

tons). There is no question of a change of allocation."

News reporters covering a story on coal from Ahmedabad may trip on a matter of detail but it is not as simple as all that. How could PTI put out a message with just that air of plausibility which makes it so dangerous? It sure would have embarrassed any other Cabinet but targets are now-a-days played up and down so often that the Ministers have only themselves to thank if news men occasionally take such liberties. It would be comforting to note that at least somebody in the Cabinet was upset over this sorry business.

Legal Props to Trade Unionism

THE question whether employers should be forced to recognise duly registered trade unions was raised in the Lok Sabha early this week, when a half-hour discussion was led by a Communist member on the non-enforcement by Government of the Indian Trade Unions (Amendment I Act, 1947). The debate brought up certain interesting questions: Whether the Government can defeat the purpose of the Bill by not enforcing the Act, passed by Parliament? Whether the non-enforcement of the 1947 Act affected our trade union development? Whether legal support even to weak unions will make them strong enough to be an effective agent in collective bargaining? Whether political considerations encourage employers to distinguish between unions while giving them recognition?

The first question is only of academic interest because if the Congress Government did not want to enforce the Act, it would not have introduced the Bill. In its unbounded enthusiasm after political independence, the Congress Party and the Congress Government immediately embarked on the task of achieving economic and social freedom for the masses through the most natural and simple means of legislation. In 1947-48, the Government of India put on the statute book many progressive labour laws, like the Factories Act, the Employees' State Insurance Act, the Industrial Disputes Act and the Minimum wages Act, without caring to see whether they could be adequately enforced or not. The amendment to the Indian Trade Unions Act also belongs to this first "flush" of labour legislation. When the question of enforcement and implementation

came, practical considerations put a damper. Another factor which influenced such legislation was the predominance of the Labour Minister's policies over those of the Government. The Minister who piloted the labour Bills was fond of enacting Laws. His successor detested legislation and preferred negotiation and collective bargaining to adjudication and State intervention. The 1947 Amendment Act was not enforced, because its provisions were incorporated in the Trade Unions Bill, 1950, which the anti-legislation Minister allowed to lapse.

The non-enforcement of the 1947 Act, however, could hardly have made any difference. The present Labour Minister was not far wrong when he said in Parliament that non-enforcement had strengthened trade unions. Instead of weakening them. In fact, it should not be forgotten that Indian labour is one of the most protected in the whole world and this has been responsible in no small measure for its weakness. If a trade union develops inherent strength by enlarging its membership and funds, and works within its legitimate field of activities, it can demand recognition from employers. It need not beg for it or rely on the crutches provided by law. The State's responsibility should be restricted to provision of the machinery within which employers and employees can bargain. The simple old Trade Union law of 1920 is enough for this purpose.

Political influences on trade unions have been one of the greatest obstacles to their growth. The all-India workers' organisations owe their allegiance to political parties and naturally the activities of the unions affiliated to them are coloured by politics of these parties. Employers naturally favour the unions affiliated to the organisation which owes allegiance to the ruling party. It is not uncommon to find employers and their organisations giving recognition to unions of a particular party, irrespective of the strength of these unions. This collusion between employers and political unionism is carried on in the fields of recruitment and promotion. It appears from the Labour Minister's reply that an enquiry is being conducted on the question of recognition vis-à-vis membership. For the sake of justice and fair play, the enquiry should be entrusted to an impartial outside agency; it should not be conducted by an interested Government.

Problem of Pump Manufacturers

COMPLAINTS of manufacturers have a monotonous uniformity which can neither be quite accidental nor entirely due to the natural human failing to grumble. It is usually the associations of the smaller manufacturers who ventilate their grievances freely at their annual general meetings. Top rank industrialists also reserve theirs for the annual general meetings of the share holders of the companies which they control, but as they take up the more important issues directly with the authorities and as in these days of increasing Government control and interference, prudence demands a discreet silence on matters of vital concern to the company concerned, the Chairmen are not always as illuminating in their addresses as they could be. The associations, however, can be more forthright because the President speaking on behalf of a number of manufacturers, would not be accused of furthering particular interests. These speeches give an insight into what is actually happening in the industrial field which one cannot get from published reports, or from the official statistics relating to the industry concerned.

The address of Shri C N Pradhan at the annual general meeting of the Indian Pump Manufacturers' Association may be taken as a fair sample of the sort of problems which small manufacturers are facing today. The only snag is that it presents the picture from the view point of the manufacturer himself. It is a pity that it cannot be easily complemented by the consumers' or the Development Wings' version of the story. But here is how the pump manufacturers view the situation.

At the end of the First Five Year Plan, the installed capacity for manufacture of power driven centrifugal pumps was expected to reach 80,000 units, while demand was forecasted at around 1,00,000. The gap between demand and supply was to be met by tube well turbine pumps which were also to be manufactured within the country. All this was in the First Five Year Plan.

At the end of the five years, installed capacity nearly reached the target, being rated at 85,000 centrifugal pumps per annum, and capacity had also been installed for the production of 2,000 bore hole turbine pumps. Demand, however, did not come up to expectation. In

fact, it did not even come up to half of the estimated figure, being only 40,000 per annum as against 1,00,000 forecasted. In view of this disappointing experience demand estimates have been drastically scaled down and it is now thought that even at the end of the Second Plan period, the demand for pumps would not exceed 86,000. Yet new units are coming up and the President of the Association complains that licences are being issued to fresh entrants while established manufacturers are burdened with unsold stocks.

Advance Planning of Purchases

O U T that is not the only trouble.

Despite existence of considerable excess capacity suggested by the above figures, imports of pumps had been allowed at one stage during the First Plan, and even the current import policy does not take adequate note of the manufacturing capacity which has been developed within the country. The reason why imports had to be allowed was that purchases, of which the bulk is by the Government, had not been suitably phased to take full advantage of manufacturing capacity. Towards the end of the First Plan — development had to be rushed in the last two years and disbursements steeply staggered 300 bore hole pumps were needed in a hurry which the manufacturers were not in a position to supply, presumably within the stipulated time. Had purchases been more evenly distributed over time, manufacturing capacity could have been better utilised.

Keeping the existing manufacturing capacity in view, the Chairman suggests that imports of the following categories of pumps should be restricted:

- (1) Horizontal Centrifugal Pumps for clear water and also Sewage Pumps upto 14" delivery for the capacity of 2.5 lakh gallons per hour for the total head upto 200ft.
- (2) Multi-stage Centrifugal Pumps up to 8" delivery for the capacity, of 1 lakh gallons per hour* and also pumps suitable for heads upto 300 ft
- (3) Bore, Hole Pumps upto the capacity of 1 lakh. gallons per hour for heads upto 300 ft and 2 lakh gallons per hour for heads upto 150 ft;

Then follows the usual list of complaints, headed by Government

purchase policy The demand of the Association via that all Government purchases should be centralised through the Directorate General of Supplies and Disposals and that DGS & D contract terms should be offered to those manufacturers who are on the approved list. Advance planning of purchases with an eye to fuller utilisation of installed capacity is another legitimate demand of the industry.

The second in the list of grievanc-

es is the difficulty of getting raw materials and equipment—pig iron, cast iron scrapshard coke, ball bearing and electric motors, the latter for the firms which manufacture pumps but not the motor with which pumps have to be coupled before they can be sold. In the case of imported materials like pig iron, ball bearings and electric motors, the demand is, in short, for free licensing of Imports, This is in such striking contrast to the dem-