

the criminal courts in view of the fact that in almost every civil court we find continuous arrears in work?

Pandit G. B. Pant: The question so far as Kerala is concerned should be addressed to that Government and so far as the other States are concerned to the respective State Governments.

Shri Narayankutty Menon: In view of the fact that a large number of cases are pending as arrears before the High Courts and also the subordinate judiciary, may I know whether the Government will consider the curtailment of the long vacation of the courts?

Pandit G. B. Pant: Government is giving thought to the matter.

Shri V. P. Nayar: May I know whether the attention of the Government of India has been drawn to the fact that in almost every civil court in all the States there are considerable arrears of work and if so whether the Government will take any action on that?

Pandit G. B. Pant: Of course there are arrears, but those courts are under the State Governments and not under the Central Government

Shri Heda: May I know the disparity or the difference between the holidays enjoyed by the courts and other Government offices?

Pandit G. B. Pant: The State Governments, as I said, are in charge of all these matters of course, and offices situated in the States, except those which are directly under the Central Government, are working under the direction of their Governments and the holidays are fixed by them and not by us.

Steamer Service to Minicoy

*458. **Shri Maniyangadan:** Will the Minister of Home Affairs be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Central Government propose to start

a regular steamer service between Minicoy and other islands on the Kerala coast and the mainland; and

(b) if so, what is the scheme?

The Deputy Minister of Home Affairs (Shrimati Alva): (a) Yes.

(b) It is proposed to charter a vessel for 10 days in a month for a round trip between the mainland and the Islands during fair season i.e. October to April.

Shri Maniyangadan: When will this, be started?

Shrimati Alva: It should be started this October.

Petroleum

*459. **Shri Bishwanath Roy:** Will the Minister of Steel, Mines and Fuel be pleased to state whether drilling operations for petroleum have started in Bengal?

The Minister of Steel, Mines and Fuel (Sardar Swaran Singh): Yes, Sir. The Standard Vacuum Oil Company started test drilling at Burdwan in April 1957 and the bore-hole has already reached a depth of about 7,700 feet

Shri Bishwanath Roy: May I know the time expected to be taken for the completion of these operations?

Sardar Swaran Singh: I think the discovery of oil will set the time-limit

Shri Sadhan Gupta: May I know whether so far any encouraging results have been obtained?

Sardar Swaran Singh: In this bore-hole no oil has yet been struck.

Shri Hem Barua: May I know if the attention of the Government has been drawn to an announcement made by the Chief Minister of West Bengal in the State Assembly that they are going to establish an oil refinery in Calcutta under the auspices of Stanvac?