

(b) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI JAGJIVAN RAM): (a) No, Sir. Other ranks (excluding JCOs) get only a fixed salary.

(b) At the time when the scale of pay for ex-servicemen re-employed in NCC were laid down in 1962, other Ranks in the regular army were only given service increments of pay at the rate of Rs. 2.50 per month after 5 years man's service and a further Rs. 2.50 p.m. after 10 years man's service. Since the total period of engagement of ex-servicemen in the NCC is 3 years, the question of grant of service increment to them did not arise.

Naval Bases of foreign countries in Indian Ocean

9905. **SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF** Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state the names of the countries which have so far built naval bases in the Indian Ocean along with their approximate naval strength in each case?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI JAGJIVAN RAM): The United Kingdom, U.S.A. France and Australia are known to have their base facilities in the islands under their control in the Indian Ocean region. Government have no precise information about their naval strength in each of these bases.

Ban on Import of Power Equipment

9906 **SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF:** Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have approved to relax the ban on the import of power equipment;

(b) if so, the salient features thereof; and

(c) the extent of its effect on the foreign exchange position of the country?

THE MINISTER OF HEAVY INDUSTRY (SHRI T. A. PAI): (a) to (c). In the context of the power shortage experienced in various parts of the country. Government decided to relax the ban

on the import of standby diesel generating sets and have allowed import of the higher ranges of sets required by industrial units so that they may be enabled to maintain an appropriate level of production. The effect of this relaxation on the foreign exchange provision is small compared to the benefits that would accrue by way of higher levels of industrial production. As for power generating equipment other than diesel generating sets, Government have cleared the import of a few sets, on the basis of a case by case examination, on grounds of either the non-standard nature of their design or of the tight delivery schedule which did not provide enough lead time for the indigenous plants to manufacture and deliver the sets. By and large import of these sets have been from rupee payment areas.

Fresh move for talks between India and Nepal

9907 **SHRI P. M. MEHTA**
SHRI K. LAKKAPPA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether fresh moves are afoot for Ministerial level talks between India and Nepal to facilitate mutual economic co-operation in various fields;

(b) if so, when the talks are likely to take place; and

(c) the other steps being taken to improve the relations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SURENDRA PAL SINGH): (a) to (c) When the Prime Minister visited Nepal in February this year it was agreed that there should be greater co-operation between the Planning Commissions of the two countries with a view to ensure mutually-beneficial economic development in India and Nepal. Accordingly, a delegation led by Shri D. P. Dhar, Minister for Planning, paid a visit to Nepal from April 29, 1973 to May 3, 1973. At the conclusion of the visit a Joint Statement was issued on the 3rd May, 1973, as per text laid on the Table of the House. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-5038/73].