

Dr. G. V. Deshmukh : Besides the statutory provision, do Government know of any arrangement that should be made to safeguard the welfare of these pregnant women and children ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I am sure the Honourable Member will allow me to say that intelligence is not the monopoly of himself ?

Dr. G. V. Deshmukh : Neither is it the monopoly of the Government.

229

* Shortage of Labour in Coal Mines

240. **Mr. Manu Subedar :** (a) Will the Honourable the Labour Member be pleased to state if it is a fact that shortage of labour in coal mines was due to higher wages offered by Army contractors for the construction of aerodromes, etc. ?

(b) What were the wages in coal mines before the war, and what have been the wages during each of the five years of the war ?

(c) Is it true that the falling off in the output of coal mines was due to the reluctance of coal mine-owners to pay proper wages, having regard to the rise in the cost of living ?

(d) What steps have Government taken to deal with the situation created by (i) shortage of labour, and (ii) shortage of coal ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : (a) Employment of labour at higher rates by Army contractors was a contributory cause of the shortage of labour in collieries;

(b) A statement@ is laid on the Table of the House.

(c) It is a fact that wages of colliery labour were not for long sufficiently adjusted to meet the increased cost of living. This was one factor in the falling off of the supply of labour.

(d) I invite the attention of the Honourable Member to the replies given in the Legislative Assembly by the Honourable Member for Supply to parts (a), (b), (d), (e) and (f) of Mr. Neogy's starred question No. 17. This describes the various steps taken by Government to deal

* Legislative Assembly Debates (Central), Vol. IV of 1944, 10th November 1944, p. 561.

@ Statement not included here.—Ed.

with the situation created by the shortage of labour and the shortage of coal.

The representatives of the industry also agreed at Dhanbad in December 1943 to increase the cash wages of colliery labour and grant concessions in the supply of foodstuffs.

Mr. Manu Subedar : What is the increase in wages that the employers are compelled to pay as compared with the prewar rates.

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I am sorry I cannot give the figure but I have got a statement here which is pretty full and I am sure the Honourable Member will find what he wants there.

Mr. Manu Subedar : What steps have the Government taken to see that the women forced into the mines in this distressful manner get at least a little more pittance than women working in other trades above ground?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I can assure my Honourable friend that the wages in coal mines have increased by more than 50 per cent.

Mr. Manu Subedar : What steps have the Government taken to coerce the coal mine owners ? The Government pay for coal Rs. 9-8-0 now instead of Rs. 3-8-0 before the war. If you give so much more for coal, have you made any condition that this part of the extra will go to the women workers whom you have disgracefully forced into the mines ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I think we have taken all the steps necessary.

Mr. N. M. Joshi : Is it not a fact that the Government of India are taking measures to prevent miners being employed by military contractors in order that the miners may be forced to go into mines for work at the risk of being starved ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : That does not arise out of this question.

Prof. N. G. Ranga : Do these 16,000 women possess any special qualification or skill so that they are thus forced to work in the mines, which qualifications could not be acquired by males in this country ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : They are neither asked nor forced. They are only permitted to offer themselves for their traditional occupation.

Mr. N. M. Joshi : May I know whether it is not a fact that the coal production today is less than the prewar period and whether this shortage of coal production is not due to the smallness of the wages paid to the miners ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : My Honourable friend is entitled to draw his own inference.

230

*** Provincial Governments' Contribution to Radical Democratic Party and Indian Labour Federation**

252. **Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi :** Will the Honourable the Labour Member please state :

- (a) whether office bearers or any individual of the Radical Democratic Party or of the Indian Federation of Labour receive monetary help from the different Provincial Governments besides Rs. 13,000 per month from the Central Government;
- (b) whether he is aware that these two organisations receive a sum of Rs. 75,000 per month from the Government of the United Provinces;
- (c) The object of the Government in giving monetary help to these two organisations only; and
- (d) which the other labour organisations are which receive monetary help from the Government ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : (a) Government has no information. The grant of Rs. 13,000 is made not to the Radical Democratic Party but to the Indian Federation of Labour and not to any individual member or office-bearer of the Federation. The letter in which assistance from Government was offered was addressed both to the All-India Trade Union Congress and the Indian Federation of Labour. In their reply the All-India Trade Union Congress did not ask for any assistance.

(b) I am not aware of any grant made to the Federation by the Government of the United Provinces.

(c) This Department is concerned only with the grant to the Indian Federation of Labour. The object of this grant is to enable the Federation to do propaganda to keep up the morale of industrial labour.

(d) There are no other labour organisations receiving monetary help from the Central Government.

231

*** Exploratory and Prospecting Licences to British and American Firms *re* Potential Oil Resources**

48. **Mr. K. C. Neogy :** (a) Will the Honourable the Labour Member be pleased to lay on the table a statement bringing up-to-date the information supplied in the statement that was laid on the table on the 2nd August, 1943, relating to mineral concessions (including exploratory and prospecting licences) granted to British and American firms in respect of potential oil resources in British India ?

(b) Is it a fact that licences for carrying on geo-physical explorations have been granted by different Provincial Governments. If so, did the Provincial Governments concerned consult the Government of India before granting such licences ?

(c) To which firms have these licences been granted; in respect of which areas, and what are their terms ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : The information is being collected and a statement will be laid on the table of the House in due course.

232

@ The Indian Trade Unions (Amendment) Bill

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar (Labour Member): I do not propose to make the motion that stands in my name.

* Legislative Assembly Debates (Central), Vol. IV of 1944, 10th November 1944, p. 574.

@ *Ibid.*, 14th November 1944, p. 730.

233

* Delhi Electric Supply and Traction Company

419. **Mr. K. C. Neogy :** (a) Will the Honourable the Labour Member be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the Delhi Electric Supply and Traction Company Limited, is a company incorporated outside India ? How long has this Company been operating in the Delhi Province and what is the area served by it ?

(b) How many units of electricity did this Company use for traction purposes, how many units did it sell to consumers in its area of supply during the past twelve months or so, how many units out of its total supply did it generate from its own power station, and how many units did the Company buy from the Delhi Central Electric Power Authority Limited ?

(c) Is it a fact that the Delhi Electric Supply and Traction Company Limited has not increased the supply of current from its generating station to any considerable extent for a number of years, and has been for some time, for all practical purposes, dependent upon the Government power station at present under the control of the Delhi Central Electric Power Authority Limited ?

(d) Is it a fact that the Delhi Central Electric Power Authority Limited is a company sponsored by Government and works on a no-profit basis ?

(e) What is the price that the Delhi Electric Supply and Traction Company Limited pays per unit of electricity supplied by the Delhi Central Electric Power Authority Limited, and what are the different rates at which the Delhi Electric Supply and Traction Company Limited sells electricity to its different classes of customers ?

(f) Is it a fact that the Government have an option to purchase the Delhi Electric Supply and Traction Company Limited in February, 1947, when their present licence expires, provided a notice is served on the Company in February 1945 ? If so, has the question of exercising the option been considered as yet, and with what result ?

(g) What is the amount that the Government will have to pay in case they decide to purchase this undertaking, and to what extent will the

purchase enable the Government to utilise the sterling balance held to the credit of India in England?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : (a) Yes. The Company's licence runs from the 2nd March 1905 : The area of supply now includes;

- (i) the whole of the area in the jurisdiction of the Delhi Municipal Committee;
- (ii) the whole of the Delhi Civil Station Notified Area;
- (iii) the whole of the West Delhi Notified Area; and
- (iv) a tract of land in the jurisdiction of the Delhi District Board.

(b) During war-time it is not in the public interest to supply the information.

(c) Yes. The Company's generating plant is now used more or less as a stand-by.

(d) Yes.

(e) A statement is laid on the table.

(f) Yes. The question is now under the consideration of the Chief Commissioner, Delhi.

(g) Under the first proviso to sub-section (1) of section 7 of the Indian Electricity Act, 1910, the price to be paid for the property of the licence, if the option of purchasing were exercised, would be its fair market value at the time of purchase of determined by arbitration. It is not possible to answer the second half of the question till the amount likely to be involved is known.

STATEMENT

The Delhi Electric Supply and Traction Co. Ltd., are charged at 69 anna per unit of electricity supplied in bulk by the Delhi Central Electric Power Authority Limited.

Rates charged by the Delhi Electric Supply and Traction Co. Ltd.

Lighting and fans—Three annas per unit less 3 pics discount per unit for prompt payment of bills.

Domestic power, (Cooling, water heating, refrigerators, radiators and air conditioning)—One anna per unit nett.

Battery charging—Two annas per unit less ten per cent discount for prompt payment of bills.

Industrial—

A Consumer with connected load up to 75 K.V.A.

Restricted hour supply—1.1 anna per unit less a discount of .1 anna per unit for prompt payment of bills.

Unrestricted hour supply—Rates as for Restricted hour supply and in addition a charge of Rs. 5 per H. P. per month less ten per cent discount for prompt payment of bills.

Special rates are quoted.

Mr. K. C. Neogy : Is the Honourable Member aware that a few years ago, the Delhi Municipal Committee applied for a licence for the purpose of enabling itself to supply electricity in the area concerned or at least part of it and that as a result of that application, an enquiry was held into the position of this company by a Committee over which perhaps Sir James Pitkeathly presided or the Electrical Adviser to the Government of Bengal, presided? Is the Honourable Member in a position to give this House an idea about the comments made by this Committee or these individuals, in regard to the affairs of this company?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : If the Honourable Member will put down a specific question, I shall certainly be glad to give the information.

Mr. K. C. Neogy : Has the Honourable Member tried to ascertain the total amount of profits earned by this Company? Has the attention of the Honourable Member been drawn to a statement in a recent article in the Hindustan Times in which it has been stated that the total profits earned by the company was already about five times its capital?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : Yes, Sir, I have noticed.

Mr. K. C. Neogy : Is the Honourable Member in a position to say whether that is a fact or not?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I cannot say anything about that now. If the Honourable Member wants information, he will give notice of a question.

Mr. K. C. Neogy : With reference to part (b) May I know the proportion of units actually produced by this company to the units purchased by the company at cost price from the Government undertakings?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I have already answered that during war time, it is not in the public interest to give the information.

Mr. K. C. Neogy : I know. Is the Honourable Member in a position to deny that it is a very small proportion of the units actually distributed by this company that is produced by it ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : That, I am afraid, will be circumventing the provisions of the Act which prohibits me from giving the information.

Mr. K. C. Neogy : I did not know that the Honourable Member was prevented even from giving the proportion. However, I give up that point. As regards the point that the matter is under consideration of the Chief Commissioner having regard to the important policy involved do Government propose to direct the Chief Commissioner in regard to coming to any particular conclusion, or do the Government of India merely propose to carry out, or rather endorse, the decision of the Chief Commissioner in this behalf ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : The Government of India themselves are considering this matter.

Mr. K. C. Neogy : With regard to part (f), having regard to the shortness of time during which notice is to be served, if at all, will the Government come to a very quick decision in the matter ? Will the Government be pleased to take this House into their confidence at the earliest possible opportunity in regard to this case ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I can assure my Honourable friend that Government will certainly come to its own conclusions before the time expires.

Mr. K. C. Neogy : Having regard to the fact that this Legislature is virtually in the position of a Provincial Legislature so far as Delhi Province is concerned, does the Honourable Member propose to let this House have an opportunity to consider and discuss this matter ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I shall bear the Honourable Member's suggestion in mind.

Mr. R. R. Gupta : Do the Government propose to increase the capacity of the electric power house situated in New Delhi under the Government control ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : That question does not arise. I cannot give an answer.

234

*** Refusal of Facilities to All-India Womens Conference for Studying the Condition of Women in Coal Mines**

579. **Mrs. Renuka Ray :** Will the Honourable the Labour Member please state:

- (a) if it is a fact that the All-India Women's Conference approached the Government for facilities to send an investigation Committee for an impartial studying of women in coal mines and that on the 3rd May, the Government of India informed the aforesaid organization that there was no objection against such investigation, and the time was not suitable at present; and
- (b) if it is a fact that subsequently on a request from the All-India Women's Conference on the 26th May, the Government of India again refused the facilities and informed them that Government would let them know when the time was suitable and that upto now the All-India Women's Conference has not heard from the Government; what the causes are which led to this course of action ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : (a) Yes.

(b) the reply to the first part of the question is in the affirmative. The reasons were explained in the Government of India's letters to the President of the Conference.

Mr. K. C. Neogy : May I know the reasons which led the Government to pass the order referred to in part (b) ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : The time was not suitable.

Mr. N. M. Joshi : What does the Government mean by saying that the time was not suitable ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I think the word 'suitable' is a very simple word. Everybody can understand it. I do not think I can further simplify it.

Mrs. Renuka Ray : Is it a fact that the Government allowed the Regge and the Health Survey Committees to go and investigate during

* Legislative Assembly Debates (Central), Vol. V of 1944, 20th November 1944, pp. 1000-01.

the same period? Is it a fact that the All-India Women's organisation has not been given similar permission till now? If so, what is the basis for such differentiation? Why is it that a responsible body like the All-India Women's organisation who are interested in the welfare of women has not been allowed?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : They are official bodies which were allowed.

Mrs. Renuka Ray : Are not the Members of the Legislature on that Committee?

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member is arguing.

Mr. T. S. Avinashilingam Chettiar : Why are women stopped from going into the mines and investigating? Why should Government consider that the time is not suitable only in the case of Women's organisation?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : The Honourable Member can draw his own inference.

Mr. N. M. Joshi : May I ask whether it is not a fact that Government do not consider the time suitable because the conditions in the mines are so bad that they do not like investigation being made by an impartial body?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : The Honourable Member is at liberty to draw his own inferences.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Next question.

235

* Shortage of Labour in Coal Mines due to Malaria

580. **Mrs. Renuka Ray :** Will the Honourable the Labour Member please state:

- (a) if it is a fact that the shortage of labour in coal mines, particularly during the months of August and September was due to a large proportion of mining labour suffering from malaria and that no adequate treatment was possible due to the inadequate supply of quinine; and

* Legislative Assembly Debates (Central), Vol. V of 1944, 20th November 1944, pp. 1001-02.

- (b) if the Honourable Member is aware of the fact that mining labour is suffering so acutely from the effects of diseases and malnutrition that this has seriously affected their efficiency; if so, what steps taken to remedy this are ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : (a) The coal-mining labour is not immune to the seasonal incidence of malaria, but it is not correct to say that a large proportion of this labour suffered from the disease during August and September. The incidence of the disease per thousand of the average daily labour force employed in the Jharia Coalfield was 81 and 80 for the month of August in 1943 and 1944 respectively and 111 and 74 for the month of September in 1943 and 1944 respectively. Every effort is made to provide adequate facilities for treatment and sufficient supplies of quinine and its substitutes.

(b) It cannot be said that mining labour is suffering acutely from mal-nutrition. As regards their health all collieries employing 30 persons or more are required to maintain a dispensary and distribute medicines through their doctors. Coal Mines Labour Welfare Fund has recently been set up from which measures for prevention of disease in the mining population and improvement of medical facilities will be financed.

Mr. K. C. Neogy : With regard to the point about mal-nutrition, will the Honourable Member please make a statement as to whether it is not a fact and an admitted fact that apart from the shortage of labour in collieries, individual output of work has gone down due to malnutrition ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I am not certain about the facts mentioned by my Honourable friend.

Mr. K. C. Neogy : Will the Honourable Member make an enquiry from the Honourable the Supply Member, who, I understand made a statement to this effect on a recent occasion when he met one of the Chambers of Commerce.

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : There is no need for an enquiry as the Honourable Member seems to be in possession of the fact.

Mr. K. C. Neogy : Will the Honourable Member convince himself about the truth of this position ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : Yes, I know there has been some fall in production, but I understood it was entirely due to the fact that there was lack of machinery.

Mrs. Renuka Ray : As the Honourable Member has told us about dispensaries in the different mines, will he kindly investigate and find out what the medical facilities are and how far the dispensaries are working and giving medicines in the mines at Ranigunj and Jharia? My information is that some of them cannot work because there are not enough medicines.

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : As I said, it was because in the opinion of Government the facilities were not sufficient that Government established the coal Mines Labour Welfare Fund.

236

*** Cases of Employment of Children on Underground Work in Mines**

581. **Mrs. Renuka Ray :** Will the Honourable the Labour Member please state:

- (a) if he is aware of the fact that there are a growing number of cases of violation of the Act prohibiting children in underground work in mines?
- (b) if the answer is in the affirmative, what the steps taken to ensure the enforcement of the Act are; and
- (c) if the answer is in the negative, will the Honourable Member kindly investigate the matter and take effective steps to put a stop to any such illegal practice that may prevail?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : (a) No.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Inspections are regularly made by the Officers of the Department of Mines to enforce the provisions of the Indian Mines Act regarding the prohibition of employment of children in mines and effective steps will be taken as a matter of course if any such illegal practice prevails anywhere.

* Legislative Assembly Debates (Central), Vol. V of 1944, 20th November 1944, p. 1003.

Mrs. Renuka Ray : Is the Honourable Member aware that there is a growing number of cases of violation in some of the mines in Jharia and Ranigunj coalfields and that children of 14 and 15 are signed up as adults and actually go down the mines ? And what does the Honourable Member propose to do about it ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : If the Honourable Member has any specific cases having reference to specific mines and will bring them to my notice, I will certainly take the matter up.

237

*** Underground Work in Mines by Pregnant Women**

582. **Mrs. Renuka Ray :** Will the Honourable the Labour Member please state:

- (a) if he is aware of the fact that pregnant women usually work underground in mines until the ninth month and again a fortnight after child birth, and that in mines where maternity benefits are not given they work even longer ?
- (b) the steps Government have taken to stop pregnant women from working underground;
- (c) if it is a fact that there have been a certain number of accidents to women working underground within the last year and there is no way of ascertaining how many of these accidents have occurred to pregnant women; and
- (d) if it is a fact that maternity benefits are given only in some mines; what steps Government intend to take to make maternity benefits compulsory for all women working in mining areas ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : (a) I am not aware of the basis for this allegation. Under section 3 of the Mines Maternity Benefit Act, employment of a woman for a period of four weeks following her confinement is prohibited. Further a woman is entitled to leave of absence for a period of one month before she expects to be delivered of a child. Inspections under this Act are regularly made by the Labour

Inspectors under the Chief Inspector of Mines, all of whom are doctors, with a view to enforcing the provisions of the Act and the rules made thereunder.

(b) As already stated, pregnant women are entitled to leave of absence for a period of one month before the date of delivery; and the object of the employment of Labour Inspectors under the Chief Inspector of Mines is to make known to these women their rights under the Act and to assist them in securing the benefits of that Act.

(c) Yes, but no information of any of these women being pregnant has been received. During enquiries following accidents, the evidence of the colliery doctor is invariably recorded and if a woman were pregnant her condition would be disclosed and recorded.

(d) The Mines Maternity Benefit Act 1941 applies to all mines in British India except:

- (i) certain stone crushing plants forming part of mines in the province of Bombay;
- (ii) iron ore mines worked without mechanical power, the whole of the ore from which is supplied locally to village smelters and blacksmiths; and
- (iii) those mines in which excavation is being carried out for prospecting purposes only, provided not more than 20 persons are employed in or about such excavation and subject to certain other conditions.

It is not considered necessary to make maternity benefits compulsory in these small mines.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai : Have there actually been any cases of pregnant women having suffered ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : Yes, there have been some.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai : When ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : Since they started working. These accidents are often occurring in the coal mines.

Mrs. Renuka Ray : Will the Honourable Member tell us whether the best way of preventing pregnant women from going down the mines would not be to restore the ban on women working underground ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I entirely agree, provided the circumstances were propitious.

238

*** Restoration of Ban on Women Working Underground in Coal Mines**

583. **Mrs. Renuka Ray :** Will the Honourable the Labour Member please state :

- (a) when the Government of India intend to restore the ban on women working underground in coal mines in view of their former promise; and
- (b) how far the employment of women underground has increased coal raisings ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : (a) The Government are most anxious to re-impose the ban as soon as production of coal reaches a figure which makes possible such re-imposition.

(b) Coal raisings have increased appreciably as a result of the employment of women underground, but no exact figures can be given as other factors are in operation at the same time.

Mrs. Renuka Ray : Is the Honourable Member aware that a very infinitesimal proportion represents the increased raisings helped by women working underground and does he consider that the violation of an international code and moral convention is compensated by the increased raisings that is due to women working in the mines even from the point of view increased production ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : My information is to the contrary.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh : May I know what is the target of production aimed at by Government in order to restore this ban ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I am unable to say.

Mrs. Renuka Ray : Is the Honourable Member aware that the woman acts as loader underground and the man as cutter, and so the rate of progress of each tub is much slower because a woman cannot act as cutter, and the result is that the man has to rest, whereas the rate would be much faster.....

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member is making a speech.

* Legislative Assembly Debates (Central), Vol. V of 1944, 20th November 1944, p. 1004.

Mrs. Renuka Ray : I should like to know if the Labour Member does not consider that the rate of progress of the work per tub is much slower because women work as loaders and cannot work as cutters.

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I am glad to have that information, but I am passing no opinion either on the reliability of the statement or the feasibility of the suggestion.

239

* Post of Labour Welfare Officer for Government of India Presses

586. **Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani :** Will the Honourable the Labour Member be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the post of Labour Welfare Officer for the Government of India presses was advertised; if so, when and how;
- (b) whether any selection has been made;
- (c) whether it is a fact that the post was reserved for a Muslim;
- (d) the number of persons who have been appointed as Assistant Labour Welfare Officers during the last two years; and
- (e) what their academic qualifications are and how many of them are Muslims ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : (a) One posts of Labour Welfare Officer for the Government of India Presses has been sanctioned and it was advertised by the Federal Public Service Commission in the approved newspapers in June last. Applications were due to reach the office of the Commission by the 10th July;

(b) and (c) Yes.

(d) One lady Assistant Welfare Adviser was appointed directly under Labour Department.

(e) She is M.A., M. Litt., and is a Hindu.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Are these officers appointed for the Central Government Presses or also for the Provincial Government Presses ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : For the Central Government Presses.

* Legislative Assembly Debates (Central), Vol. V of 1944, 20th November 1944, pp. 1005-06.

240

*** Statistics re Private Newspaper Owners and Their Employees**

600. Mr. Kailash Bihari Lall : Will the Honourable Member for Labour be pleased to state :

- (a) if the Government have obtained any statistics about the number of private newspaper owners and the persons employed by them; and
- (b) if the answer to (a) be in the negative, do the Government propose to obtain the statistics with a view to afford relief to such employees with regard to (i) rules of leave, (ii) list of holidays, (iii) grades of salaries and (iv) dearness allowance ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : (a) No.

(b) The Labour Investigation Committee is collecting general information regarding the terms and conditions of employees in printing presses. The question as to what additional information should be collected and as to the feasibility of legislating to govern the conditions of employees of newspaper organisations will be considered in due course.

Mr. Kailash Bihari Lall : May I know if Government can at least obtain the figures regarding Delhi Printing Press ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I think it would be better to wait in order to know what the Labour Investigation Committee is doing in this matter.

Mr. Kailash Bihari Lall : Delhi is a small area of which the Honourable Member can get.....

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member is arguing. Next question.

241

@ Extensions of Service in Government of India Press, Aligarh

601. Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi : Will the Honourable the Labour Member be pleased to state :

- (a) whether it is a fact that extension after extension in service is allowed in many cases in the Government of India Press, Aligarh

* Legislative Assembly Debates (Central), Vol. V of 1944, 20th November 1944, p. 1013.

@ *Ibid.* pp. 1013-14.

- (b) whether it is a fact that every year the Manager of that Press recommends a lot of cases of extension to the Controller of Printing and Stationery in India;
- (c) whether it is a fact that fully trained and qualified men are available in that Press to work in the places of these men whose extension has been recommended by the Manager and who are on the verge of retirement;
- (d) whether it is a fact that the claims of some of the qualified men for the posts of these retiring hands have been blocked due to these recommendations for extension in service; and
- (e) if the answers to (a) to (d) be in the affirmative, has the Honourable Member considered the advisability of issuing instructions to the effect that no further extension be granted in future under any circumstances ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : (a) and (b) No. Only a few cases are recommended.

(c) In some cases qualified men are available, in others not.

(d) No.

(e) Does not arise.

Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi : Do I understand that the answer to part (a) of the question is in the negative, and he has not been recommending any extensions whatsoever?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I said, only a few cases are recommended.

Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi : Has the General Manager been granting any extensions, or not ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : The Manager has been granting extensions.

Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi : May I know why these extensions are granted when qualified persons are available.

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I am not prepared to admit that extensions are granted notwithstanding that qualified persons are available.

Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi : I understood the Honourable Member to say that sometimes extensions are granted even when qualified persons are available.

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : Yes, in a very few cases.

Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi : May I know the reason for which extensions are granted to people even under those circumstances ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I understand that the general reason why these extensions are granted in the cases referred to by my Honourable friend are entirely governed by the fact that some people lose their pensions if they are not given a year or two's extension.

Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi : Is that the only reason, or is there some other reason also ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I am not aware of any other reason.

Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi : Will the Honourable Member be pleased to enquire whether the extensions that were given in the cases referred to were solely for this reason or for some other reason ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I have made enquiries and that is the information I have.

Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani : May I know the names of persons included in those 'few cases' ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I have no names of persons, but I have a certain number of cases before me.

Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani : What community do they belong to ?

(No reply).

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Next question.

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*** Time Scale of Pay for Binders and Warehousemen of Government of India Press, New Delhi**

602. **Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi :** Will the Honourable the Labour Member be pleased to state :

- (a) whether it is a fact that the Government of India has sanctioned the Time Scale of pay for which the Binders and

* Legislative Assembly Debates (Central), Vol. V of 1944, 20th November 1944, pp. 1014-15.

warehousemen of the Government of India Press, New Delhi, had been representing;

- (b) whether it is a fact that these people have been representing their case for this purpose for the last fifteen years approximately;
- (c) whether it is a fact that some warehousemen who have been serving for the last fifteen and twenty years and whose pay is only Rs. 25 per month at present, are not benefited at all by this Time Scale of pay at present;
- (d) whether it is a fact that not a single increment has been sanctioned to any man, immediately; and
- (e) if the answers to (a) to (d) be in the affirmative, will the Honourable Member please consider the advisability of sanctioning at least one increment to all Binders and warehousemen just at the time of introducing the Time Scale of pay so that some immediate relief may be gained by these men who have been waiting for the last so many years ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : (a) Yes.

(b) Yes, for some time past.

(c) Yes, but they will be benefited as soon as they earn their next increment.

(d) Yes, because no increment has been yet earned since the 22nd June 1944 when the Time Scale came into force.

(e) No action as proposed is necessary, as the men will earn their increments next year.

Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi : Will the Honourable Member be pleased to consider that some persons will be on the verge of retirement and will not be able to get any benefit from this time-scale. Isn't it proper in such case for the Government to give them some increment in lieu of their past services ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I do not think it is prudent to alter the law in order to meet hard cases!

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*** Development of Mahanadi Projects in Orissa**

607. **Prof. N. G. Ranga** : Will the Honourable the Labour Member be pleased to state :

- (a) if he is aware that Sir M. Visveewaraya Committee's report on Mahanadi to stop the ravages of floods in Orissa has suggested the development of Mahanadi projects and a system of irrigation canals to irrigate huge areas of land in Cuttack, Sambalpur, Puri and Balasore Districts;
- (b) if such a scheme was estimated to cost about rupees four crores in 1938-39; and
- (c) whether Government of India will consider the advisability of taking the initiative and developing that scheme, in view of the financial disabilities of the subvention province of Orissa and also of the great need of India for more rice production ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : (a) and (b) No. Information on the subject has been called for.

(c) Government cannot give such an assurance at this stage without a careful examination of the scheme.

Prof. N. G. Ranga : Is Government prepared to examine this scheme carefully ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : Yes.

Prof. N. G. Ranga : Will it form part of the investigations of one of the various sub-committees or the National Planning structure of committees ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I cannot say as regards the procedure that Government should adopt. But I shall examine the thing.

Prof. N. G. Ranga : Thank you.

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@ Arrangements for Supply of Rice to Colliery Labour in Bihar

611. **Mr. K. C. Neogy** : (a) Will the Honourable Member for Labour be pleased to explain in detail the arrangements that are in operation

* Legislative Assembly Debates (Central), Vol. V of 1944, 20th November 1944, p. 1018.

@ *Ibid.*, p. 1021.

in the province of Bihar in the matter of supplying rice to colliery labour ?

(b) Has the Honourable Member received any complaint that the Bihar authorities are charging some of the collieries prices for rice to be supplied to their labour force which are higher than the control prices and that the quality of rice supplies is also bad ? If so, what are the different points raised in these complaints, and what are the ascertained facts relating thereto ?

(c) How does the system in Bihar in the matter differ from the system introduced in the Bengal collieries ?

(d) What action do Government propose to take to remove the complaints made on behalf of a section of the Bihar collieries in this matter ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : (a) Under an order issued by the Additional Deputy Commissioner, Dhanbad, under the Defence of India Rules dated the 20th April 1944, every colliery worker is entitled to buy from the colliery shop at prices equal to the controlled prices fixed by the Additional Deputy Commissioner, an amount of foodgrains not exceeding a total of four seers of foodgrains per week (of which not more than two seers shall be rice) for himself and each adult dependent, and two seers (of which not more than one seer shall be rice) for each minor dependent. In addition every heavy worker is entitled to half a seer of free ration in rice for each attendance; but miners who prefer may draw the whole or some part of the free ration in other grains.

(b) The reply to the first part is in the affirmative. The facts are that the Bihar Government have charged the Colliery Associations the actual cost of rice supplied up to the 1st November 1944. The bulk of these supplies originated in Nepal where the Bihar government had to purchase above their control rate. Consequently supplies of Nepal rice have been made to the Colliery Associations at approximately Rs. 1—8—0 above the local wholesale control rate. From the 1st November 1944, the Bihar Government have decided to charge the local wholesale control rate plus four annas administrative charge and to bear the resulting loss. The facts relating to the complaint regarding quality are being ascertain.

(c) In the Bengal collieries there is no rationing system but employers of more than 1,000 workers must buy their supplies of grains from the Civil Supplies Department of the Government. In Bihar every colliery is required to buy through the Rice Administrator, Indian Mining Association or the Secretary Joint Supply Pool.

(d) The Honourable Member's attention is invited to the answer given to clause (b) of the question.

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*** Contract for Construction of Clerks' Quarters at Lodi Road, Delhi**

612. Shri K. B. Jinaraja Hegde : Will the Honourable the Labour Member be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the contract for the construction of clerks' quarters at Lodi Road for about Rs. 28,60,000 was given to a higher tenderer instead of lower tenderer who quoted 11.25 below the schedule of rates;
- (b) if the answer to (a) is in the affirmative what was the total excess amount the Government had to pay over the lowest tenderer,
- (c) if it is a fact that the same firm was given another contract for a similar construction at the very place for about Rs. 50,00,000 at 5 per cent, above the schedule of rates, rejecting the lowest tenderer; and
- (d) were the above tenders examined by the Department before they were accepted ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : (a) No.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No. A portion of the Lodi Road project was given to this firm as its tender rate was low in comparison with that of others.

(d) The tenders were examined and accepted by the Chief Engineer, Central Public Works Department who is the competent authority in such cases.

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*** Prescribing Set Form of Receipt for Rent under Delhi Rent Control Ordinance**

625. Mr. Kailash Bihari Lall : Will the Honourable the Labour Member be pleased to state if the Government propose to prescribe a set form of receipt to be compulsorily granted by the landlord to the tenants under the Delhi Rent Control Ordinance, 1944 ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : Government have the matter under examination.

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@ Increase in Cost of Living in Certain Cities

100. Mr. Badri Dutt Pande : Will the Honourable the Labour Member please state:

- (a) if it is a fact that the living index has shown an increase in the cost of living by 182 per cent in certain cities; if not, what the fact is;
- (b) if it is a fact that the wages of Railway servants working in those cities have not been raised by 182 per cent; if not, what the correct fact is; and
- (c) if the Government propose to increase the wages of the employees in those cities where the cost of living has arisen by 182 per cent accordingly; if not, why not;

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : (a) Government are aware that the published cost of living indexes have risen in some towns by 182 or more over the index of August, 1939.

(b) The answer to the first part is in the affirmative. In regard to the second, Railway workers are compensated for increased cost of living by relief in cash and concessions in kind which together are considered adequate to meet the needs and are adjusted from time to time as the situation demands.

* Legislative Assembly Debates (Central), Vol. V of 1944, 20th November 1944, p. 1027.

@ *Ibid.* p. 1038.