

for fixation of minimum wages for the agricultural labour and rural labour in the country; and

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

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR (SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA): (a) and (b) Legislation already exists in the shape of Minimum Wages Act, 1948 providing for fixation/revision of minimum wages of various employments added to the schedule including agriculture. There is no need for any separate legislation for fixation of minimum wages for agricultural and rural labour. Minimum rates of wages under the Act have been already fixed or revised in almost all the states in regard to employment in agriculture.

Opening of sub-regional offices of the Employees' Provident Fund Scheme

272. SHRI S. W. DHABE: Will the Minister of PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to open sub-regional offices of the Employees' Provident Fund Scheme at some places where there are no such offices; and

(b) if so, what are the names of the places where the proposed offices will be located?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR (SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA): (a) and (b) Sub-Regional Offices of the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation are already functioning at Nagpur, Surat, Faridabad, Siliguri, Meerut and Pune. The Central Board of Trustees have recommended opening of such offices at Guntur, Visakhapatnam, Cuddapah, Raipur, Rajkot, Gorakhpur, Asansol and Kozhikode.

Visit of Chairman, SAIL, to foreign

273. SHRI GHAYOOR ALI KHAN: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Chairman, SAIL visited some countries in the Middle East, including Kuwait, in February, 1977;

(b) if so, what are the names of the countries visited by him and whether he negotiated for sale of steel products to any of those countries; and

(c) if the answer to part (to) above be in the affirmative, what is the total tonnage and FOB value of each steel product for which business was negotiated by him?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI BIJU PATNAIK): (a) to (c) The Chairman, SAIL, led a delegation to Kuwait only, in February, 1977, with the object of enhancing the export of steel in the Arab market as well as to explore the possibilities of selling technology covering design, engineering and construction. The delegation booked orders/sold on consignment basis about 25,000 tonnes of bars and rods and 2,000 tonnes of H.R. Coils at a total estimated FOB value of Rs. 3.83 crores.

Officers of the Central Industrial Relations Machinery on deputation

274. SHRI SYED AHMAD HASHMI: Will the Minister of PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of officers of the Central Industrial Relations Machinery are on deputation to the various offices of the public sector undertakings;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that with so many officer.; on deputation, the parent Cadre suffers because it has to make *ad hoc* appointments;

(c) what steps Government propose to take to ensure the minimum possible deputation from CIRM; and

(d) whether Government propose to formulate any definite policy in regard to such deputations?