

to production, operation maintenance, etc. of the Steel Plants. Last such meeting was held at Rourkela with the Chief Executives, including General Manager Rourkela on the 23rd September, 1977.

(b) Discussions were mainly to have first hand information of the general working and problems in the functioning of the steel plants. They generally covered a wide range of subjects such as production problems, service matters of the employees, housing facilities, training of apprentices, prices of steel materials, difficulties in availability of input materials etc. Follow-up action is taken by SAIL and its subsidiaries on the decisions taken.

Arrears of E. S. I. Contributions

293. SHRI SANAT KUMAR RAHA : Will the Minister of PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) the number of employers who have not deposited their contributions under the Employees' State Insurance Scheme in various States and the amount in arrears till December, 1976; and

(b) what steps Government have taken to realise the arrears ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. RAM KRIPAL SINHA) : The Employees' State Insurance Corporation have furnished the following information :

(a) The Corporation works out one year old stabilised figures of arrears on half yearly basis. As per latest available information, a total number of 10,318 employers in various States have defaulted in payment of Employees' State Insurance Contributions amounting to Rs. 17,95,57,549.00 upto 31-3-76 as on 31-3-1977.

(b) The following steps are being taken to bring down the arrears :—

(i) Legal action for recovery of dues, as arrears of land revenue, is being taken under

Section 45B of the E.S.I. Act. The procedure for such recoveries has been streamlined and the Regional Directors follow a well defined drill for the same.

(ii) Recourse is also taken to prosecutions against the defaulting employers under Sections 85, 85A, 85B and 85C of the Act.

(iii) Besides the legal remedies available under provisions of the Act, administrative and persuasive measures are also being employed for early recovery of arrears.

Strikes and Lock-outs in Industries

294. SHRI SANAT KUMAR RAHA : Will the Minister of PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR be pleased to refer to the reply to Starred Question 140 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 22nd July, 1977 and state :

(a) the number of strikes and lock-outs in the industrial units in different States since April, 1977; and

(b) the man-days lost and the number of workers laid-off due to these strikes and lock-outs ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. RAM KRIPAL SINHA) : (a) and (b). Requisite information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha as soon as it is received.

Closure of Bidi Industries

295. SHRI SANAT KUMAR RAHA : Will the Minister of PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that as a result of imposition of excise duty on branded bidis, a number of established bidi industries have closed down and a large number

of workers have been rendered unemployed; and

(b) if so, what steps Government have taken to provide jobs to such workers of the bidi industry ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI LARANG SAI) : (a) and (b). The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Bidi Workers in Registered Bidi Factories

296. SHRI SANAT KUMAR RAHA : Will the Minister of PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) the number of bidi workers in registered bidi factories in each state; and

(b) the number of sick or closed bidi factories at present ?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR (SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA) : (a) and (b). The required information is being collected from State Governments and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Extra Departmental Sorters and Porters in the PT Department

297. SHRI VITHAL GADGIL : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to State :

(a) whether it is a fact that persons working as Extra Departmental Sorters have been asked by the Posts and Telegraphs Department to work as Class IV Extra Departmental porters before they are allowed to appear for the promotion examination;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Extra Departmental Sorters, who are matriculates, are not absorbed as regular full time Sorters while Extra Departmental Porters

who have no qualifications are absorbed within three years in that cadre ; and

(c) if so, what are the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI NARHARI PRASAD SUKHDEO SAI) : (a) and (b). No, Sir, They are merely part-time workers not like IV employees who are whole time workers.

(c) Does not arise.

Training of IFS personnel

298. SHRI VITHAL GADGIL : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to introduce basic changes in the training of the Indian Foreign Service personnel; and

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

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE) : (a) and (b). The training programme for IFS officers has been carefully drawn up to serve the requirements of the Foreign Service. It is kept constantly under review and further modification could be made if any shortcomings are evident or improvements are considered expedient.

Reorganisation of public sector steel industry

299. SHRI VITHAL GADGIL : Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have decided to reorganise the public sector steel industry; and

(b) if so, what are the broad features of the proposed scheme?