

(iii) **PROTEST STRIKE BY JUTE WORKERS
 OF WEST BENGAL**

Mr. Speaker: As a special case, I am taking up another calling attention notice, because the hon. Labour Minister is leaving today. Shri Dinen Bhattacharya.

Shri Dinen Bhattacharya (Serampore): I have moved it yesterday. It is for the Minister to make the statement now.

The Minister of Labour and Employment (Shri D Sanjivayya): At present the payment of bonus and dearness allowance to the workers in jute mills, including those in West Bengal, is governed by the recommendations of the Central Wage Board for the jute industry. The recommendations of the Wage Board are reported to have been implemented by the jute mills in West Bengal.

The question of profit bonus in industrial employments has been considered by the tripartite Bonus Commission and it has recommended that the bonus formula evolved by it should be applied to the jute industry also unless the Employers' Associations and the Unions concerned agree to any other arrangement. The recommendation has been accepted by Government. It has been represented by the Indian Jute Mills Association that the bonus formula evolved by the Bonus Commission should not be applied to jute mills during the period of operation of the recommendations of the Wage Board i.e. upto the 31st December, 1967. The workers have, however, demanded that bonus should be paid to them under the Bonus Commission's formula as the same is more favourable.

3. A letter was received, on the 23rd November, 1964, from the Government of West Bengal, saying that on account of the divergent views held by the industry & labour on the

question of bonus, the unions representing the jute workers had given notice of a strike on the 1st December, 1964, on the question of bonus. It was also suggested by the State Government that a meeting of the Industrial Committee on Jute might be convened as early as possible to discuss the matter. It has accordingly been decided to call a meeting of the tripartite Industrial Committee of Jute to consider this matter, on the 19th December, 1964. I also sent personal letters to the concerned Central Organisations of workers on 26-11-1964 informing them of the proposed meeting and requesting them not to precipitate matters by staging demonstrations or strikes on this issue. A press note on the subject was also issued on the 28th November, 1964 for general information.

4. A tentative draft bill to give effect to the recommendations of the Bonus Commission, as accepted by Government, has been prepared. It is being placed before the Standing Labour Committee at its meeting to be held on the 9th December, 1964.

Shri Dinen Bhattacharya: Besides the issue of bonus there was another demand about dearness allowance to cope with the exorbitant rise in prices. About that the hon. Minister was silent in his reply. May I also draw the attention of the Minister to the fact that due to faulty and erroneous compilation of working class price index by the Union Government there has been a fall in dearness allowance given to the jute mill workers to the extent of 60 naye paise per month, and may I ask the Minister whether this has been brought to the notice of the Minister by the organisations that gave the call of strike, on 1st December? If that is so, may I know what steps Government propose to take to rectify this faulty compilation of the price index so that the rise in prices may be compensated to the workers?

Shri Nambiar (Tiruchirapalli): He has clearly put the case.

Shri Dinen Bhattacharya: The workers are losing 60 paise per month.

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. **Shri Nambiar** says that he has been perfectly clear; why does he want any more clarification?

Shri D. Sanjivayya: Sir, I did not specifically make any reference to the question of dearness allowance because the jute wage board had decided to link the existing dearness allowance to the cost of living index—for every rise of one point 20 paise are to be given. It is being worked out like that. With regard to the defect in the index number, in fact, in other States too these defects have been noticed. It has been brought to the notice of the Government that in Maharashtra and Gujarat these defects were there. Special expert committees were appointed and the defects have been rectified. In various other States also expert committees have been appointed. Now that this has been brought to my notice we will certainly examine as to how far it will be possible for us to rectify the mistake.

Shri Nambiar: In view of the fact that the jute mill owners are refusing to accept the bonus commission formula under the plea that there was an agreement already existing, which agreement was signed prior to the bonus commission formula, and in view of the fact that there is every justification that they must be given payments according to the new bonus formula, may I know what steps Government are taking, apart from calling tripartite conferences where the matter will again be discussed—apart from this sort of discussion—to press the Jute Mills Association to pay according to the bonus commission formula which is going to be incorporated in the Bill that is coming?

Shri D. Sanjivayya: After accepting the recommendations of the Bonus Commission the Government have indicated their decision to various employers and it is for them to implement. If they do not implement and if the labour organisations raise it as a sort of labour dispute or industrial dispute, we will have to refer it to the Industrial Tribunal, under the present circumstances. But after the Bill is passed it will be very clear.

Shri Nambiar: Even after that if they refuse to do so they will have to be proceeded against.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: This strike was called jointly by the INTUC, the AITUC and all other unions irrespective of political affiliation as a protest against the most arrogant attitude, the most non-compromising attitude of the Indian Jute Mills Associations who were supposed to have or who have actually flouted all instructions of the Government. I would like to know whether it is a fact that this letter, which was sent to all the employers for acceptance of the Bonus Commission's recommendations as agreed to by Government, was sent to IJMA and they did not accept it because they wield political influence both on the State Government and on the Central Government, if so, what steps Government contemplate to take, apart from legislation, to influence them to accept this recommendation.

Mr. Speaker: Certain presumptions are always made.

Shri D. Sanjivayya: I do not know whether they wield any influence.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: They run *sarkars*.

Shri D. Sanjivayya: So far as I am concerned, I am not amenable to any such influence. In fact, according to a statement made by me on the floor of the House, I said that workers should get bonus either on the existing basis or on the basis of the new

formula, whichever be higher. According to calculations, now the workers in jute mills will certainly get more. According to the existing formula, they get a maximum of Rs. 22, whereas according to the new formula, the minimum is Rs. 40. Therefore it is a justifiable demand. That is why we have called a meeting of the industrial committee on jute on the 19th of this month at which meeting we will certainly ask the employers to implement it.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: Will they co-operate?

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. Members also should co-operate.

Shri Nambiar: I want to underline the word "ask".

Mr. Speaker: This is not co-operation; this is obstruction.

Shri Nambiar: I am so sorry, Sir.

श्री हुकू चन्द शहाय : मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि जूट मिल एसोसियेशन की तरफ से जो विलम्ब हुआ है, उन्होंने केन्द्र की सफरिश नहीं मानी है जिसके कि कारण मजदूरों में उत्तेजना फैली है क्योंकि उनको ठीक समय पर पैसा नहीं मिला तो क्या सरकार को यह बात मालूम थी और सरकार को उन मजदूरों ने काफ़ी दिन पहले इस बात की सूचना दे दी थी कि हमारा फैसला अगर जल्दी नहीं हुआ तो हम इस तरीके का क़दम उठायेगे और इस बात की सूचना उन को देने के बावजूद भी सरकार ने इस सम्बन्ध में बर्षों नहीं कड़ा कदम उठाया ?

Shri D. Sanjivayya: According to the existing procedure, we can only persuade them to implement it because all the tripartite recommendations, maybe wage board's recommendations or maybe Bonus Commission's recommendations, will have to be implemented by the parties concerned voluntarily.

Shri Dinan Bhattacharya: DIR can be applied.

Shri D. Sanjivayya: If anybody does not implement it, probably it will have to be referred to a tribunal. But after the legislation is passed the provisions of the Act will be implemented.

श्री बड़ु : जूट मिल एसोसियेशन ने ग्रॉप के इन्स्ट्रक्शन्स को नहीं माना क्या इस के लिए शासन उन के खिलाफ कोई ऐंशन लेने जा रही है ? शासन ने इस के लिए क्या कदम उठाया है ?

Shri D. Sanjivayya: I do not think anything can be done. We have asked them and they have represented their difficulties. But, according to our decision, they will have to implement it.

Dr. Saradish Roy (Katwa): Is the Ministry bringing forward the Bill during this session itself so as to enact the recommendations of the Bonus Commission?

Shri D. Sanjivayya: I hope to introduce it at least.

17.17 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Friday, December 4, 1964/Agrahayana 13, 1886 (Saka).