

the first five months of 1991, approximately 1100 grievances relating to service matters were received in the Ministry. In addition, nearly 15,000 grievances relating to retirement benefits were received from retired Government servants.

(b) and (c) Grievances relating to service matters of serving Government employees arise from a large variety of factors like promotion, seniority, increment, disciplinary measures, provision of amenities in the work place and so on. These are passed on to the organisations concerned which take appropriate action according to the provisions of the relevant rules, regulations and instructions. Similarly, grievances received from pensioners are passed on to the respective pension sanctioning and pension disbursing authorities for necessary action. There is no centralised machinery for compiling data relating to grievances received either from the serving Government employees or from pensioners.

(d) and (e) Government is alive to the need for prompt and effective redress of grievances of its employees. Ministries, Departments and other major offices have been advised to set up a grievance redress machinery under a designated Staff Grievance Officer (SGO). Such a machinery has been set up by and large in all the major organisations of Government.

Besides this, there is the statutory mechanism under the Administrative Tribunal Act of 1985 which provides for a tribunal exclusively for the adjudication or trial of disputes and complaints with respect to recruitment and conditions of service. In addition, the Joint Consultative Machinery (JCM) provides an important and effective forum for redress of grievances of Government servants on general issues.

Request to increase the Commission on Sugar and Kerosene in Kerala

1097. PROF. K. V. THOMAS: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether any request has been received from the ration dealers asso-

ciation of Kerala to increase the commission on sugar and kerosene; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. All Kerala Retail Ration Dealers Association has represented for enhancement of commission for distribution of levy sugar and kerosene by ration dealers in Kerala.

As regards levy sugar dealers' margins for Kerala were fixed in September, 1987. A request from Government of Kerala to revise the margin, which has been received by Ministry of Food, is being examined.

As regards Kerosene, the Oil Price Review Committee, constituted by the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas has recently submitted its recommendations on various issues referred to them including dealers' commission on Kerosene. These are under examination by that Ministry.

People below Poverty Line

1098. SHRI ASHOK ANANDRAO DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of persons who were living below poverty line during the Seventh Plan Period, State-wise; and

(b) the steps taken to improve their living conditions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI H. R. BHARDWAJ): (a) Provisional estimate of poverty is available for the year 1987-88 based on the 43rd Round of National Sample Survey data on household consumer expenditure. The estimated number of persons living below poverty line is 237.67 million in the year. The State-wise number of persons below the poverty line is indicated in the enclosed statement.