

(a) whether it is a fact that the amount of under-payment to retiring officer involved in the case was about Rupees three thousands and his Ministry took about nine months to settle the case;

(b) whether any action has been taken to fix responsibility for the delay so that such inordinate delays do not recur; and

(c) if so, whether there are any other such cases of underpayment and delay in settlement of accounts of retiring officers and what steps are being taken to ensure that the retiring officers are paid their dues expeditiously?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. VENKATA REDDY): (a) Yes.

(b) No individual official can be held responsible for the delay.

(c) Similar cases of delay have not come to notice and retirement benefits are granted to retired employees as expeditiously as possible.

Lockout in Bennett Coleman and Co. Ltd.

1504. SHRI BHOLA PRASAD: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Bennett Coleman and Company Limited, Bombay has lately declared a lock-out in their establishment at Bombay;

(b) whether it is also a fact that as a result of lockout, the Times of India (Bombay) and other journals were closed down;

(c) if so, the details in this regard; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to intervene and to see that the lockout is lifted?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. VENKATA REDDY): (a) to (c) According to the information received from the Government of Maharashtra, which is the appropriate Govern-

ment in so far as the labour management relations in the establishments of Bennett Coleman and Company Limited are concerned, the Company did not declare a lockout. There was, however, a stoppage of work in the establishments from 5th October, 1980, consequent upon the strike of a group of workmen from 1st October, 1980. The daily newspapers viz., The Times of India (English), Navbharat Timeg (Hindi) and Maharashtra Times (Marathi) did not appear from 2nd October to 21st October. Evening News and Economic Times were published intermittently in a limited number between 2nd October and 6th October. All other periodicals also of the group viz. weeklies, fortnightly, etc. were also not published during the period from 2nd October upto 21st October. *

(d) The dispute was resolved at the intervention of the Minister of Labour and the Chief Minister. The strike and closure were lifted from 19th October, 1980.

National Insulated Cable Company of India

1505. SHRI VIREN J. SHAH: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that National Insulated Cable Company of India Limited (NICCO) has acquired Alfred Herbert India Private Limited, by taking 40 per cent interest in the latter from the parent company in the UK;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that the Alfred Herbert (India) Ltd., is under liquidation;

(c) what are the terms announced by liquidators Alfred Herbert Limited of UK for the disposal of its 40 per cent interest in the Indian Company;

(d) whether the Government of India and the UK Government have agreed to the deal; and

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