

S. debate on teachers' allowances

Parliament on Sunday heard a debate on the restriction of government allowances for teachers of non-government schools and colleges who got third division in their academic career, reports UNB.

During the question-answer time, several treasury bench members questioned the logic behind the government order and wanted to know why the teachers, who were employed under the existing rule and have been serving for several years, would not be included in the Monthly Payment Order (MPO).

Responding to a volley of supplementary queries from Ramesh Chandra Sen, Mustafizur Rahman, Abdul Latif Mirza, Abdul Latif Siddiqui and Sharif Khasruzzaman, Education Minister ASHK. Sadique said the decision was taken following an agreement between the school and college teachers associations and the government on August 24 last year.

He said the teachers association made the proposal and also the draft of the agreement envisaging their proposal. Under the circumstances, the government cannot scrap the agreement unilaterally.

The Education Minister further told the House that such provision relating to the third division had been in force for a long time, but it was suspended for a time following a government notification.

The government decision would not, however, affect those teachers who are already included in the MPO list, he said.

Ruling party MPs argued that the teachers were appointed by the managing committees under existing rules so they should not be deprived of enlisting in MPO and of government benefit. This decision would bring disaster to thousands of teachers' families, they said.

Some MPs questioned the legitimacy of teachers associations' signing the agreement sitting in a cosy atmosphere in the capital without considering the interest of teachers in rural areas.

One MP said many people having third division in academic career became eminent scholars in their later life. Abdul Latif Siddiqui said Mohit Lal Majumdar, who got third division, became a renowned teacher of Bengali Department in the Dhaka University.

Another MP said if government officers having third class could get job and elevated to senior positions why school teachers would not be enlisted in the MPO and get government benefit.

Sharif Khasruzzaman said the issue was discussed at a meeting of Awami League parliamentary party where the Prime Minister assured that she would consider the matter. "If the decision is not revised, it will cast an adverse impact on our politics."

Despite the pleas by the ruling party members, the Education Minister stuck to his point and favoured the decision, arguing that those teachers who are engaged in teaching should have a standard of academic qualification.

Sadique, however, assured that the government might consider the matter only if the teachers associations want to do it and sign another agreement with the government.

"Let the teachers associations sit and come up with their pro-