

state:

(a) whether Government have given up plan to divide the Life Insurance Corporation into more than two units;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government have noted the Life Insurance Corporation proclivities to purchase high cost real estate and further increase prices;

(d) whether investment by LIC in real estate ventures has resulted in clogging up of urban areas; and

(e) if so, whether LIC propose to reduce congestion in mid-city areas by carrying out building activities outside populated areas/ semi-urban areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EXPENDITURE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI B.K. GADHVI): (a) and (b). The Bill to split the LIC lapsed with the dissolution of the 7th Lok Sabha in 1984. It was later decided not to proceed in the matter. The main objectives of the Bill were sought to be achieved by streamlining, strengthening and decentralising the activities of the Corporation at Branch Offices, particularly in 1985, 1986 and onwards.

(c) and (d). The real estate ventures of the LIC are in the form of housing finance, policyholders housing schemes, office and investment premises on lands provided by the State Govt. concerned or the statutory bodies and those vested in LIC on nationalisation. The magnitude of LIC's activities in these areas is not that large as to result in clogging up of urban areas. Investments of LIC in real estate are done in the best interests of the policyholders, keeping in view the requirements of office and customers and after obtaining all necessary clearances

from civic bodies and other concerned authorities and are not intended to exercise any influence on prices.

(e) Does not arise.

Conversion of Technical Staff Into General Category Staff in New India Assurance Company

7132. SHRI R. DHANUSHKODI ATHITHAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the New India Assurance Company has converted its technical staff (Claim Inspectors) into general category staff under the scheme of one time promotion;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the cadre of technical staff is likely to be adversely affected by it;

(d) the reaction of the employees associations thereto;

(e) whether this conversion from technical staff to general category has been done after 20-25 years' service put in by the employees in that category; and

(f) the steps taken by Government to protect the interest of the technical staff?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EXPENDITURE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI B.K. GADHVI): (a) to (f). Superintendent's cadre in the general insurance companies has become a run-off grade. As a corollary, the technical staff (Claim Inspectors) who were in this cadre had no opportunities for higher grades. Consequently, technical staff (Claim Inspectors) in the New India Assurance Company were promoted as Assistant Administrative Officers under one-time pro-

motion policy framed by the General Insurance Corporation. There is no more recruitment of technical staff in Superintendent's cadre. All such promotees have generally accepted the functions allotted to them except a few who have represented through their organisation. After this one-time promotion, the technical staff would have better opportunities for further advancement and career prospects.

Species Import

7133. SHRI K. MOHANDAS: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any spices are being imported;

(b) if so, the names and quantity imported annually during last three years;

(c) whether these spices are not produced in the country; and

(d) if so, the steps being taken to increase their production?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI NARAYAN DATT TIWARI): (a) and (b). A Statement showing import of spices during 1983-84, 1984-85 and 1985-86 is given below. Data beyond 1985-86 is not available.

(c) and (d). Cloves, nutmeg and cinnamon are produced in the country to a certain extent. For increasing production of these spices, progeny gardens have been established in Kerala and Andaman and Nicobar Islands. In the Seventh Plan it is proposed to distribute 1.9 lakhs seedlings of clove at subsidised rate. Research is being undertaken to select high yielding varieties, standardisation of agro-techniques etc.