

Where land could be secured, action has been taken to get the buildings constructed. Schemes are in various stages of sanction, issuance of tenders and actual construction in most of the regions.

The construction of Regional Office building has been completed at the cost of about Rs 14 00 lacs at Kanpur and the building occupied. Regional Offices are located in the Organisation's own buildings at Madras, Bangalore and Trivandrum.

So far, the Organisation has incurred an expenditure of Rs 1.55 lacs in the acquisition of land, acquisition of buildings and construction of office buildings and staff quarters.

Rent paid by the Organisation for the last three years on buildings hired for the Regional Offices and Central Office is Rs 33,02,446/-.

Amendment of E. P. F. Act, 1952

353. SHRI R. P. YADAV: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND REHABILITATION be pleased to state

(a) whether Government are contemplating to amend the Employees Provident Funds Act, 1952 to apply it to an establishment employing ten or more employees and enhance the rate of contribution to 10 per cent from 8 per cent and 8 per cent from 6½ per cent to enable the workers to save more for the old age, and

(b) if so, the present position and the time by which the amending bill is likely to be brought before the parliament?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRI R. K. KHADILKAR): (a) and (b) The National Commission on Labour has recommended that (i) the Employees' Provident Fund and Family Pension Fund Act, 1952 may be extended to establishments employing between 10 and 20 persons and (ii) the rate of Provident Fund contribution be increased to 8% where it is 6½% and to 10% where it is 8%. Both the proposals are still under consideration.

Criticism of South Korea and U. S. A. by North Korean Consul General

354. SHRI PILOO MODY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state

(a) whether attention of the Government of India has been drawn to a statement made by the North Korean Consul General as published in the *statesman* of the 5th February 1972, strongly criticising South Korea and the United States,

(b) whether the statement amounts to violation of third country rule, and

(c) if so, the reaction of Government of India in this regard?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SURENDRA PAL SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir

(b) and (c) The attention of the DPRK Consulate General has been drawn to the impropriety of criticising countries friendly to India.

Change in Procedure of Procurement of Steel

355. SHRI N. T. HORO: SHRI K. BALADHANDA-YUJHAM

Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state

(a) whether, keeping in view the shortage of steel, Government have formulated any new scheme or procedure in consultation with the Steel Priority Committee to procure steel to meet the growing demand, and

(b) if so, the main features thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI SHAH NAWAZ KHAN): (a) and (b). In view of the shortage of steel, Government decided to augment availability by procuring steel from abroad where necessary. A fairly liberal import policy was followed. In 1970-

71 import licences were issued to the tune of Rs. 199 crores and in 1971-72 (upto January 1972) import licences for about Rs. 235 crores have been issued.

2. In order to ensure that the steel produced in the country reaches the actual consumers as far as possible, the distribution procedure was streamlined and made consumer oriented. Measures were taken to ensure speedy processing of indents and sale orders. The re-rolling programmes of the main steel producers are being regulated in accordance with national priorities and urgent requirements. A uniform system of consumer oriented distribution policy is also being followed by the stockyards of the main producers. To check misuse of steel, the Iron and Steel (Control) Order has been amended to provide that the use of steel for any purpose other than that for which it is allotted or applied for will be a violation of that order and as such punishable under the Essential commodities Act. Regional Offices of the Iron and Steel Controller have also been set up to check misuse of steel and, in this the assistance of the Central Bureau of Investigation is taken where necessary.

3. Government have also set up a Billet Re-rollers Committee to regulate the distribution of billets to the billet Re-rollers and to regulate the products re-rolled therefrom. Formerly, while the billets were being supplied to the billet Re-rollers at a regulated price, there was no regulation on the price or distribution of the products re-rolled therefrom.

4. The traditional raw material for scrap re-rollers is used rails. For the last two years or so, these rails were not available due to a Court Injunction. That case has been decided now and about 2 lakh tonnes of used rails have become available. It is proposed to regulate the distribution of these accumulations to the scrap re-rollers and the products re-rolled therefrom. The details of this scheme are being finalised.

Amendment of Bonus Act

356. SHRI N. E. HORO: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND REHABILITATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether several Labour Union

Leaders have submitted a memorandum to the Union Government requesting Government to amend the Bonus Act in order to increase the payment of minimum bonus from 4 per cent to 8 per cent; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Central Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRI R. K. KHADILKAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A Committee is proposed to be set up to review the working of the Bonus Act, 1965.

Minimum Wages for farm Labour

357. SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND REHABILITATION be pleased to state:

(a) the names of States and Union Territories where minimum wages for farm labour have been fixed till date with rates of wages fixed for various categories of farm labour in each State;

(b) whether all the Districts or of the States and Union Territories have been covered; if not, the number and proportion (to total districts) of Districts covered; and

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Centre to see that minimum wages for farm labour are fixed in each State without delay?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRI R. K. KHADILKAR): (a) Employment in Agriculture is covered by the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 and both the Central and State Government are required to fix minimum wages in this employment in their respective spheres. The Central Government has notified a minimum wage ranging from Rs. 2.50 to Rs. 3.70 per day for unskilled workers in different areas. Available information about rates fixed by the State Governments was published in Indian Labour Statistics 1971 (Table 4.11). Subsequent information is not available.

(b) Information is not available.