

in effecting economy by adopting various measures such as rationalisation of staffing pattern and working methods. But for the economy measures, the expenditure on the High Commission would have been much more due to increase in the overall cost of living all the world over. It may be stated here that a comparison of the Budget provision of Rs. 126.03 for 1972-73 with that of Revised Estimates 1972-73 of Rs. 118.47 lakhs will show a recurring saving of Rs. 7.56 lakhs as a result of economy measures.

Digging of Tunnels by POWs of Pakistan for escape

5143. SHRI AMBESH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state the names of the places where Pakistani Prisoners of War had dug tunnels to escape from the camps?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI JAGJIVAN RAM): Pakistani POWs were found to have dug tunnels in camps in Ranchi, Ramgarh, Gwalior, Agra and Allahabad.

Conference of Asian Nations for Assisting Indo-China's Rehabilitation

5146. SHRI BHAGIRATH BHANWAR: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to convene a Conference of Asian Nations to discuss ways and means of assisting in the rehabilitation of Indo-China after the Vietnam War; and

(b) if so, the facts thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SURENDRA PAL SINGH): (a) and (b). There is no specific proposal at this stage for convening such a conference.

Promotions of Assistant Executive Engineers in M.E.S.

5147. SHRI D. P. JADEJA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether on the 17th February, 1973, 50 posts of Assistant Executive Engineers have been filled up in the Military Engineering Service;

(b) if so, whether *ad hoc* promotions to the posts of Assistant Executive Engineers and Accounts Officer Grade II are made strictly on the basis of seniority from amongst the Superintendents Grade I (Charge holder) and Office Superintendent respectively;

(c) if so, whether these promotions were not made strictly on the basis of seniority; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor and the steps Government proposes to take to remedy the situation?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI J. B. PATNAIK): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d). Although the promotion to the 50 posts of Assistant Executive Engineers was on an *ad hoc* basis, as the appointments were expected to last beyond one year, the selection was made on seniority-cum-merit basis by a Departmental Promotion Committee presided over by a Member of the UPSC.

Ad hoc promotions to the grade of Admin. Officer Gr. II (Class II) and not Accounts Officers, were made on the recommendations of the Departmental Promotion Committee on the basis of seniority-cum-fitness, as the appointments were expected to last for about six months.