

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR (SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA):

(a) and (b) The Report of the Committee on Overseas Employment is under consideration of the Government.

Welfare measures for workers of tea garden

2117. SHRI AJIT KUMAR SHARMA: Will the Minister of PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) the extent to which the tea companies in Assam and West Bengal have implemented the provisions relating to health and welfare of the workers in tea gardens as contained in the Plantation Labour Act, 1951;

(b) whether Government have made any enquiries as to how far the tea companies have fulfilled their statutory obligations regarding housing, medical facilities, water supply, education and provident fund for workers; and

(c) if so, what are the findings of these enquiries?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR (SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA):

(a) According to information from the Government of West Bengal, there are 159 hospitals and 152 dispensaries in the tea gardens of the State, which employ 1,18,866 families for whom 76,957 houses have been constructed up to 1977.

According to the information from the Government of Assam, there are 547 garden hospitals and 591 dispensaries with 12,118 beds. There are 610 full-time medical officers, 528 visiting medical officers, 659 pharmacists, 449 qualified mid-wives, 507 nurses, 198 health assistants in these garden hospitals. Establishment of group

hospitals is also being envisaged. Two types of creches—one for children below 2 years and the other for children between 2 and 6 years of age have been established.

(b) and (c) In West Bengal, the implementation of the provisions of the Act relating to housing and medical facilities is periodically assessed by two statutory advisory boards, one for Housing and the other for Medical facilities. The implementation of statutory provisions regarding drinking water supply, education and other welfare measures is ensured by the enforcement machinery through regular inspections. The Regional Provident Fund Authorities have their inspection machinery to watch the implementation of the Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 in the tea plantations of West Bengal. The Assam Tea Plantations Provident Fund and Pension Funds Scheme Act, 1955 is under implementation in the tea gardens of Assam. In Assam, the Act is implemented by the State Labour Commissioner and his machinery through a system of supervisory checks and inspections. Corrective and punitive action is taken wherever necessary.

Conversion of narrow gauge to broad gauge in Madhya Pradesh

2118. SHRIMATI RATAN KUMARI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state the progress so far made in conversion of railway lines which are likely to be converted from narrow gauge to broad gauge in Madhya Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SHEO NARAIN): Gondia-Jabalpur narrow gauge section of Satpura Railway System is being surveyed for assessing traffic demand and technical feasibility in connection with its conversion to broad gauge. Decision on the conversion will be taken in the light of the survey results.