

†[THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Coal Mines Provident Fund authorities have reported that the arrears of Provident Fund amounted to Rs. 11.76 crores as on 30-9-1972.

(c) Proposals to make the penal provisions in the Coal Mines Provident Fund, Family Pension and Bonus Schemes Act, 1940 more stringent are under consideration. It is proposed to introduce necessary legislation in this behalf as soon as the proposals are finalised.]

RETRENCHMENT OF WORKERS IN H.A.C. RENUKOOT (U.P.)

*537. SHRI SAN AT KUMAR RAHA: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND REHABILITATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Hindustan Aluminium Corporation Renukoot, Uttar Pradesh has retrenched more than 3,000 workers in construction section; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY) (a) and (b) The matter falls in the State sphere. Information is, however, being collected from the State Government.

BAN ON PLYING OF CYCLE RIKSHAWS

*538. SHRI N. R. CHOUDHURY: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND REHABILITATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to ban plying of Cycle Rikshaws in the country; and

(b) if so, the time by when this practice is likely to be abolished?

†[] English translation.

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY): (a) and (b) The Labour Ministers Conference in 1955 having recommended gradual abolition of rickshaw pulling, the Government of India had advised the State Governments accordingly and had suggested model regulations also. The matter was under correspondence with State Governments. Subsequently, the Government of India was advised that the restrictions contemplated may raise legal issues about constitutionality. It was then left to the State Governments to decide the question of constitutionality of undertaking necessary legislation in the matter in consultation with their legal Departments.

The Central Council of Local Self-Government at its 13th meeting held on the 3rd and 4th November, 1970 considered the question of elimination of this practice as early as possible. The following steps were suggested for immediate action: —

(1) The local bodies may be asked not to issue new licences as far as possible.

(2) The practice of absentee ownership should be discouraged and the rickshaw pullers assisted to become the owners of the vehicles themselves or through the Co-operatives.

(3) Where it is possible, hand pulled and cycle rickshaw should be replaced by auto-rickshaw.

(4) A detailed scheme should be prepared to eliminate the rickshaw pulling in the towns in States.

State Governments | Administrations are taking various steps to implement the above suggestions.

MILITARY TRAINING FOR WOMEN

*539. SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal to have military training for women in India either in para military forces or in the regular armed forces; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI J. B. PATNAIK): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

RAISING OF POWs ISSUE IN THE U.N. BY PAKISTAN

*540. SHRI SITARAM JAIPURIA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it has come to Government's notice that Pakistan is proposing to take up the POWs issue in the United Nations; and

(b) if so, what is the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SARDAR SWARAN SINGH): (a) Government have seen press reports to the effect that Pakistan may take the POWs issue to the UN, if the situation so demands in the future.

(b) It is Government of India's view that settlement of the prisoners of war issue can best be achieved by discussions between India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. To help this process Pakistan should remove the obstacle in the way of Bangladesh's participation on the basis of sovereign equality.

LOSS SUFFERED BY HEAVY ELECTRICALS LTD.

*541. SHRIMATI PRATIBHA SINGH: Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the total accumulated loss suffered so far since inception by the Heavy Electricals Ltd.;

(b) the precise reasons to which the recurrent losses are attributable;

(c) the steps taken and being taken to make HEL a profitable venture; and

(d) by what time it is likely to begin earning profits?

THE MINISTER OF HEAVY INDUSTRY (SHRI T. A. PAI): (a) to (d) a statement is laid on the table of the House.

STATEMENT

The total accumulated loss incurred by Heavy Electricals (India) Ltd., Bhopal since its inception is Rs. 58.98 crores as on 31-3-72. In an undertaking like the Heavy Electricals (India) Ltd., with a heavy investment and a long gestation period involved in the manufacture of highly sophisticated items, it is usual to incur losses in the formative years as had been clearly anticipated in the detailed project Report that had been prepared by the foreign consultants in 1956. After the project was accepted by Government on the basis of this Report, further changes were made in the product-mix and even the scope of manufacture which was extended to cover steam turbines not originally included, involving larger investments. Costs had also gone up on account of investments on a larger township and attached facilities like hospitals, schools etc. Increased import duties on plant and machinery raw materials and components, effects of devaluation of the Indian Rupee in 1966 and the British £ in 1967, additional expenditure on account of increased rates of wages, annual increments and other statutory payments like contributory provident fund, bonus etc., were other factors that led to losses that accumulated to higher levels than had been anticipated at the time of the preparation of the project Report.

The following steps have been and are being taken to improve the working of Heavy Electricals (India)