

the prescribed manner. In a few cases payment was made locally in Indian rupees and these are under investigation by the Reserve Bank of India.

NAVAL DOCKYARD, BOMBAY

*1123. **Dr. Amin:** Will the Minister of Defence be pleased to state the terms of the agreement which has been signed with Messrs. Alexander Gibbs and Partner for the expansion of the Naval Dockyard, Bombay?

The Minister of Defence Organisation (Shri Tyagi): A statement is laid on the Table of the House. [See Appendix V, annexure No. 46.]

MINE MECHANISATION

*1124. **Dr. Amin:** (a) Will the Minister of Natural Resources and Scientific Research be pleased to state whether any report has been submitted by the Expert Committee which was appointed to examine the possibility of setting up a mechanisation centre at the Indian School of Mines for imparting training to the students in mine mechanisation?

(b) If not, what are the reasons for the delay?

The Minister of Education and Natural Resources and Scientific Research (Maulana Azad): (a) and (b). The Committee has not been able to meet, because two of its members, whose presence was absolutely necessary for the work of the Committee have been abroad. One of them has recently returned and the second, who is a specialist in coal mining and mining machinery and has gone for further special training abroad, is expected back in November 1953.

EDUCATION FOR THE BLIND

*1126. **Shri Muniswamy:** (a) Will the Minister of Education be pleased to state whether it is a fact that more than twenty lakhs of people in India are blind?

(b) If not, what would be the correct figure?

The Minister of Education and Natural Resources and Scientific Re-

search (Maulana Azad): (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. The number of blind persons in this country is estimated at about 20 lakhs. The exact number is not known.

SCHEDULED CASTES AND TRIBES

*1127. **Shri B. N. Kureel:** Will the Minister of Home Affairs be pleased to state whether Government have taken any action on the recommendations made by the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in his Report of 1951 for the amelioration of the conditions of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes?

The Deputy Minister of Home Affairs (Shri Datar): I lay a statement on the Table of the House showing the action taken. [See Appendix V, annexure No. 47.]

TRAVANCORE-COCHIN HIGH COURT

*1128. **Shri Sinhasan Singh:** Will the Minister of States be pleased to state the number of judges including the Chief Justice of the Travancore-Cochin High Court which sits at Ernakulam after the integration of these two States?

The Minister of Home Affairs and States (Dr. Katju): Eight, Sir.

DEARNESS ALLOWANCE TO PENSIONERS

*1129. **Shrimati Maydeo:** Will the Minister of Finance be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to sanction the Dearness Allowance to pensioners who are not allowed to get any benefit of merging dearness allowance in basic pay;

(b) if so, when; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

The Deputy Minister of Finance (Shri M. C. Shah): (a) to (c). The benefit, in the matter of pension, of merging a portion of dearness allowance in basic pay will accrue to those who retired or may retire on or after the 15th July 1952. Pensioners who retired before that date will continue to