

is being collected and will be placed on the Table of the Sabha in due course.

PAYMENT OF TERMINAL GRATUITY BY FOREST DEPARTMENT OF ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS

3963. SHRI K. R. GANESH : Will the Minister of FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Andaman Forest Department has stopped payment of Terminal gratuity to the industrial staff;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether Government's approval was taken to discontinue this concession ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION (SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE) : (a) to (c). The information is being collected and will be placed on the Table of the Sabha in due course.

SCALES OF PAY OF MAHAUTS AND FOREST GUARDS OF ANDAMAN FOREST DEPARTMENT

3964. SHRI AMRIT NAHATA : Will the Minister of FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have received any representation to give appropriate scale of pay to the mahauts and Forest Guards of the Andaman Forest Department; and

(b) if so, whether Government have formulated any proposals in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CO-OPERATION (SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE) : (a) and (b). The information is being collected and will be placed on the Table of the Sabha in due course.

NORTH ANDAMAN FOREST

3965. SHRI AMRIT NAHATA : Will the Minister of FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) the total area of North Andaman Forest under Messrs. P. C. Ray & Co. (P) Ltd.;

(b) the total estimated tonnage of timber in this area;

(c) the estimated price of this timber; and

(d) the loss to the national exchequer as a result of litigation with the above firm ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CO-OPERATION (SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE) : (a) to (d). The information is being collected and will be placed on the Table of the Sabha in due course.

12.13 Hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

REPORTED AMERICAN INTERFERENCE WITH THE LAST GENERAL ELECTIONS IN INDIA

SHRI H. N. MUKERJEE (Calcutta North East) : I call the attention of the Minister of Home Affairs to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon :

"Reported American interference with the last general elections in India."

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI Y. B. CHAVAN) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would invite the attention of the House to the statement I had made on June 15, 1967 regarding the use of foreign funds in the General Elections. I had at that time informed the House that a report in the matter had been received from the Intelligence Bureau and was being examined carefully. It would be recalled that on December 7, 1967, the question had again come up in the course of supplementaries in response to the statement made by me regarding the reported Russian interference with the last General Elections in India. I had again informed the House that the entire question of the use of foreign money in the last General Elections was being examined by the Government on the basis of a report submitted by the I.B. It is not possible at this stage to indicate the time that would be taken in completing the examination, but I would like to assure the House that it would be done as expeditiously as possible.

SHRI H. N. MUKERJEE : It is really disconcerting that Government pursues a