

share of provident fund contributions deducted from their wages. Substantial amount of the dues relate to sick textile mills and in these cases claims were filed with the Commissioner of Payments as required under law. The decision of the Commissioner of Payments is awaited.

Applications for Telephone Connections

233. SHRI MULKA GOVINDA REDDY; Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of applications pending for 'new telephone connections in (i) general, (ii) special and (iii) O.Y.T. categories in each State Capital; and

(b) by when Government propose to give telephone connection to all the applicants in the state Capitals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI NARHARI PRASAD SUKHDEO SAD: (a) -and (b) Information is being collected and will be placed on the Table of the House in due course.

Development in Ethiopia and Cambodia

234. SHRI VIREN J- SHAH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state;

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to an article entitled "Ethiopia; a matter of conscience" which appeared in the 'Indian Express' of the 11th April, 1978;

(b) whether Government's attention has also been drawn to the article which appeared in the 31st March, 1978 issue of the 'Himmat Weekly' alleging large scale liquidation in Cambodia; and

(c) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S. KUNDU); (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) It is not the normal policy of the Government of India to make any comments on the internal affairs of countries. Moreover, we do not have a diplomatic mission in Kampuchea at present.

Simla Agreement

235. SHRI PRAKASH MEHROTRA: SHRI GURUDEV GUPTA; SHRIMATI RATAN KUMARI: SHRI MOHAMMED USMAN ARIF: SHRIMATI HAMIDA HABIBULLAH:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state;

(a) whether it is a fact that he has recently made a statement to the effect that the former Prime Minister Shrimati Indira Gandhi had entered into a secret understanding with Mr. Z. A. Bhutto, former Prime Minister of Pakistan on the Kashmir question during Simla talks held in 1972; and

(b) if so, what is the basis for making the statement and what are the other details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S. KUNDU); (a) and (b) Minister of External Affairs has stated that he was at Simla when the talks were going on and it was common knowledge that the negotiations had run into rough weather. It was, therefore puzzling how all of a sudden an agreement had emerged. Several journalists at that time had given stories of a sudden change in the course of events after a post-dinner meeting between the two leaders. There was also a reference to "a final settlement of Jammu & Kashmir" in the Simla Agreement. After assuming charge, the Minister of External Affairs had made efforts to acquaint himself with various documents and had discussions with a number of knowledgeable individuals. Piecing together all the evidence from different

sources he reaffirmed that some sort of secret understanding was reached by Shrimati Indira Gandhi in her confidential conversation with Mr. Z. A. Bhutto during the Simla talks in 1972.

Minimum Wages for Agricultural Labour

236. PROF. RAM LAL PARIKH: Will the Minister of PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) what is the latest position in each State in regard to the fixation of minimum wages for agricultural labour in rural areas;

(b) whether any standing committee has been set up to review the progress periodically in this behalf; and

(c) If so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR (SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA): (a) A statement showing present wage rates payable to agricultural workers under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 in various States is appended. [See Appendix CV, Annexure No. 19].

(b) and (c) At the special conference on Rural Unorganised Labour held at New Delhi on 25th January, 1978, it was the recommendation that a Central standing Committee ON Rural Unorganised Labour should be set up to advise the Government on matters relating to the conditions of work and life of rural workers and promotion of their Organisations. Details regarding setting up of this Committee are being worked out.

Strike in States

237. SHRI F. M. KHAN: Will the Minister of PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of strikes by the industrial labour in each State

during the period from March, 1977 to March, 1978; and

(b) what is the number of strikes declared illegal in each State during that period?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR (SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA): (a) and (b) The requisite information is being collected from the State Governments/ Union Territories and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha in due course.

Indian Immigrants in U.K.

238. SHRI MULKA GOVINDA REDDY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state;

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian High Commissioner in U.K. has suggested that the Government of India should secure assurances from the U.K. Government that the members of Indian community settled in U.K. would continue to enjoy their legitimate rights as British citizen as they are feeling a sense of insecurity; and

(b) if so, what action is proposed to be taken by the Government of India in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S. KUNDU): (a) The Indian High Commissioner, presiding at a function in London on 14th April, 1978 where Shri Mohan Dharia, Commerce Minister, met office-bearers of various Indian Organisations, advised those present not to get too perturbed by the climate of racialism which some of them considered to be prevailing in Britain and referred to the need for further suitable action by Britain to allay the anxieties of Indian nationals and immigrants in the U.K.

(b) The British Government maintain that legislation in the U.K. is