

(d) if so, the nature of the action taken as also the names of officers/officials against whom the action was taken?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND SUPPLY AND REHABILITATION (SHRI VASANT SATHE) (a) to (d): Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Refusal of permission to Smt. Indira Gandhi to cast a postal vote

66. **SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKHARA MURTHY**: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Smt. Indira Gandhi was not allowed to cast a postal vote in the recent election for which she had sought the permission of the Election Commissioner;

(b) if so, what were the main reasons for refusal to allow Smt. Indira Gandhi to cast the postal vote;

(c) whether the former Prime Minister was allowed to cast a postal vote;

(d) if so, whether any enquiry has been ordered; and

(e) how many postal ballot votes were allowed to be cast during the 1980 elections?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. SHIV SHANKER): (a) The Election Commission has stated that it did not receive any communication asking for the facility of postal ballot for Smt. Indira Gandhi at the time of recent general election to the Lok Sabha and the Commission has no information whether any request was made by Smt. Indira Gandhi to the Returning Officer of the consti-

tuency in which her name is registered as an elector for the facility of postal ballot.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) By virtue of notification No. S. O. 959 dated the 18th April, 1960, issued under sub-section (4) of section 20 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950 and section 60 of that Act and rule 18 of the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961, holders of certain high offices such as Cabinet Ministers, Ministers of State, etc can avail of the facility of postal ballot. Shri Charan Singh, as the holder of the office of the Prime Minister at the time of the poll at the recently held general election to the Lok Sabha was, therefore, entitled to vote by post at that election. Information is not readily available as to whether he exercised his franchise by post.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) Information as to the number of electors who cast their votes at the recent general election to the Lok Sabha by post is not readily available with the Election Commission.

Press report regarding working of an official of BBC for Janata Party

67. **SHRI MALLANNA**: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to news item in the 'Hindustan Times' dated the 26th December, 1979 that the Madhya Pradesh Congress-I office had sent a protest letter to the British High Commission in India objecting to BBC official Ratnakar Bharti's reported participation in the Janata Party's electioneering;

(b) whether it is a fact that Mr. Bharti's action has been termed in the protest letter as direct interference of the British Government in the internal matters of the country through the B.B.C. which cannot be tolerated by any independent country; and

(c) if so, whether any probe in this regard has been made by the Government or Government propose to issue some directions in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND SUPPLY AND REHABILITATION (SHRI VASANT HE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). It has been reported that Shri Ratnakar Bharti is an Announcer with the BBC, Shri Bharti belongs to Madhya Pradesh and had come to his town on leave. On reading the news item published in the newspapers, the External Affairs Ministry immediately got in touch with the BBC bureau Chief in Delhi and enquired from him whether Shri Bharti was really an employee of the BBC. He immediately got in touch with his headquarters in London and reported to External Affairs Ministry that Shri Bharti was in some sort of contract employment with the BBC and that a suitable message had been delivered to him indicating that if he wished to participate in the Indian election campaign, he should dis-associate himself from the BBC.

Limit on poll expenses in 1980 Elections

68. SHRI K. MALLANNA:

SHRI CHHITUBHAI GAMIT: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that previous Government took a decision to limit the poll expenses on the eve of the 1980 Elections to the Lok Sabha; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. SHIV SHANKER): (a) and (b). Rule 90 of the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961 relating to the maximum limit of election expenses which may be incurred in a Parliamentary constituency and an Assembly constituency

in the various States and Union territories, was amended by this Ministry's Notification No. 767 (E) dated the 29th November, 1979, which raised the limit of such expenses. having regard to the fact that the limits which were fixed in 1971 had become unrealistic. A copy of the said notification is laid on the Table of the House.

(Placed in Library. See No LT—131/80)

बिहार राज्य के मुंगेर में किउल नदी से भू-कटाव

69 श्रीमती कृष्णा साही : क्या ऊर्जा और सिंचाई तथा कोयला मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या बिहार राज्य के मुंगेर में पिछले अनेक वर्षों से किउल नदी से रेहभ्रा, ओलोपुर, रामचन्द्रपुर, मोहनपुर, खुटहा और अन्य गांवों में भू-कटाव हो रहा है ;

(ख) क्या इन गांवों में भू-कटाव रोकने के लिए कोई कारगर कार्यवाही नहीं की गई है; और

(ग) यदि हां, तो क्या सरकार इन गांवों में भू-कटाव रोकने के लिए कोई कारगर कार्यवाही करेगी ?

ऊर्जा और सिंचाई तथा कोयला विभाग मंत्री (श्री ए० बी० ए० गनी खान चौधरी) : (क) से (ग) : सूचना एकत्र की जा रही है और सभा पटल पर रख दी जायगी ।

Legal aid to the poor

70. SHRI K.A. RAJAN: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that various committees appointed by the previous Governments to make recommendations on a comprehensive legal aid to the poor programme have submitted their reports;