

(c) whether there is any suggestion from the State Governments that the Nyaya Panchayats might be constituted as claims authorities; and

(d) if so, what is the reaction of Central Government?

The Minister of Supply in the Ministry of Economic and Defence Cooperation (Shri Hathi): (a) The State Governments being competent to amend the Minimum Wages Act to suit their requirements, no permission of the Central Government is required for appointing Sarpanches as Claims Commissioners.

(b) This is for the State Governments to decide.

(c) Yes, there is such a suggestion from the Government of Maharashtra.

(d) In view of the varying patterns of Panchayat organisations in different States, this matter has to be left to the State Governments to decide.

Indians in Burma

***251. Shri Koya:** Will the Prime Minister be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Indian citizens in Burma at present;

(b) the number of Indians who have so far applied for Burmese citizenship and the number of those who got it;

(c) the number of citizens of Indian origin who are Stateless; and

(d) how the Government of India propose to help these Stateless people?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs (Shrimati Lakshmi Menon): (a) 1,80,000 (approx).

(b) Approx. 35,000 applied for Burmese citizenship out of which about 7,000 have been accepted.

(c) Approx. 370,000 persons of Indian origin are without any citizenship papers. Out of this number nearly 100,000 are technically eligible to apply for Burmese citizenship; the remaining 270,000 could be described as Stateless.

(d) Government of India have authorised the Embassy of India, Rangoon, to register as Indian citizens those who qualify under the existing rules, and who decide to apply for such citizenship. The Embassy has been instructed to interpret and implement the rules liberally. The Government of the Union of Burma has also assured the Embassy of India, Rangoon, that they would speed up the examination of applications of those who have applied for Burmese citizenship. Further, the Embassy has made representations to the Burmese Foreign Office requesting them to liberalise their regulations on the subject so as to enable those people of Indian origin who wish to apply for Burmese citizenship to do so.

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath: May I know whether the attitude or policy of the present Government of General Ne Win is more favourable or more sympathetic towards this problem than that of his predecessor, that is, of Thakin Nu, and if so, whether any talks have been held at governmental level or any other level between the two countries?

Shrimati Lakshmi Menon: The last portion of the main answer refers to the attempts made by the Embassy in Rangoon to expedite the procedure.

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath: My question is different. I want to know whether any talks have been held. The Embassy instructions are different.

Mr. Speaker: It is very difficult to compare the attitude of one Government with another and say whether one is more favourable than the other.

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath: At least, the second part of my question may be answered. Have any talks been held between the two countries?

Shrimati Lakshmi Menon: Yes; towards the last portion of the main answer I had stated that talks were held by our Embassy with the Burmese Government, and assurances have been given that the rules will

be liberally interpreted and the procedures expedited.

Shri Hem Barua: In view of the fact that these Indians in Burma have to pay exorbitant fees for the renewal of the stay permits, and inordinate delay is also involved in this operation, may I know whether this particular fact has been brought to the notice of the Burmese Government, and if so, their reaction to it?

Shrimati Lakshmi Menon: These rules apply not only to Indians but to all aliens, and as such, we cannot take any special step. It is a thing that affects all foreigners in Burma.

Shri Ranga: It is in regard to the administration of these rules that my hon. friend had put his supplementary question earlier, namely whether any success has been achieved in lessening the delay in getting the permission of the Burmese authorities for the stay permits. Apart from that, I wish to ask this question, namely whether any success has been achieved by Government in getting any relaxation in the rule that was promulgated as to the transfer of their savings to India, the maximum of which, is, I think, about Rs. 30 or so per month.

Shrimati Lakshmi Menon: Rs. 20 per month.

Shri Ranga: It has now come down to Rs. 20 per month. May I know whether any improvement is likely to be made in the near future in this regard?

Shrimati Lakshmi Menon: I could not give any answer to that, because it is for the Burmese Government to decide what procedures it will follow with regard to remittances abroad depending upon their foreign exchange resources position.

Shri Ranga: We know that it is for the Burmese Government to make their own rules. But are we not making any representations from time to time on this matter . . .

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. The question is whether we have taken

steps to see that this rule might not be so strictly enforced, and the amount might be raised.

Shrimati Lakshmi Menon: All these things are raised from time to time. But we have not been successful. The Burmese Government take steps to suit their convenience and not to suit the convenience of aliens.

Shri Sham Lal Saraf: May I know whether such of the Indian citizens who are now in Burma who have been registered as having no State of their own are engaged in business or they have any immoveable property there? Has any inquiry been made about this?

Shrimati Lakshmi Menon: There are three categories of Indians living in Burma: firstly, agriculturists, secondly traders and thirdly, government servants.

Shri D. C. Sharma: How many applications for Indian citizenship have been received by the Indian Embassy in Burma, how many have been disposed of and how many remain pending?

Shrimati Lakshmi Menon: I have not got the figure of those who have applied for Indian citizenship.

Shri Bishwanath Roy: Is it a fact that Indian citizens who were working previously in Burma and who came home for some time are not getting fresh visas for going back to Burma from the Burmese Government?

Shrimati Lakshmi Menon: They have to apply for re-entry visas.

Employment and Population

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- *252. { **Shri Daji:**
Shri Indrajit Gupta:
Shri S. M. Banerjee:
Shri Umanath:
Shri Yashpal Singh:
Shri Inder J. Malhotra:

Will the Minister of Planning be pleased to state: