

curement of material, technological collaboration etc. There is no proposal for amalgamating these offices with a view to improving the image of India in foreign countries.

(b) Does not arise.

Programme for Effective Control of Price Index

1931. SHRI RAJ KRISHNA DAWN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE, CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether in view of the tremendous rise in prices of daily use commodities such as wheat, rice, edible oils, soaps, cycle tyres, pulses, spices etc., Government have drawn any programme for effective control of price index by forming super markets at various places and thereby supplying goods at competitive prices;

(b) whether facility will extend to the rural people; and

(c) whether any target date has been fixed for completion of the programme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES & COOPERATION (SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR GOYAL):

(a) The programme formulated by the Government visualises expansion of the network of consumer cooperatives in the urban areas, for ensuring equitable distribution of essential consumer goods at fair prices and thus help in measures of price stabilisation. Consumer cooperatives operate through the network of retail branches of varying sizes according to the actual needs of the consumers in the towns and cities in which they operate. Co-operative Department Stores which are popularly known as Super Markets. Super Bazars, Janata Bazars, Apna Bazars etc. are large branches set up by Consumer Cooperatives in big cities and towns and generally deal in all the basic essential commodities under one roof, adopting modern retailing practices such as cleaning, pre-pack-

ing etc. There is a plan programme of covering all important cities and towns by cooperative department stores to be set up by consumer cooperative institutions.

(b) In so far as rural areas are concerned, there is no programme of establishing cooperative department stores in view of small population and the low per-capita income which would make the units un-economic. However, in Mandi-towns or taluka level towns, wherever considered necessary and found economically viable on the basis of project formulation, department stores can be set up for the benefit of rural population as well. In the rural areas, besides fair price shops, agricultural/service cooperatives and marketing cooperatives are expected to open branches for undertaking effective distribution of consumer articles in the rural population.

(c) The targets and the programme to be undertaken are to be fixed by the concerned State Governments in the light of the conditions obtaining in the respective States.

Failure to persuade Foreign Airlines Touch Down at Calcutta Airport

1932. SHRI RAJ KRISHNA DAWN: SHRI SAMAR GUHA:

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the development of Tourism in West Bengal suffered badly mainly due to the failure of the Central Government to persuade larger number of foreign Airlines to touch down at Calcutta Airport;

(b) whether Government are persuading foreign Airlines to touch down at Calcutta;

(c) if so, the latest development; and

(d) steps taken by Government for increased utilisation of Calcutta Airport by foreign airlines?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PURUSHOTATM KAUSHIK): (a) to (d). The development of tourism in any particular area depends upon a number of factors the facility of air service being one amongst them. While the number of international air services which touch Calcutta is less as compared to those serving Bombay and Delhi, this should not deter tourist groups from going to West Bengal as many foreign tourists arriving at Bombay, Madras or Delhi international airport do visit West Bengal travelling either by Indian Airlines flights or by trains.

2. Every possible efforts is being made by the Government to encourage foreign airlines to operate through Calcutta. Calcutta is invariably offered as a point of call to foreign airlines while route schedules to bilateral air services agreements are negotiated. However, initiative in this regard lies with the foreign airlines who decide such matters on purely commercial considerations.

3. The Government of India will welcome and encourage operation of scheduled air services by foreign carriers to/through Calcutta in accordance with their traffic entitlements and have taken a number of steps to make Calcutta airport a modern international airport in India. Rs. 3.00 crores have been spent in providing a new terminal building, an operational block, approach roads and in modernising radio navigational aids, besides extending and strengthening runways and installation of versatile and sophisticated radar equipment at Calcutta airport. Apart from this, India Tourism Development Cooperation have constructed a hotel at Calcutta airport at a cost of Rs. 2.60 crores to augment facilities for tourists. It is hoped that foreign airlines would come forward and take the necessary initiative in this regard.

Finalisation of dues of Retired Government Employees

1933. SHRI RAJ KRISHNA DAWN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that though several times Government have assured that the dues of retired Government employees will be finalised immediately after their retirement, it is observed that retired persons have to face immense difficulties and hardships to receive their dues; and

(b) what effective action Government are taking to avoid harassment to retired Government servants and delay in the finalisation of their dues?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI H. M. PATEL): (a) and (b) With a view to ensuring the authorisation of pension and gratuity on the dates on which they fall due, a revised and simplified procedure was introduced in February, 1976. A statement incorporating the salient features of the revised procedure is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

The payment of pension and other retirement benefits are authorised by the Heads of Offices under the various Ministries/Departments scattered all over the country. To enable them to authorize the payments of retirement benefits on the due dates, the procedure was simplified and streamlined in February 1976. The salient features of the procedure are as follows:—

(1) The payment of superannuation pensions is to commence in all cases on the first of the month in which they are due. The payment of gratuity is authorized immediately on the retirement of the Government servant. In order to ensure this, a strict timetable for the work at various stages has been laid down for the Heads of Offices and Accounts Officers and firm cut-off dates have been prescribed for each stage.