

late to the change in the Organisational set-up of the Central Social Welfare Board, revision/strengthening of the programmes of the Central Social Welfare Board, delegation of administrative and financial powers to the State Boards, registration of State Boards as subsidiary units of the Central Social Welfare Board, bearing of all administrative expenses of the State Boards by the Central Social Welfare Board etc. The recommendations of the Committee have been noted and action, wherever feasible, initiated.

Salary of Anganwadi workers

92. SHRI ASHOK NATH VERMA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to revise the salary of Anganwadi workers;

(b) whether there is a proposal under Government's consideration to make a provision for uniform salary for the Anganwadi women workers all over the country; and

(c) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (PROF. M. G. K. MENON): (a) to (c) Anganwadi Workers are voluntary, part time, honorary workers under the Centrally-sponsored Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme. They are paid an honorarium. The rates of honorarium prescribed are uniform for the entire country. Expenditure on such honorarium is borne by the Government of India.

At present, there is no proposal to revise the honorarium of Anganwadi Workers.

Enquiry into defence deals

93. SHRI YASHWANT SINHA. Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to institute enquiries into the various

defence deals concluded during the last five years, specially with a view to finding out payment of illegal commissions if any; if so, by when; and

(b) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH):

(a) and (b) In such cases where unauthorised payments come to light will need to be inquired into.

Damage to forests

94. SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the damage being caused to forests by the traditional practice of carrying head loads of timber or wood for fuel or for other use;

(b) if so, what is the estimated damage caused by this practice per year; and

(c) what steps have been taken or are proposed to be taken to prevent this kind of damage to our forest wealth?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) Fuelwood head loads are one of the main source of domestic energy in the villages. The people extract firewood as traditional or prescriptive privileges of rights. This extraction has now increased beyond the carrying capacity due to increased population. Excessive extraction of timber as head loads is not noticed.

(b) No systematic survey has been carried out at the National level to assess the damage to the forests because of wood extraction through head loads.

(c) The new National Forest Policy has suggested a massive need based and time bound programme of afforestation with particular emphasis on fuelwood and fodder production. The Policy has also stressed that the holders of customary rights and conces-

sions should be motivated to identify themselves with the protection and development of forests from which they derive benefits. A Wasteland Development programme has been launched to augment the production of biomass and relieve biotic pressures upon the forests.

Civil Supplies System in the country

95. SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state;

(a) whether Government have taken any steps to improve and to have the best civil supplies system in the country; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI NATHU RAM MIRDA): (a) and (b) For a good Civil Supplies System in a mixed economy like ours both public and private sectors have to play their roles, under a regime of regulations designed to secure optimal production of consumer goods and their equitable distribution. Public Distribution System (PDS) plays a crucial part to ensure a minimum availability of important essential commodities of daily use at reasonable prices to the public, particularly the vulnerable sections, and to influence market conditions including prices of these articles.

Steps are taken to improve the Public Distribution System on a continual basis. States and U.Ts have been advised from time to time to increase commodity coverage under the Public Distribution System; evolve an effective coordination among the various agencies involved; set up consumer advisory vigilance committees at various levels; improve the viability of the fair price shops and open new ones wherever necessary; introduce mobile shops for supply of essential commodities in remote areas etc. The States and U.Ts have also been advised to tighten the en-

forcement measures under the Essential Commodities Act and similar other legislations.

New initiatives for Ocean Development

96. SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state: what are the details of the new initiatives and measures being considered by Government for Ocean Development?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (PROF. M. G. K. MENON): The new initiatives and measures under consideration for ocean development activities include: (1) identification and formulation of research programmes to provide real time picture of the current and evolving state of the physico-chemical regimes of the ocean required for environmental protection and resource exploration, using space data and predictive models; (2) scientific experiments designed to provide clues to the process of global change and insights for making environmental impact assessments; (3) exploration of deep seabed mine site in the Central Indian Ocean using sophisticated techniques; (4) launching of research and development programmes to establish the techno-economic viability of deep seabed mining; (5) acceleration of specific programmes of economic importance such as harnessing of wave energy, exploration of living resources, drugs from the sea and protection of coastal and offshore environment; (6) acquisition and development of indigenous technology in instrumentation; (7) systematic monitoring and modelling of ocean pollution regimes and (8) development of data and knowledge base as well as skills for Island development.

Protection of environment and forests in the country

97. SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state what steps are