as the private sector is concerned, they are also constructing houses

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. The hon. Minister might be allowed to conclude.

Shri Nanda: Yes, Sir; I can answer these questions in the informal consultative committee. In the case of the private sector, some part of the cost is being met by the private employers.

About provident fund, the question was raised as to why it is that we do not have provident fund everywhere. If hon. Members were to look into the figures, they will find that the coverage has increased step by step year after year. Every year more and more industries are being brought into this provident fund scheme. We reduced the number of workers from 50 to 20 and many more are being covered. More industries will be brought in. Also, the provident fund contribution has been increased. It has been made 8 per cent in the case of 5 industries now. This increase will be progressively applied to the other industries also. About loans, I think for all purposes which are important, loans are being given. In the case of the Employees' State Insurance Scheme, the question of hospitals has been raised. There also, a programme of considerable size has been undertaken.

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Every year more hospital accommodation is being made available.

These are some of the things I wanted to say; I am not quite sure if I may not have missed some of the points raised by hon. Members. One point was raised by Mr. Oza as to why conciliators are being made arbitrators. The direction is that the parties may choose; if they want arbitration by anyone else. If not, they may accept the conciliator who is undertaking the conciliation proceedings as the arbitrator. Because of shortage of men, we have to adopt this device. I do not think any harm can come from this.

Ultimately, I have just to say that the whole basis of our labour policy is mutual understanding between the parties concerned—the workers, the employers and the Government. This is producing very good results. Everything that is being done in one direction or the other is the outcome of these tripartite deliberations. I feel a great deal of satisfaction that in various ways, this labour policy has been worked well and I am convinced that this is the direction which we have to pursue. I hope that both the industry and the working class will collaborate in speeding up industrial progress and welfare of the workers.

Shri Priya Gupta: May I know if the hon. Labour Minister has considered that the permanent negotiating machinery in the railways has become a failure due to the third tier, the tribunal, not being set up at all and the meeting not being held in its proper perspective? It is known to him that the recognised unions are being treated in a very bad manner under the threat of intimidation under the Defence of India Rules in the name of emergency, though they are recognised.

Shri Nanda: There are a lot of assumptions there. I am not so much familiar with the details of what is

happening in the railways, because the functioning in the railways is that the workers and the railway administration have set up what is called the three tier negotiating machinery. It is only when it fails that the workers approach the Labour Ministry and we intervene, like in any other relationship between employers and workers. We do not intervene at every stage. Recently I have received some reports of dissatisfaction with the working of the three-tier machinery. I have received some complaints and I am discussing with the Railway Board and the Railway Ministry that there is this grievance and we must consider how to remove this.

Shri R. S. Pandey: In 1957, a study group was appointed to go into the question of workers' participation in management. After visiting some foreign countries, the study group submitted its report, according to which in U.K., France and Sweden, this idea has been introduced. May I know what action is being taken about workers' participation in management in this country?

Shri Nanda: Every year there is some advance. More and more units both in the public sector and in the private sector have accepted the idea of workers' participation and the establishment of joint management councils. The number is, now 50 or so. This is not good enough. Wherever this is done, the reports are good. They accept the fact that the existence of these councils has helped in various ways. Yet, the progress is not fast enough. We have appointed special officers to promote it further. One reason may be union rivalry and the various complications that arise from it. That may be deterring the management from accepting this.

13 hrs.

Some Hon. Members rose—

Mr. Speaker: We cannot continue now indefinitely with these questions.

Shri Mohammad Elias: I want to put a very important question on a point about which he has not answered.

Mr. Speaker: I will give him a chance. Shri Melkote, I think, wanted to put a question.

Dr. Melkote (Hyderabad): I only want to seek a clarification as to why in the Central Government sector—in the ordnance factories—where thousands of workers are employed, the health insurance scheme has not been extended?

Shri Nanda: Health insurance?

Dr. Melkote: I mean the Contributory Health Service scheme.

Shri Nanda: I said that I am struggling both with the public sector and the private sector to get the acceptance of these things. It is a slow process.

Shri Mohammad Elias: May I know what would be the arrangement for the rehabilitation of the ten lakh goldsmiths who are now unemployed due to the Gold Control Order. We raised this point in our speeches but the hon. Minister has not answered it.

Shri Nanda: There may be some other things also which I have failed to deal with. There was some correspondence on their behalf. I met some of the people who are interested in this matter. I have discussed it with the Chairman of the Board also. We have offered our good offices in this matter both for training purposes and also the services of our exchanges.

श्री श्रीकाशाल बैरवा (कोटा) :
श्रीमत् फैक्टरियों के अन्दर हर तीन महीने के बाद मजदूर को एक दिन दो दिन के लिए बन्द कर देते हैं और फिर उसको नए सिरे से लेते हैं। यह कौन से कानून के अनुसार होता है, और इसके लिए आपने क्या किया है ?

Shri Nanda: Sir I have got information that it is not so. Under the standing orders there is an obligation that after three months a person has to be made permanent. If those orders are not being applied, then certainly we can take action about that. Under the new arrangement it is not open to anybody to leave a worker in a temporary status for a very long period.

Shri K. N. Pande: As the Wage Board for the journalists is going to take a longer time, will the hon. Minister persuade the employers to give some interim relief to the journalists?

Shri Nanda: No, Sir; I am not aware of any such proposal at present.

Mr. Speaker: Have I to put any cut motion separately?

Some Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: Then I shall put all the cut motions moved under these Demands together.

All the cut motions were put and negatived.

Mr. Speaker: The question is:

"That the respective sums not exceeding the amounts shown in the fourth column of the order paper, be granted to the President, to complete the sums necessary to defray the charges that will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1964, in respect of the heads of demands entered in the second column thereof against Demands Nos. 71, 72, 73, 74 and 135 relating to the Ministry of Labour and Employment."

The motion was adopted.

[The motions of Demands for Grants which were adopted by the Lok Sabha are reproduced below—Ed.]

DEMAND No. 71—MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 24,84,000 be granted to the

President to complete the sum necessary to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1964, in respect of 'Ministry of Labour and Employment'."

DEMAND No. 72—CHIEF INSPECTOR OF MINES

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 25,66,000 be granted to the President to complete the sum necessary to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1964, in respect of 'Chief Inspector of Mines'."

DEMAND No. 73—LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 7,54,56,000 be granted to the President to complete the sum necessary to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1964, in respect of 'Labour and Employment'."

DEMAND No. 74—OTHER REVENUE EXPENDITURE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,88,72,000 be granted to the President to complete the sum necessary to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1964, in respect of 'Other Revenue Expenditure of the Ministry of Labour and Employment'."

DEMAND No. 135—CAPITAL OUTLAY OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 78,000 be granted to the President to complete the sum necessary to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1964, in respect of 'Capital Outlay of the Ministry of Labour and Employment'."

MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

Mr. Speaker: The House will now take up discussion and voting on Demands Nos. 50 to 64 and 131 relating to the Ministry of Home Affairs for which 10 hours have been allotted.

Hon. Members desirous of moving their cut motions may send slips to the Table within 15 minutes indicating which of the cut motions they would like to move.

DEMAND No. 50—MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

Mr. Speaker: Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 4,07,08,000 be granted to the President to complete the sum necessary to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1964, in respect of 'Ministry of Home Affairs'."

DEMAND No. 51—CABINET

Mr. Speaker: Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 41,69,000 be granted to the