

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) to (d) The Central Passport Organisation is presently employing 564 casual labourers over varying period of time. The casual labourers were not en-paged against any sanctioned post. They are deployed to work on an ad hoc basis wherever and whenever required, based on exigencies of work.

2. A Special Qualifying Examination was conducted by the Staff Selection Commission in 1993 for the benefit of casual labourers who fulfilled certain prescribed conditions of eligibility. 127 casual labourers, who have qualified in this examination, have been offered regular posts, of LDC in various passport offices-Whenever Group D posts fall vacant in passport offices, casual labourers are appointed against regular Group D posts based on their seniority.

Documentary on Mahatma Gandhi Circulated to Indian Mission

7973. SMT. BASANTI SARMA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) how many non-Indian are estimated to have seen the 13-reel documentary on Mahatma Gandhi circulated to Indian Missions abroad on the occasion of his 125th birth anniversary, by the External Publicity Division;

(b) how many films boxes and video cassettes were circulated;

(c) how much money was spent on this?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) and (b) Video cassettes of the documentary, Mahatma' on Mahatma Gandhi have

been provided to all 149 Indian Missions abroad. Missions have been actively publicising Gandhiji's message through exhibition of this film to audiences in Embassy premises and through loan to interested institutions. As a result of such screenings the film has been shown in most parts of the world. However, it is difficult to estimate the number of non-Indians who may have seen this documentary through such screenings because of the dispersed nature of such exhibitions

(c) An amount of Rs. 2.6 lakhs has been spent on the film and its distribution abroad

Foreign Journalists hosted by External Publicity Division

7974 SRI RAM RATAN RAM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what are the names of foreign journalists and the institutions or media represented by them, hosted by the External Publicity Division in India during the last year;

(b) how much money was spent on them;

(c) what was the mode of selection of these journalists;

(d) whether Indian Journalists went abroad on similar schemes in return; and

(e) how much assistance was given to the foreign journalists visiting India and to whom?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) The details of the names of the foreign Journalists and the institutions or media represented by them, hosted by the External Publicity Division last year may be found" in the enclosed list as per Statement. (See below).