

visit been cancelled? We would like to know.

SHRIMATI LAKSHMI MENON: That does not arise from this question, Sir.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Can I have some information?

SHRIMATI LAKSHMI MENON: It does not arise from this question.

PURCHASE OF FURNITURE FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICES

*428. SHRI SATYACHARAN: Will the Minister of Works, Housing and Supply be pleased to state:

(a) the agency through which furniture for the Offices of the Government of India is purchased; and

(b) whether Government propose to create special agency for making such purchases with a view to introducing uniformity in the type of furniture and prices?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF WORKS, HOUSING AND SUPPLY (SHRI ANIL K. CHANDA): (a) Purchase of office furniture has not been centralised in any Ministry. Each administrative Ministry/Department makes its own arrangements in this regard.

(b) No, Sir.

SHRI SATYACHARAN: May I know whether the Government would consider the desirability of giving contracts to co-operative societies?

SHRI ANIL K. CHANDA: Sir, the purchase of furniture is made by the Departments or Ministries by inviting open tenders in the market.

SHRI SATYACHARAN: May I know whether the Government propose to cut down the budget by 20 per cent. to effect economy as they have done in the case of stationery?

SHRI ANIL K. CHANDA: I am not quite sure whether he is referring to furniture or to construction. So far as construction and furniture questions are concerned, we have cut our requirements to the bone.

SHRI SATYACHARAN: I have just said that they have made a cut of 20 per cent. in matters of stationery. So I would like to know from the hon. Minister if the same policy is also going to be pursued in matters of purchase of furniture.

SHRI ANIL K. CHANDA: So far as stationery is concerned, the cut has been occasioned mainly because it is not available in the country and we do not want to import from outside.

SHRI SATYACHARAN: May I know whether the purchase of furniture by the various Departments would cost more than when it is purchased through an agency which is specifically installed for the purpose?

SHRI ANIL K. CHANDA: I am not quite sure because as I said the Ministries concerned call for tenders in the market and buy at the lowest rate that is available.

SHRI SATYACHARAN: The purport of my question was uniformity in the standard of furniture and may I know if it could be effected if different Departments are given charge of purchasing furniture separately?

SHRI ANIL K. CHANDA: There is a proposal before the O & M Division of the Cabinet Secretariat to prescribe a standard of specifications for furniture to the various Ministries but so far as the actual purchase of furniture is concerned, there is no proposal that it should be centralised under our Ministry.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: May I know whether the new policy of the Government is to have such furniture which requires renovation al-

most every year and whether they are contemplating any scheme whereby we will have furniture which does not require such renovation year after year?

SHRI ANIL K. CHANDA: No, Sir. We have no policy that the furniture should be renovated every year.

NATIONAL RESEARCH LABORATORY FOR MATHEMATICS

***429. SHRI R. P. N. SINHA:** Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state whether Government propose to set up a National Research Laboratory for Mathematics on the lines of the National Physical Laboratory, National Chemical Laboratory, etc?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI LAKSHMI MENON): The Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Bombay, is the National Centre for advanced study and fundamental research in Mathematics. The setting up of further centres is, therefore, not in contemplation at present.

SHRI R. P. N. SINHA: I want to know if an independent laboratory for research in mathematics is to be put up.

SHRIMATI LAKSHMI MENON: I have stated in the answer that there is no such proposal.

SHRI R. P. N. SINHA: In view of the long tradition of the knowledge of this subject in this country, does the Government consider it advisable to have a laboratory of this kind?

SHRIMATI LAKSHMI MENON: Sir, it is very difficult because we have got only very few people who are eminent in mathematics and they are all concentrated in this Institute of Fundamental Research. If you have more institutions without proper personnel it would only bring down even the standard of this Institute.

***430.** [The questioner (Shri M. P. Bhargava) was absent. For answer, vide col. 2761 infra.]

FACILITIES PROVIDED FOR PAKISTANIS TO ATTEND THE FAIR NEAR THE TOMB OF AFZAL KHAN

***431. SHRI B. D. KHOBARAGADE:** Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state whether visa or any other travel facilities were provided to Pakistani citizens for attending the fair held in January, 1961 near the Tomb of Afzal Khan at Pratapgarh (Maharashtra)?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI LAKSHMI MENON): The External Affairs Ministry have not received any request from any of our Missions in Pakistan or the Pakistan High Commission in India regarding grant of special facilities to the Pakistanis to visit the fair near the Tomb of Afzal Khan at Pratapgarh. We have written to our Missions in Pakistan enquiring whether they granted any visas for this purpose in individual cases, but have not yet received any reply. The information when received would be laid on the Table of the House.

SHRI B. D. KHOBARAGADE: May I know whether it is a fact that a large number of Pakistan nationals has attended for the first time the fair which was held near the Tomb of Afzal Khan this year?

SHRIMATI LAKSHMI MENON: Sir, I have given the information in the answer. We have no knowledge whether visas were granted for Pakistanis to come to India to attend the festival. We are trying to enquire from our Missions whether such visas were granted and as soon as we get the information we shall place it on the Table.

SHRI B. D. KHOBARAGADE: May I know whether the hon. Minister will ascertain whether the Pakistan nationals, if they had at all come, had come for the purpose of attending the