

which appeared in the Economic Times of the 1st December, 1977 under the caption "Ministerial row over Coking Coal Import";

(b) if so, whether any proposal has been made to import coking coal from Australia and other places;

(c) what will be the landed cost of imported coking coal from Australia;

(d) whether any team was sent to Australia to discuss the feasibility of importing coking coal from that country;

(e) if so, who were the members of the team and what expenses were incurred in this connection; and

(f) whether it is a fact that the Coal India Ltd. has opposed the import of coking coal; and if so, what are the reasons therefor?

**THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI BIJU PATNAIK):** (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Government has not yet taken any firm decision for import of low-ash coal from Australia or other places. The technical and economic implications (including landed cost) of importing low-ash coking coal for blending purposes, in view of limited reserves and relatively high-ash content of Indian coking coals, are under examination by Government.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

(f) It is not a fact that Coal India Ltd. has opposed the import of coal. Government's final decision in this matter will be taken after considering the views of the concerned Ministries.

#### Statement

The members of the team that visited Australia to assess the suitability of Australian coals were:

(i) Shri K. C. Mohan, Chairman-cum-Managing Director, Metallurgical and Engineering Consultants Ltd.

(ii) Shri G. Venugopala, Engineering Manager, Metallurgical and Engineering Consultants Ltd.

The expenses incurred on the visit were about Rs. 63,000.

\*676. [Transferred to the 20th December, 1977.]

#### Cultural Agreement with Mozambique

\*677. **SHRI HIMMAT SINH:**

**SHRI HARSH DEO MALAVIYA:**

**SHRI NRIPATI RANJAN CHOUDHURY:**

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has recently signed any cultural agreement with Mozambique and Angola; and

(b) What steps Government propose to take to establish cultural and educational contacts with these countries for the benefit of persons of Indian origin who have settled in these countries?

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S. KUNDU):** (a) No, Sir.

(b) We have concluded agreements with several countries covering cultural and educational cooperation. At the same time, we are conscious of the need for meeting the special requirements in cultural and educational fields of persons of Indian origin settled abroad and we are currently examining steps to be taken in this regard.

#### Irregularities in the P.F. Organisation

\*678. **SHRI BHAIKAB CHANDRA MAHANTI:**

**SHRI PATITPABAN PRADHAN:**

SHRI LAKSHMANA MAHA-  
PATRO:  
SHRI LOKANATH MISRA:  
SHRI BRAHMANANDA  
PANDA:

Will the Minister of PARLIAMEN-  
TARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR be  
pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention  
has been drawn to the news item  
which appeared in the "Indian Ex-  
press" of the 8th June, 1977 under  
the caption "P.F. Organisation kind  
to Congress friends" alleging irregu-  
larities in the Central Provident  
Fund Organisation; and

(b) if so, what action Government  
have taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN  
THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND  
PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR.  
RAM KRIPAL SINHA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Shah Commission of In-  
quiry has called for a report which  
has been submitted to them.

**Shortage of medicines etc., in ESCI  
Dispensary at Sonapat**

\*679. SHRI SUJAN SINGH: Will  
the Minister of PARLIAMENTARY  
AFFAIRS AND LABOUR be pleased  
to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there  
is shortage of medical staff, medical  
equipments and medicines in the ESCI  
Dispensary at Sonapat in Haryana;  
and

(b) if so, what remedial steps Gov-  
ernment are taking in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN  
THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND  
PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR.  
RAM KRIPAL SINHA): (a) The Em-  
ployees State Insurance Corporation  
have reported that they have been  
informed by the Government of Har-  
yana, who are responsible under the

Employees' State Insurance Act for  
the provision of medical care in that  
State, that there is no shortage of  
staff, equipments, or medicines.

(b) Does not arise.

**Strike by the workers of the Hindus-  
tan Aluminium Corporation**

\*680. SHRI LAKSHMANA MAHA-  
PATRO:  
SHRI SANAT KUMAR  
RAHA:  
SHRI S. KUMARAN:

Will the Minister of PARLIAMEN-  
TARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR be  
pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that about  
7000 workers of the Hindustan Alu-  
minium Corporation have served no-  
tice for an indefinite strike from De-  
cember 13, 1977:

(b) whether it is a fact that the  
workers of the said Corporation have  
been agitating for a long time to press  
their demands:

(c) if so, what are the details of  
their demands;

(d) whether the Central Govern-  
ment have taken or propose to take  
any steps to settle the dispute; and

(e) if so, what are the details  
thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMEN-  
TARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR  
(SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA): (a) to  
(e) The matter falls essentially in  
the State sphere. According to  
available information, the Hindalco  
Pragathisheel Mazdoor Sabha, had  
served a notice on 26th November,  
1977 intimating their intention to go  
on an indefinite strike from Decem-  
ber 13, 1977 in support of the work-  
ers' demands relating to reinstatement  
of dismissed/suspended workmen,  
higher bonus, revision of pay scales,  
etc. The strike notice has been with-  
drawn following intervention by the  
State Labour Minister.