

SRI LANKA



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Rs. 52 MILLION ON INCREASED ALLOWANCES

AN immediate increase in wages amounting to Rs. 52 million was ordered by the Prime Minister just before he left for New Delhi last week. The increases are to be given effect to from November 1st.

The Prime Minister told the representatives of Trade Unions that this may even result in a curtailment of the Government's development programme, but he would make every endeavour to avoid that.

The following is the full text of the Prime Minister's statement:—

On 21.11.57, at a conference between me and the Government Workers' Trade Union Federation, I agreed that by 29.11.57 the Government would consider representations made to them and come to a decision on the following matter.

In view of the fact that representations were made that those earning under Rs. 100 did not have sufficient for their living expenses the Government would go into the question of making some suitable temporary increase pending the decision of the Salaries Commission Report otherwise than by an increase in the basic wage.

In pursuance of this, Treasury officials considered representations made by the Government Workers' Trade Union Federation, the Public Service Workers' Trade Union Federation, the Rajaya Jatika Kamkaru Sammelanaya, and others.

I had a meeting today to explain the decisions of the Government regarding the mat-

ters represented, to those concerned. Representatives of the G. W. T. U. F. and P. S. W. T. U. F. were present.

65,000 DAILY-PAID WORKERS WILL BENEFIT

I explained that the Government had already decided to give an increase of Rs. 12.50 to the Special Cost of Living Allowance of workers under Rs. 100. It had also been decided to place on a basis of monthly pay all permanent daily-paid workers and temporary daily-paid workers and temporary workers for 6 months. (Casual workers, after 6 months would be made temporary and 6 months thereafter would be made monthly-paid). This would mean that more than 65,000 daily-paid workers will be placed on a monthly-paid basis.

As a further measure of temporary relief, pending the Report of the Committee that has been appointed to report on the Cost of Living Index and the General Salaries Commission which will be appointed in a few days, I stated that the Government was prepared to make an increase of Rs. 5 in the general Cost of Living Allowance of those receiving salaries under Rs. 300. (Marginal cases will, of course, receive consideration). It will be observed that we have gone beyond the position of workers earning under Rs. 100 per mensem. Representations were made regarding workers receiving under Rs. 300 per mensem and the Government considered that it was fair to give this section also some relief.

The total increase involved in these steps will be—

	<i>per annum</i> Rs.
For those receiving the Rs. 12.50 increase on the Special Cost of Living Allowance, approximately ..	30,000,000
Increase due to daily-paid workers being put on a monthly basis ..	10,000,000
Increase of Rs. 5 in the General Cost of Living Allowance for those receiving salary of under Rs. 300 ..	12,000,000

These figures are approximate and might be exceeded.

It should be noted that the allowances referred to will be paid to the appropriate groups of pensioners as well.

It will thus be seen that the full total of these temporary increases, pending the Reports referred to earlier, is in the neighbourhood of Rs. 52,000,000. These increases would be given effect to with effect from 1st November, 1957.

It should also be noted that when the Anomalies Commission Report is published (it is now expected in a few days' time), a further increase of the total expenditure is likely to result.

I pointed out that the Government has budgetted this year for a deficit of Rs. 154,000,000. It has now been increased to about Rs. 170,000,000, exclusive of the Rs. 52,000,000 which the increases mentioned above would involve. It is possible that these increases may result in a curtailment of the

Government's programme of development works for the year. But the Government will make every endeavour to avoid this. The Government was taking these steps in order to re-assure Government Servants that it is doing all in its power, within reason, to meet the grievances of public servants and in the interests of cordial relations and mutual confidence between the public, the Public Servants, and the Government.

I am confident that the position explained above will be accepted by the Public Servants concerned.

Bill to Amend Planning Council

A Bill to amend the National Planning Council Act was tabled in the House of Representatives last week by the Prime Minister.

The object of the Bill is to enable the Prime Minister to appoint an Additional Deputy Chairman of the National Planning Council who will exercise and perform such powers and functions as the Chairman may delegate to him.

The Chairman of the Planning Council is the Prime Minister.

Acting Minister of Home Affairs

THE Governor-General has appointed Mr. Mahanama Samaraweera, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Acting Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Home Affairs to act as Home Minister in addition to his duties as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice during the absence out of the Island of Mr. A. P. Jayasuriya, Minister of Home Affairs, who has left for New Delhi to attend the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference.

Salaries Commission—Terms of Reference

THE Governor-General, Sir Oliver Goonetilleke, has appointed a 4-member Salaries Commission consisting of Mr. C. Nagalingam, Q.C. (Chairman), Mr. N. S. Perera (retired Surveyor-General), Mr. R. L. Brohier, and Mr. Wilmot A. Perera (former Ambassador to China).

A fifth Commissioner is to be appointed by the Governor-General from the ranks of Trade Union representatives.

The Commission's terms of reference, as defined in the letter of appointment are to inquire into and report on the following matters:—

"(1) the changes that may be necessary in the existing salaries wages, allowances and conditions of service, including hours of work, of Government employees and of teachers in Assisted Schools whose salaries are paid by the Government, having particular regard to the following:—

"(a) the maintenance of a suitable standard of living;

"(b) the fixing of minimum and maximum salaries;

"(c) the fixing of a minimum wage;

"(d) the possibility of determining a salary inclusive of the allowances hitherto paid and any other allowances, such as risk or hardship allowance, which are appropriate to the duties, hours of work and conditions of each service;

"(e) the removal of any anomalies in the structure of salary scales or in the relation between the qualifications and responsibilities required for or attached to the posts in the Government Service and the remuneration in respect of these posts and the elimination of differences in the remuneration of persons discharging similar responsibilities;

"(f) the provision of adequate avenues of promotion in appropriate cases:

"(2) the alterations that, in consequences of the changes referred to in the preceding paragraph (1) may be necessary to pension rights, leave, holiday warrants, house, station and rent allowances, and the concessions allowed to particular employees or grades of employees in respect of quarters, electric lights, transport, &c.

"(3) the adequacy, superfluity or otherwise of the staff employed in Government Departments;

"(4) The practicability of reducing the present working hours to eight hours per day in various Government Departments and the changes of staff that may become necessary in consequence of any reduction of such hours; and

"(5) the financial implications of any recommendations you may make in regard to the aforesaid matters."

EARLY ACTION

The letter of appointment adds:

"And I do hereby authorize and empower you, the said Commissioners to, hold all such inquiries and make all such investigations into the aforesaid matters as may appear to you to be necessary and require you to transmit to me as early as possible, under your hands a report setting out the results of your inquiries and investigations and your recommendations, and also any interim report or reports relating to any of the aforesaid matters that need immediate attention;

"And I do hereby direct that such part of any inquiry relating to the aforesaid matters as you may in your discretion determine shall not be held in public.

"And I do hereby require and direct all public officers and other persons, to whom you may apply for assistance or information for the purposes of your inquiries and investigation, to render all such assistance and furnish all such information as may be properly rendered and furnished in that behalf."

PADDY BILL PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT

THE amended Paddy Lands Bill which was approved by the Cabinet at its meeting on November 18 was presented to the House of Representatives last week.

The Second Reading of the Bill will be taken up at the next meeting of the House.

The following are the amendments to the Bill:—

1. Compensation

Where a paddy land is acquired by the Government the amount of compensation to be paid will be equal to ten years' annual rental value of the land.

The original draft did not specify an amount.

2. Owner Cultivators

In the original draft Bill a landlord, whose paddy lands had been cultivated by tenant cultivators, had to decide within five years whether he wanted to be an owner cultivator. In addition to this, the amended Bill provides for a landlord who is a minor to decide within six months after he has attained majority to be an owner cultivator even though the five-year limit may have elapsed.

The owner may also, in cases where the tenant cultivator has died without leaving any relation to inherit his rights, or where a tenant cultivator has been evicted for bad cultivation, decide to be the owner cultivator.

3. Tenant Cultivators

Whenever a paddy land is acquired by the Government, its tenant cultivator shall continue to be the tenant cultivator. Where there is no tenant cultivator the Cultivation Committee shall select a suitable person to be the tenant cultivator.

In the original draft such land were to be transferred to the Cultivation Committee within whose jurisdiction the land was situated.

4. Lands Cultivated with Hired Labour

Sections 15 and 16 of the original draft bill shall not apply to a land which prior to April 12, 1956, had been cultivated by its owner with the assistance of hired labour if the Commissioner of

Agrarian Services is satisfied that an efficient standard of production is maintained by the owner.

Under section 15 of the original draft bill a Cultivation Committee had the power to appoint itself or any suitable person to be the tenant cultivator of a paddy land which had no tenant cultivator or had not been cultivated.

Under section 16 of the original draft Bill, agricultural labourers who cultivated paddy lands were to be appointed tenant cultivators.

5. Sale of Paddy Lands

Where an owner has offered to sell his paddy land to the Government, the Commissioner of Agrarian Services shall decide whether the ground on which the land is offered is a prescribed ground and if the applicant is dissatisfied with the decision of the Commissioner, he shall have the right of appeal to the Board of Review.

6. Misuse of Paddy Lands

It would be an offence to use paddy lands for purposes other than cultivation, e.g., putting up buildings.

7. Alienation to Non-Ceylonese Invalid

The alienation of a paddy land by its owner to a person who is not a citizen of Ceylon, except with the approval of the Commissioner of Agrarian Services shall be invalid.

8. Appeals to Board of Review

All appeals against the decisions of the Commissioner of Agrarian Services will be heard by a Board of Review appointed by the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

9. Regulations

The regulations made under the Paddy Lands Act shall be first approved by the Government before they are put into operation.

10. Cultivation Committees

Membership: The term of office of the members of a cultivation Committee shall be one year.

In the original draft bill, the term of office was to be three years.

11. Absentee Landlords May Vote
Non resident landlords have the right to vote at the election of the landlord members of a Cultivation Committee. Only resident landlords, however, shall be eligible for election and the landlord members shall not be more than one-fourth of the total membership of the Committee.

In the original draft only resident landlords had the right to vote. In the amended draft bill, this right is extended even to non-resident landlords, provided they are citizens of Ceylon.

12. Right to Requisition a Meeting

Persons who are qualified to vote at the election of a member of a Cultivation Committee may call for a meeting of the cultivators by a requisition signed by the prescribed number of such persons and addressed to the Chairman of the Cultivation Committee.

Under the original draft bill the voters had no such right.

13. Rent

The rent payable by a tenant cultivator to the landlord will be 15 bushels per acre or one-fourth of the yield whichever is less.

In the original draft, the yield was fixed at 10 bushels per acre or one-fourth of the total yield whichever is less.

New Appointments

THE Public Service Commission has selected the under-mentioned candidates for appointments to the posts noted against their names:—

D. L. Seneviratne.—Assistant Superintendent of Stores (Temporary), Government Stores Department.

Mrs. S. J. Hassen.—Principal (Female), Government Training College (Tamil), Alutgama, Education Department.

G. R. Perera.—Supervisor-in-Charge, Emergency Training Schemes, Department of Labour.

Alienation of Land to Peasants

THE Land Commissioner's Department alienated 3,391 acres last month to landless peasants in 14 Districts.

This brings the total area alienated to peasants since June, this year, to 43,110 acres.

The extents alienated last month and the crops to be grown thereon are—

Ratnapura District

Kadawata and Meda Korales:—90 acres—rubber.

Kuruwita Korale:—169 acres—highland crops.

Nawadun Korale:—20 acres—highland crops.

Atakalan Korale:—17 acres—highland crops.

Kandy District

Udupalata:—126 acres—residential purposes.

Udunuwara and Yatinuwara:—19 acres—residential purposes.

Pahatha Hewaheta: 84 arcs—residential purposes.

Galle District

Beranagoda:—90 acres—tea.

Pelagas Palatha:—250 acres—tea.

Kottawa:—400 acres—tea.

Nebadawa:—300 acres—tea.

Udubethhawa:—40 acres—tea.

Anuradhapura District

Kalagam Palatha:—21 acres—paddy.

Nuwaragam Palatha:—152 acres—paddy, and 10 acres—highland crops.

Puttalam District

Pitigal Korale North:—65 acres—highland crops.

Puttalam Pattu and Gravets:—712 acres—highland crops.

Jaffna District

Punneryn Thunakkai:—54 acres—paddy and highland crops.

Valikaman North:—4 acres—residential purposes.

Badulla District

Udukinda:—131 acres—mixed crops, and 90 acres—tea and highland crops.

Wellawaya:—250 acres—coconut and chena cultivation.

Yatikinda:—4 acres—residential purposes.

Wiyaluwa:—60 acres—mixed highland crops.

Matale District

Matale North:—32 acres—highland crops.

Batticaloa District

Eravur Korale Pattu:—250 acres—paddy.

Matara District

Morawak Korale:—384 acres—tea.

Gangaboda Pattu:—4 acres—mixed crops.

Mannar District

Mantai:—41 acres—residential purposes.

Vavuniya District

Vavuniya South:—22 acres—paddy and highland crops.

Kurunegala District

Hiriyala Hathpattuwa:—100 acres—paddy, coconut and fruits.

Nuwara Eliya District

Walapane:—28 acres—vegetables and highland crops.

Uda Hewaheta:—19 acres—vegetables and highland crops.

Encroachments on Crown Lands

THE Government's policy on encroachments on Crown lands was outlined in the following statement issued recently by the Ministry of Lands and Land Development:—

The policy of Government in respect of encroachments, which had taken place prior to September 28, 1955, is that, where an encroacher is living on the land with his wife and children, no legal action for ejection should be taken unless full facts have been ascertained by personal inquiry by a responsible officer of the Kachcheri. If the encroachment has to be removed as the land is required for a Government purpose, the express personal orders of the Government Agent in charge of the District should be obtained before such action is instituted. Where an encroacher, who is a landless peasant, has effected improvements to the land and the land is available for alienation, the encroachment should be regularized. Where the land is not available for alienation, however, before action for ejection is taken, every possibility of offering him alternative land should be explored. These concessions apply only to encroachments, which had taken place prior to September 28, 1955.

In respect of encroachments occurring after that date, the policy of Government has been to take immediate action for eviction before the encroachers have the opportunity of effecting improvements to the land so that Government control over disposition and use of Crown land may be retained and so that its hands may not be forced by encroachers.

Conciliation Boards for Village Areas

THE Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice last week presented in the House of Representatives a Bill to provide for the establishment of Conciliation Boards in village areas so that civil disputes in those areas could be settled amicably by a Conciliation Board without recourse to the Courts.

In the case of certain offences, the Conciliation Boards will be empowered to compound the offences with the consent of the parties concerned. These offences include voluntarily causing hurt, wrongful restraint and confinement, assault or criminal force otherwise than on grave and sudden provocation, criminal and house trespass, defamation, intentional insult and criminal intimidation.

Prosecution for any of these offences may be instituted in a court only if the alleged offence has been inquired into by the Board and has not been compounded.

In the case of certain other offences, the Boards are empowered to recommend to the Attorney-General, with the consent of the parties concerned, that his consent may be given to the compounding of those offences. In this category falls offences such as, animal trespass, voluntarily causing hurt by dangerous weapon or means, and causing grievous hurt by an act which endangers life or the personal safety of others.

Prosecution for any of these offences may be instituted in a court only if the alleged offence has been inquired into by a Board and a recommendation has or has not been made to the Attorney-General that his consent may be given to the compounding of that offence.