

nt>

Title: Need to create a separate Ministry/ Department exclusively for the welfare of ex-servicemen.

COL. SONA RAM CHOUDHARY (BARMER): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I want to draw the attention of the Government through you to the conditions of ex-servicemen in the country. There are about 50 lakhs ex-servicemen and their families in the country. There is only one Kendriya Sainik Board which was established during 1917 to look after the welfare of the ex-servicemen, NOK of the deceased, disabled soldiers in Action. There are about 12,51,000 ex-servicemen registered with Kendriya Sainik Board awaiting resettlement. Fifty thousand soldiers retire every year from the three Services. I will submit that average retirement age of persons below officers' rank is 35 years. It is higher for offers i.e. about 50 years. Bulk of the armed forces are made of persons below officers rank. Therefore, ex-servicemen as a category needs to be rehabilitated.

The funds allotted for care of ex-servicemen is very meager, Kendriya Sainik Board is not equipped and organised to look after the welfare of ex-servicemen. In this context it is worth mentioning that USA has a separate Ministry though with a limited ex-servicemen population. Subject of ex-servicemen welfare is left to States whose response is just negligible.

On retiring at a young age the ex-servicemen are at a loss to seek re-employment because they lack knowledge, skill and experience that is required in any civil profession.

Therefore, I strongly feel that there is a need for a separate Ministry for ex-servicemen. However, in case it is not possible, a separate Department must be created under Ministry of Defence totally dedicated to the welfare of ex-servicemen.

15.33 hrs (Dr. Laxminarayan Pandey in the Chair)