

(a) whether the Cabinet has appointed a Committee of Group of Ministers to go into some demands of workers in the Public Sector Undertakings;

(b) if so, the composition of the Committee and the issues referred to the same;

(c) whether the Committee is given some time limit to submit its report; and

(d) when the Committee's report is likely to be submitted?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Group of Ministers consists of Deputy Chairman Planning Commission, Minister of Labour, Minister of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises, Minister of Power, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Minister of Commerce and Industry, Minister of Textiles, Minister of Surface Transport and Minister of Finance. The Committee is to consider and make recommendations on following issues:

(i) Problems relating to payment of wages, salaries and statutory dues of employees in Central Public Sector Undertakings (CPSUs), particularly the sick CPSUs.

(ii) VRS. Policy.

(iii) Periodicity of pay/wage revision in CPSUs; and

(iv) Safeguarding of workers interests in sick PSUs.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) The Committee's report will be submitted after considering the views of all Ministries/Departments on the demands of the unions and arriving at a consensus on how best these demands could be met.

Improvements in Employees Pension Scheme

1590. SHRI JIBON ROY: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Board of Trustees of Employees Provident Fund had made recommendations for improvement in the Employees Pension Scheme, 1995;

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(b) if so, how many of them have been accepted; and

(c) the reasons for not accepting the recommendation, which have been rejected?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The recommendations/suggestions received from the Central Board of Trustees, Employees' Provident Fund and other sources related *inter-alia* to removal of discrimination between married sons and married daughters and between remarrying widows and remarrying widowers, extension of the scheme benefits to the employees drawing wages beyond Rs. 5000/- per month, provision for commutation, reduction in discounting rate for early payment of pension, provision of ensuring pension payment in default cases, application of the scheme to the serving subscribers who did not join the family Pension Scheme, 1971, refund of family pension related withdrawal benefit in the case of exemption and coverage of piecerated workers. These suggestions were examined and a notification carrying out necessary amendments in the Employees' pension Scheme, 1995 was issued on 28.2.1996. Based on the recommendations of the Central Board of Trustees, Employees Provident Fund the scheme has been further amended providing, *inter-alia*, for payment of pension to the dependant parents, life-long pension to the disabled children, enhancement of minimum children pension from Rs. 115/- to Rs. 150/- per months, minimum orphan pension from Rs. 170/- to Rs. 250/-per month and minimum widow pension to Rs. 450/per month in respect of the beneficiaries of the ceased Family Pension Scheme, 1971. Consequent to the second annual valuation of the Pension Fund as on 31.3.1998, an increase of 5.5% on pension in payment has been sanctioned, to the pensioners w.e.f. 1.4.1998. However, the recommendation of the Central Board of Trustees for enhancement of interest on the pension fund kept in public account from 8.5% to 12% per annum has not been found acceptable by the Government due to financial constraints.

Beneficiaries under New Pension Scheme

1591. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:
SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state: