

(d) the time by which all the vacancies of judges in various High Courts and Supreme Court of India are likely to be filled up;

(e) whether recently there was a controversy/debate regarding giving due consideration to the representatives from the weaker sections, women and minorities while appointing the judges to the Supreme Court of India and High Courts; and

(f) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS AND MINISTRY SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. M. THAMBI DURAI): (a) to (d) Government have seen the Press reports to the effect that the Chief Justice of India has made certain observations about non-filling up of the vacancies of Judges. No communication has, however, been received by the Government of India from the Chief Justice of India in this regard. As on February 24, 1999, there was 1 vacancy of Judge in the Supreme Court of India and 138 vacancies of Judges/Additional Judges in various High Courts of the country.

No sooner the Advisory Opinion on the scope and extent of consultation in the appointment of Judges was given by the Supreme Court on October 28, 1998, appropriate steps to fill up the vacancies of Judges in the Supreme Court and the High Courts were initiated in consultation with the concerned Constitutional authorities. Seven vacancies in the Supreme Court and 36 vacancies in various High Courts have been filled up after the receipt of the Opinion. Four vacancies are likely to be filled up shortly. While it is not possible to indicate a time-frame by which all the vacancies are likely to be filled up, proposals for filling up more vacancies in various High Courts have been received.

(e) and (f) There is no controversy/debate among the concerned Constitutional authorities in the matter of appointment of Judges as appointment of Judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts is made under Articles 124 and 217 of the Constitution which do not provide for reservation for any caste or class of persons. The Government have, however, from time to time addressed letters to the Chief Ministers of the States and the Chief Justices of the High Courts requesting them to locate suitable persons from the Bar belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, other Backward Classes, Minorities and Women for appointment as High Court Judges.

Bill on Sexual Harassment of Women

*82. SHRI S. SUDHAKAR REDDY:
SHRI SURENDRAN CHENGARA:

Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government propose to bring out a legislation in accordance with judgement of Supreme Court upholding the dismissal from job of any person resorting to sexual harassment of women at the workplace; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. M. THAMBI DURAI): (a) and (b) No, Sir. Since the guidelines/norms laid down by the Supreme Court of India have the force of law under article 141 of the Constitution of India and the existing civil/penal laws and certain labour legislations contain adequate prohibitive provisions to protect women from sexual harassment at work places, it is felt that there is no necessity for enacting a separate legislation on the subject.

[Translation]

Sub-Standard quality of Electricity Equipments

*83. SHRI PANKAJ CHOUDHRY:
SHRI RAMACHANDRA BAINDA:

Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether large quantum of power goes waste due to sub-standard quality of electric equipments in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government propose to enact any law to punish the manufacturers of sub-standard electric equipments; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF POWER, MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM): (a) to (d) A large quantum of power goes waste owing to energy inefficient electric equipment and appliances. The Government is formulating