

ments have already been asked to implement the recommendations of the Jalan Committee for bringing about uniformity in levies.

(c) The State Governments have been advised to consider creation of additional capacity for the production of alcohol based on surplus molasses available in their State. Government is also encouraging expansion of existing distilleries so that they are able to operate economically.

Programme to finance Small Newspapers

143. SHRI PRADYUMNA BAL: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is the Government's declared policy that the Government would finance small newspapers especially language newspapers for establishing printing press and working capital;

(b) if so, what steps Government have taken to implement such a programme and when can the small newspapers expect long term and short term financial assistance;

(c) whether in view of large scale illiteracy in the country, Government would think of giving subsidies to small language newspapers to take up illiteracy eradication programme; and

(d) if so, the particulars thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI L. K. ADVANI): (a and b). It is not Government's policy to finance newspapers directly for such purposes. However, at the instance of the Government it has been decided by the Industrial Development Bank of India to grant financial assistance to newspaper industries and hence it should now be possible for newspaper to approach lending Institutions for securing financial assistance.

(c) and (d). There is no proposal to give subsidies to small language newspapers to take up illiteracy eradication programme.

Amendment of Cantonment Act, 1924

144. SHRI R. K. MHALGI: Will the DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have a proposal under consideration to amend the Cantonment Act of 1924? If so, since when;

(b) at what stage the matter stands at present;

(c) whether it is a fact that the All India Conference of 62 Cantonments in India have urged upon the Government since long for the immediate amendment of the Act;

(d) if so, what are their main suggestions and which have been accepted by Government; and

(e) whether Government are likely to bring forth an amending Bill in the Budget Session of Parliament itself?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (PROF. SHER SINGH): (a) and (b). The Government have been considering proposals for amending the Cantonments Act, 1924 for quite some time. At present the proposals are in an advance stage of consideration.

(c) and (d). A conference of the All India Cantonments Board elected members met at Kirkee on 24-1-1969 and submitted the following Resolutions regarding amendments to the Cantonments Act:—

(i) Disapproval of the long delay in amending the Cantonments Act and that whatever amendments have taken place have increased the rights of officials instead of decentralising and democratising the set up;

(ii) Anguish at Vice-Presidents not being allowed to preside over the meetings of the Board in the absence of the President and Military Officers being asked to preside instead;

(iii) The number of elected members in every Board should be increased in the proportion of one elected member for every 30,000 voters. Further the number of nominated members should not be more than 5 in 'A' Class Cantonments, 4 in 'B' Class and 2 in 'C' Class, including the Health Officer and Garrison Engineer.

(iv) The term of office of elected members be raised from 3 to 5 years as in other local bodies. The President of the Board should be from the elected members and not from the Military side.

The position concerning these Resolutions is as follows:

(i) For carrying out the comprehensive amendments to the Cantonments Act, Government had set up a Task Force in December, 1972 for suggesting amendments after taking into account the representations and suggestions received from various quarters including the public M. Ps. Employees' Associations etc. In the light of the recommendations of the Task Force a comprehensive amending Bill is under preparation keeping in view the over-riding considerations of the health and security of the troops located in Cantonments the contemporary trends in municipal legislation and the need for strengthening the local administration. Further, greater delegation of powers to the Civil Area Committee has also been kept in view.

(ii) Provision is being made in the Act that in case the President is away from the Station for more than 30 days he shall cease to be the President. In such cases the Vice President would preside.

(iii) Provision is being made for maintaining parity in the numbers of elected and nominated members. This has been the practice under executive instructions since 1955.

(iv) The term of office of Board 3 members is proposed to be increased from 3 to 5 years.

(v) In view of the fact that considerations of the health, security and welfare of the Armed Forces are paramount in Cantonments, it has not been possible to accept the suggestion that the President of the Board should be an elected member and not a Military Officer.

(e) The amending Bill will be introduced in Parliament as soon as it is finalised.

Ban on providing Liquor in Parties and on Tours

145. SHRI R. K. MHALGI: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have advised the Information Officers of various Ministries not to provide liquor to the parties and tours arranged by them;

(b) whether Government are aware that liquor is freely served by the Information Officers to correspondents who are on tour in the Railway Compartments; and

(c) if so, whether any action has been taken against such Information Officers?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI L. K. ADVANI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. The rules framed in respect of such press tours prohibit the serving of liquor.

(c) Does not arise.