

gations of irregularities, misappropriation and mal-administration in the Sandur Manganese and Iron Ore Limited Sandur (Karnataka); and

(b) if so, what action Government have taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI SHANTI BHUSHAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The matter is under consideration of the Government.

Kazhakuttam bye-elections

825. SHRI S. KUMARAN : Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Election Commission had deputed its representative as an observer to ensure that the Kazhakuttam bye-elections were free and fair;

(b) whether it is also a fact that this representative was sent in response to a representation made by the opposition parties in the State;

(c) if so, whether Government's attention has been drawn to the opposition parties allegations of misuse of official machinery and political corruption in the elections; and

(d) if so, what are the details in this regard and what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI NAR-SINGH YADAV) : (a) The Election Commission had deputed its representative as an observer at the bye-election

to the Kazhakuttam Assembly Constituency.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Some complaints were received by the Election Commission in connection with this bye-election.

(d) The complaints were to the following effect :—

(1) False cases were being registered by the police at the instance of ruling parties and the opposition parties were being harassed.

(2) Use of Government machinery and the commission of illegalities and irregularities by the ruling parties were apprehended.

(3) Ministers were misusing their position by way of coercion and undue influence.

(4) State Govt. chose such of the officers for election, who were well known for their political affiliation with ruling parties.

(5) Congress workers were creating provocation and disturbance.

(6) Police officials and other officers were transferred at the instance of the Youth Congress to help the ruling parties.

The Chief Electoral Officer, Kerala, was directed to enquire into the allegations and to give necessary instructions to all officials connected with the bye-election to the impartial and ensure free and fair election. Besides sending its own officer as an observer at the bye-election, the Election Commission appointed eleven officials of the State Government as its observers at the bye-election.