

LOK SABHA DEBATES

(Part II—Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

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LOK SABHA

Monday, 30th August, 1954

The Lok Sabha met at a Quarter Past Eight of the Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair.]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(See Part I)

9-15 A.M.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT

SITUATION IN TRAVANCORE-COCHIN RE: TRANSPORT SERVICES

Mr. Speaker: I have received notice of an adjournment motion which reads as under:

"The serious situation in Travancore-Cochin State and especially in the Transport Services managed by the State, resulting from the lathi charges on Transport Workers and arrests of several hundreds of the State Transport Workers on and from the 28th August, 1954."

On its own showing, the motion refers to a subject which is entirely within the jurisdiction of the State. In giving his reasons for the adjournment motion, the hon. Member has tried to stretch the point and bring it within the Central responsibility. He says in his reasons that, the Government of India has under the current Five Year Plan, allotted a sum of Rs. 42 lakhs for the development of the State-owned transport system, in the

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Planning Commission's report and the second reason is that the implementation of the development plans, for which the Government of India has sanctioned this amount, will necessarily depend upon the harmony between the workers and the Government. I think this is too far-fetched and the motion cannot be brought within the Central responsibility. I am afraid I cannot give my consent to this.

PAPER LAID ON THE TABLE

OPINIONS ON INDIAN ARMS (AMENDMENT) BILL

Shri U. C. Patnaik (Ghumsur): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy of Paper No. 1 containing certain opinions on the Indian Arms (Amendment) Bill, 1954, which was circulated for the purpose of eliciting opinion thereon by the 31st August, 1954, by the direction of the House on the 9th April, 1954.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

STRIKE IN HARNESS AND SADDLERY FACTORY, KANPUR

Shri V. P. Nayar (Chirayinkil): Under Rule 215, I beg to call the attention of the Minister of Defence Organisation to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon:—

"The situation arising out of the strike in the Harness and Saddlery Factory, Kanpur."

The Deputy Minister of Defence (Shri Satish Chandra): The manufacture of camouflage nets commenced in fairly large numbers in March, 1954, when suitably trained men became available. The piece-work rate for one net was provisionally fixed at Rs. 12. Subsequently, in accordance with certain general instructions regarding co-relation of piece-work rates with monthly scales of pay, the rate of Rs. 12 was increased to Rs. 17/8/- along with increases in other rates. It had been observed that the provisional rate of Rs. 12 was very loose, but the management wished to be satisfied and, therefore, watched its operation over a few months, during which period the increase due to co-relation with monthly scales took place. It was found fairly obvious that this increased rate of Rs. 17/8/- was loose, and at the time of co-relating it, it was earmarked as a rate giving excessive profits which should be reviewed in accordance with the orders of the Government on the subject. The progress of manufacture was further watched during which period the abnormal profits continued. At this stage, the workers apparently got to know that the management was contemplating a review of the piece-work rate and immediately adopted a 'go-slow' policy which was watched for some time, and a notice to this effect was posted in the section. The time-study as completed by the rate-fixer, was with the rate of Rs. 8/4/- per net, but on scrutiny by the Works Manager, it was considered that the rate-fixer was rather strict in some of the study-factors and, accordingly, suitable amendments were made, and the rate was finally fixed at Rs. 10 per net. This rate was notified to take effect from the 16th August, 1954.

On the 17th August, the Secretary of the Harness and Saddlery Factory Employees' Union sent a letter to the Superintendent of the Factory protesting against this reduction. A reply was sent on the 19th pointing out that the rate of Rs. 17/8/- had been very loosely fixed, and asking the

Secretary to advise the workers to accept the correct rate, on which they could still make a decent profit if they worked properly. On the 23rd August, the Secretary of the Union saw the Superintendent of the Factory and efforts were made to make him appreciate the correct position, but the Secretary was adamant and insisted that there should be no reduction. He left the Superintendent's office stating that he would tell the workers to strike work from 1 p.m., and as a result of his advice, the workers stopped work. The Regional Labour Commissioner was apprised of the situation. The next day, on the 24th August, 246 men engaged on the manufacture of camouflage nets attended the factory but sat idle doing no work. Both the Central Conciliation Officer and the Regional Labour Commissioner negotiated with the employees' representatives. The Regional Labour Commissioner suggested that the manufacturing operation should be time-studied again. The factory management agreed to this proposal, but the Union agreed only on the condition that the old rate of Rs. 17/8/- was allowed to continue upto the 1st September, 1954. This was not accepted by the management, who said that any new rates arrived at as a result of the second time-study should be made applicable from the 16th August, on which date the new rate had been brought into effect. The Regional Labour Commissioner recommended to the Union to accept the proposal, but the Union did not agree.

On the 25th August, a meeting was held by the Union at which a resolution was passed calling upon workers in the Factory to stage a token strike from 10 a.m. to 12 noon on the 27th August. The Superintendent thereupon informed the workmen that the men staging a sit-down strike would not be entitled to any payments during the period of the strike as per section 9 of the Payment of Wages Act. About 20 to 30 persons of the Production Section, that is, approximately 600 to 700 workmen, joined

this token strike and the rest worked as usual. No one, however, worked in the Camouflage Net Section. The Superintendent informed the workmen that those men in the Net Section who were on strike from 1 p.m. on the 23rd August and subsequently would be treated as absent from duty for the period when they did no work.

The revision of the piece-work rates was in accordance with the Government decision on the recommendations of the Kalyanvala Committee. According to that decision, the piece-work rates, which had previously been linked to the rates prior to 1947, were to be revised and linked to the monthly scales following the Pay Commission's recommendations. Generally, this meant a considerable increase in the rates and Government had passed orders that where *prima facie* excessively high profits were being earned, the rates should be reviewed after proper examination and study. There is no question of reducing piece-work rates because production is going up. Government has no intention whatsoever of reducing piece-work rates on that account. On the contrary, Government wants increased production. Wherever, however, the records of earnings of workers show that very excessive profits are being earned, there is surely a case for revising the wrongly fixed piece-work rates. Normally, a piece-worker, working with a reasonable speed, is expected to earn a profit of 25 per cent over his basic wage. A good piece-worker may earn 50 or even 75 per cent profits. Where, however, profits are consistently being earned by many workers over 100 or 200 per cent, it is fairly clear that the piece-work rate was fixed too high and needs revision.

**GOVERNMENT PREMISES (EVIC-
TION) AMENDMENT BILL, 1953**

The Minister of Works, Housing and Supply (Sardar Swaran Singh): I beg to move for leave to withdraw the Bill further to amend the Government Premises (Eviction) Act, 1950,

which was introduced in the House of the People on the 18th March, 1953.

The reason is merely this. This Bill has been before the House for about a year and a half. Recently, in a case decided by the High Court of Bombay, it was held that sub-section (1) of section 3 of the Act does not authorise the eviction of a person who continued to be in occupation of the premises allotted to him even after the due determination thereof, because he was not a person in unauthorised occupation of the premises within the meaning of clause (b) of the said sub-section. The intention of this section has always been that such persons should be deemed to be persons in unauthorised occupation of the Premises.

So, we have decided to amend the Government Premises (Eviction) Act, 1950, in order to make our intention clear in this respect. If the House will permit me to withdraw this Bill, I shall be moving another Bill more comprehensive in nature and covering both the amendments.

Mr. Speaker: The question is:

"That leave be granted to withdraw the Bill further to amend the Government Premises (Eviction) Act, 1950."

The motion was adopted.

**GOVERNMENT PREMISES (EVIC-
TION) AMENDMENT BILL, 1954**

The Minister of Works, Housing and Supply (Sardar Swaran Singh): I introduce the Bill further to amend the Government Premises (Eviction) Act, 1950.

Mr. Speaker: The Bill is introduced.

**CENTRAL EXCISES AND SALT
(AMENDMENT) BILL**

The Deputy Minister of Finance (Shri A. C. Guha): I beg to move for