

[10 August, 2000]

RAJYA SABHA

Provident fund/Pension to workers Engaged in Cashew and Coir Industry

2128. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it has come to the notice of Government that thousands of workers engaged in cashew, plantation and coir industry are denied Provident Fund/pension on the grounds of break of service and discrepancy in age;

(b) whether Government/PF authorities have issued any new regulation in order to reckon break of service so as to avail PF pension; and

(c) whether Government will take urgent steps to rectify the anomalies so that the poor workers can avail the benefit of PF pension without paying huge amount as arrears due to break of service?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) The EPF subscribers including those engaged in cashew plantation and coir industry are entitled to payment of pension as per the provisions of the Employees Pension Scheme, 1995.

(b) and (c) According to available information cashew and plantation workers in Kerala generally work for 2-3 months in a year. As such these workers have not deposited contribution for most of the period in a year during which they were without wages. These cashew workers have rendered many years' such service under the old Family Pension Scheme and the same can be considered for pension under the new Pension Scheme provided that the requisite contribution is paid by the members as prescribed under para 9 (2A) of the Family Pension Scheme 1971. As the Employees' Pension Scheme is a contributory scheme with limited resources, it is considered actuarially desirable to recover the contribution interest so as to ensure payment of monthly pension to the beneficiaries on a continued basis.