

respective positions on the issue. It was agreed to continue discussions on the issue during the next round of the dialogue process.

Criteria for recruitment of jawans in Military

328. SHRI BALWINDER SINGH
BHUNDAR: SHRI RAJ
MOHINDER SINGH:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that criteria for enrolment of jawans in Military has changed after 1970; and

(b) if so, the criteria which has been adopted and the reasons for the same?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Certain changes have taken place in the criteria for enrolment of soldiers into the Army since 1970 due to changing socio-economic conditions in the country and induction of sophisticated modern weapons/equipments in the Army.

Brief details of changes in criteria for enrolment of Soldiers (GD) in the Army are given as under:—

(i) Educational Standards:— The educational standard was enhanced to 10th class pass w.e.f. 1st April, 1986 due to progressive modernisation in the Army and need for effective handling of sophisticated weapons/equipment system of the future. However, dispensation in educational standards have been accorded to certain areas/communities due to socio-economic and educational status prevalent in these regions.

(ii) Age:— The minimum age criteria for enrolment into the Army was lowered from 17 to 16 years w.e.f. 13th March, 1984 to give enhanced opportunity of recruitment to potential candidates.

(iii) Physical Standards:— The minimum Physical standards have been reviewed from time to time based on various studies and a statistical evaluation of the physical standards carried out by Defence Institute of Physiology & Allied Science as follows:—

(a) 1971:— Minimum physical standards for specified classes were laid down.

(b) 1978:— The physical standards based on caste/class were further enhanced.

(c) 1983:— The concept of caste/class based on minimum physical standards was changed and region based physical standards were adopted.

(d) 1995:— The region-based physical standards were further enhanced particularly in height.

Induction of Light Combat Aircraft in IAF

329. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India's Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) would be ready for its first flight by mid-1999, as reported in the Hindustan Times, dated 12th October, 1998;

(b) if so, by when Government hope to induct Light Combat Aircraft into the Indian Air Force; and

(c) the present assessment of the U.S. Company in this regard who are collaborating with India's Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE) on the L.C.A.'s digital flight control system and the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) The first LCA technology demonstrator (TD-1) will be ready for its first flight by mid-1999.