

uve service do not get the benefit of the pension rates recently enhanced; and

(b) whether it is a fact that Government have not sanctioned any increase in the rates of disability pensions?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE PRODUCTION IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI A. M. THOMAS) : (a) and (b) An officer, who is retired from military service on account of a disability which is attributable to or aggravated by service and which is assessed at 20% or over, is awarded a disability pension. No minimum service limit is prescribed for this purpose. The disability pension consists of a service element and a disability element. The service element is assessed with reference to the rates of retiring pension which have been enhanced with effect from 1st October 1961. The benefit of the enhanced rate of retiring pension gets reflected in the disability pension which has thus automatically increased.

MISAPPROPRIATION OF DEFENCE FUND

•206. SHRI N. PATRA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the allegations published in the 'Dainik Samaj' of Cuttack dated 21st June, 1964 to the effect that huge sums of money have been misappropriated from the Defence Department in the Eastern Region;

(b) if so, whether this malpractice was detected by the Special Police staff after investigation; and

(c) whether some senior officers of the Department have been found to be engaged in this nefarious activity?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE PRODUCTION IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI A. M. THOMAS) : (a) to (c) No specific instances of misappropriation of money have been mentioned in the news item. However, some complaints were received by

Special Police Establishment in April 1963, that certain officials of a military establishment at Chandipur were realizing illegal gratification from the fishermen for allowing them to do fishing in the prohibited area of the Establishment in the Bay of Bengal. As a result of their enquiries, S.P.E. have submitted a report to Government. The matter is, however, still under investigation. No high officer was involved, nor has any report regarding misappropriation of money been received.

COMMITTEE ON FUNCTIONING OF THE MINISTRY

♦207. SHRI NIRANJAN SINGH:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have set up or propose to set up a Committee to assess the functioning of her Ministry;

(b) if so, what are the terms of reference of the Committee; and

(c) by when the Committee is likely to submit its report to Government?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI) : (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

This opportunity of making a policy statement on the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is welcome. The Ministry realises the immense importance of the media of mass communications as also the fact that in the rest of the world, techniques and methods of these media are dynamic, evolving and constantly changing. The problem before us is, therefore, not merely one of fault-finding or assessing the value of the work done but of so revitalising the entire Ministry as to enable its different organisations not only to keep more closely in touch with the demands of the people, but

also to be more alive to the newest ideas and methods and to the needs of our changing times.

While various shortcomings and deficiencies have been pointed out in Parliament as well as outside in the working of almost all the organisations of this Ministry, criticism in the main has been concentrated on the functioning of A.I.K. and its programmes. The Ministry is grateful for the helpful suggestions that have been made. Each Unit should however, be judged in the light of the immensity of its tasks and problems. A.I.R., for instance, has to broadcast in numerous languages and dialects while most of its stations have only single programme channels in which to accommodate, within a limited span of time, all the diverse demands and interests of millions of listeners with different tastes, languages, levels of education and regional and local preferences. Its news broadcasts are also conditioned by certain factors beyond its control as well as some that are inherent in the medium itself. Its longest news bulletin runs for only 15 minutes and contains about 2100 words in contrast with the average of 40,000 words of news in a daily newspaper. Rigorous selection and editing are necessary at every stage, under continuous pressure. A.I.R. cannot indulge in any speculative treatment of news nor can it notice the internal affairs of political parties. News bearing on Government's national and international policies cannot be broadcast until such items are authoritatively confirmed. It has also to exercise much greater restraint both in regard to the content and the method of presentation of news. In the collection of news also, AIR. is handicapped by paucity of staff and does not have representatives even in important foreign capitals.

2. In spite of these factors and the undeniable fact that A.I.R. is at present providing a fairly satisfactory medium wave service to approximately 74 % of the population of our country, we cannot claim that AIR. or the

other Units are functioning as well as they are capable of doing.

As stated at the outset, many constructive and helpful suggestions have been made for improving the working of these Units during previous sessions of Parliament and also in the Press. Many more suggestions have been offered recently and among these some of the most valuable have been the recommendations of the Study Team on Five-Year Plan Publicity.

3. It would be best to begin by mentioning some of the steps so far taken, more or less, on an ad-hoc basis to improve the functioning of the Information and Broadcasting Ministry:

- (1) As regards the News Service Division of All India Radio, certain steps were taken last year to reorganise this Division at the supervisory and directional levels in order to improve the quality and content as well as the promptness and objectivity of the news service.
- (2) Regarding the use of Hindi, every effort has been made to implement the recommendations of the Hindi Advisory Committee and, as recommended by it, a clear distinction is now made between the language of literary and non-literary programmes. A Committee set up by Government under the chairmanship of Shri Sri Prakasa to advise in regard to the language of Hindi news bulletins has also been of great assistance in helping A.I.R. to evolve a medium capable of being understood by the largest possible number of listeners.
- (3) The service conditions of Staff Artists to which frequent references have been made in Parliament have been recently reviewed by a Departmental Committee and a number of its recommendations are be-

ing implemented while others are under consideration.

- (4) A similar Committee has been appointed to study the conditions of service and avenues of promotion of the engineering personnel of A.I.R.
- (5) As regards the information and publicity aspects of the Ministry's functions, the Press Council Bill which is under discussion in the Rajya Sabha seeks to set up a statutory self-regulatory body whose functions would be to help newspapers to maintain their independence as well as the highest standards of journalism, besides placing a check on the concentration of ownership.

An Inquiry Committee on Small Newspapers under the chairmanship of Shri R. R. Diwakar has been set up with the object of recommending to Government the steps which should be taken to help the development of small newspapers and periodicals which are an important instrument of educating the people on matters of interest, particularly to rural areas. Reference has already been made to the report of the Study Team on Five-Year Plan Publicity. While mentioning that the impact of radio programme has been impressive, direct, and decisive, the team has suggested that the radio rural forum programme should have top priority. The Ministry agrees with this and also with the observation that AIR is not only a spokesman of the Government but Government has a moral obligation to serve as the voice of the people. The Ministry agrees that the duration of rural programmes should be increased and their timings fixed according to regional and seasonal requirements. The Ministry also accepts that emphasis in the publicity programmes should be placed on the needs of the rural areas. Also, funds permitting, the Press Information Bureau will, in its best, as recommended by the Team, to increase the number of tours for metropolitan and sub-metropolitan papers, to

provide them with fortnightly digests of news, background material and a reference service, and for the non-metropolitan Press a special photo-cum-feature service, mailing of suitable Government literature to correspondents in cities and districts, a periodical round-up on Plan and its progress and a photo panel service for Sunday Magazine Sections.

(6) As regards newsreels, directions have recently been issued to the Films Division to the effect that news reels should give greater coverage to activities of non-official social, educational and cultural organisations, completed Projects (rather than inauguration or foundation stone laying ceremonies) describing how they affect the lives of the people, and to selected items from newsreel material received in exchange from foreign countries, as well as Sports items of national and international interest.

As regards documentaries, it has been decided that stress should be laid on quality even though this may mean curtailment of quantity.

The above account of the steps already taken, or proposed to be taken, to improve the working of the various Units of the Ministry will serve to indicate its anxiety to give better service to the people in the sphere of information and mass education. While these steps will undoubtedly result in some improvement, it has to be recognised that in many directions the Units have not kept pace with the tremendous changes and developments in the approach and technique of the various Media meant for Mass Communication. It is important that a whole-time committee of knowledgeable persons interested and experienced in mass communication should go thoroughly into the working of all the Units of this Ministry. The terms of reference for this Committee are being considered and will be shortly finalised. It is intended that this Committee, besides evaluating the work at present being done by the various Units in the light of the high professional standards re-

quired of them, should suggest short term measures (which can be put into effect immediately) as well as such long term and even radical remedies as are considered necessary by them. For this reason not only have the terms of reference to be as comprehensive as possible but the personnel of the Committee has also to be chosen with great care. It is the Ministry's wish that the Committee should complete its report within six months or earlier so that there is no delay in enabling our mass communication media to effectively fulfil its vital role in bringing to the people information and education in its widest sense, as well as a high level of entertainment. Only thus can we promote the development of the country, achieving greater national solidarity and enriching the lives of the people.

चीन द्वारा भारतीय सीमा के पास हवाई अड्डों का बनाया जाना

*३७. श्री राम सहाय: क्या प्रतिरक्षा मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि युद्ध विराम के बाद चीन ने भारतीय सीमा के पास अब तक कितने हवाई अड्डे बनाये हैं ?

[AERODROMES BUILT BY CHINA NEAR INDIAN BORDER

*37. SHRI RAM SAHAJ: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state the number of aerodromes so far built by China near the Indian border after the cease-fire?]

प्रतिरक्षा मंत्रालय में प्रतिरक्षा उत्पादन मंत्री (श्री ए० एम० धामस) : इस विषय में सूचना प्रकट करना लोकहित में नहीं है।

[THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE PRODUCTION IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI A. M. THOMAS): It is not in public interest to disclose any details on this subject]

वैदेशिक कार्य मंत्रालय में प्राप्त हिन्दी के पत्र

३४३. श्री भगवत नारायण भार्गव : क्या वैदेशिक कार्य मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि उनके मंत्रालय में तथा उससे सम्बद्ध और अधीनस्थ कार्यालयों में चालू वर्ष की प्रथम छमाही में (१) कितने पत्र हिन्दी में प्राप्त हुए और (२) कितने पत्रों का उत्तर हिन्दी में दिया गया ?

[LETTERS IN HINDI RECEIVED IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

343. SHRI B. N. BHARGAVA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state the number of letters (i) which were received in Hindi and (ii) which were replied to in Hindi by his Ministry and its attached and subordinate offices during the first six months of the current years?]

वैदेशिक कार्य मंत्री (सरदार स्वर्ण सिंह) : (१) ५६१ ।
(२) १६६ ।

*[THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SAHDAR SWARAN SINGH): (i) 561. (ii) 166.]

प्रतिरक्षा मंत्रालय में प्राप्त हिन्दी के पत्र

३४४. श्री भगवत नारायण भार्गव : क्या प्रतिरक्षा मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि उनके मंत्रालय में तथा उससे सम्बद्ध और अधीनस्थ कार्यालयों में चालू वर्ष की प्रथम छमाही में (१) कितने पत्र हिन्दी में प्राप्त हुए और (२) कितने पत्रों का उत्तर हिन्दी में दिया गया ?

[Transferred from the 8th September, 1964. t[] English translation.