

(c) the action proposed to be taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES AND MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Uniform pay scales, Higher retirement age, increased pensionary benefits, better medical facilities and more facilities to retiring Judges, as well as enhanced financial powers to High Courts were some of the important suggestions made in the Chief Justices' Conference.

(c) These suggestions are being examined by the Government.

Increase in the Prices of Steel

24. PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been steep rise in the prices of steel during the last one year:

(b) if so, the reasons therefore; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken by Union Government to bring down the prices of steel?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES AND THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI): (a) and (b). There has been some increase in steel prices in last one year on account of increase in input costs like coal & Power, railway freight and excise duty.

(c) Prices are sought to be contained through various costs reduction measures taken by the integrated steel plants from time to time, including modernisation, and by increasing domestic availability by judicious imports.

[*Translation*]

Pending Cases in High Courts

25. PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases pending in the High Courts at present, court-wise;

(b) the court-wise break up of cases pending for more than one year;

(c) the number of cases pending for more than five years; and

(d) the steps proposed to be taken by Government to provide speedy and cheap justice?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES AND MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI): (a) to (c). A statement is given below.

(d) In order to further streamline the functioning of courts and with a view to delivering cheap and speedy justice at the door steps of the common man, Government entrusted the study of judicial reforms to the Law Commission. Some of its important recommendations pertain to the setting up of Gram Nyayalayas at village level for resolution of disputes in rural areas, curtailment of the jurisdiction of the High Courts by excluding subjects which deserve specialist treatment by Specialist Court/Tribunals as well as curtailing of oral arguments are being considered for implementation by the Government. Besides, increasing the Judge strength in the High Court/Supreme Court, the Report of the Committee of three Chief Justices of High Courts, constituted by the Government recently to look into the problem of arrears and to suggest remedial measures is likely to be received shortly. This will also be examined expeditiously.