

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of estimated investment in housing from the Government and Private Sector and from foreign direct investment during the current year and the Ninth Plan period; and

(d) the details of investment proposed for housing in rural sector?

THE MINISTER OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI RAM JETHMALANI) : (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

FDI for Housing Sector

(a) and (b) At present, Foreign Direct Investment is not permitted in the housing sector.

(c) As per the report of the Working Group on Urban Housing for the Ninth Plan, the projected flow of funds from the formal sector for urban housing is Rs. 34,000 crores during the 9th Plan period. During 1998-99 the gross budgetary support for central sector housing and shelter schemes is to the extent of Rs. 491 crores in urban sector. Since FDI is not permitted now, the issue of estimating foreign direct investment during the year and the Ninth Plan does not arise.

(d) As ascertained from the Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment, during the Ninth Five Year Plan the budgetary outlay envisaged for the Centrally sponsored scheme of Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) for 1997-98 is Rs. 1143.75 crores and for 1998-99 the outlay is Rs. 1600 crores.

Sir, without the hon. Member having to ask the supplementary question, I would like to supplement this information and draw the attention of the hon. Member to a statement made by the hon. Prime Minister on the 28th of November, 1998 in which he said, *inter alia*, that the possibility of availing investments from abroad, including FDI in housing-related activities, is also an important thrust area for my Government and the Ministry of Urban Affairs and Employment has already come up with specific proposals which are under serious consideration by the Cabinet. We propose to provide highly liberal terms for FDI in the housing sector.

Sir, the policy will be formulated very soon. I will come back to the House with the policy. So, I would request all the Members to postpone asking any further questions about this matter a little later.

MR. SPEAKER : It is a good reply.

Shri Sharma, please keep in mind the fact that the Minister has already requested not to put any supplementary on this question.

[Translation]

SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Hon'ble Minister has mentioned one point. He is of the view that a policy is to be framed for the direct capital investment. In this connection Hon'ble Prime Minister has also stated and a proposal is being awaited from his ministry. The Hon'ble Minister has said that it would be better to consider this question after that is reached to them. Therefore, I think that this question may be put up later on at any time.

[English]

Disparity in Pay Scales of Armed Forces

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*168. SHRI U.V. KRISHNAMRAJU :
SHRI C. KUPPUSAMI :

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have since examined the Ajit Kumar Committee report on anomalies and disparities in pay and allowances of the Armed Forces;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the time by which it is likely to be implemented;

(c) if not, the reasons for delay;

(d) whether the Government have also constituted any anomalies committee within the Defence wings to remove genuine anomalies among the various cadres of the Armed Forces; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

The Ajit Kumar Committee constituted to consider the anomalies in Pay and Allowances of the Armed Forces personnel arising out of the implementation of the Vth Central Pay Commission recommendations submitted its Report to the Government on 23.4.1998. On the directions of the Prime Minister, a Group of Officers consisting of Cabinet Secretary as Chairman, Chief of Army Staff, Chief of Naval Staff and Chief of Air Staff, Defence Secretary, Home Secretary, Secretary (DOP&T), Secretary (Expendi-

ture) as members is currently considering the recommendations of the Committee which cover disparities in pay scales, allowances and other related anomalies. The meetings of the Group of Officers are being held regularly and it is expected that final decisions will be taken very soon by the Government.

The Government has not constituted any other Anomalies Committee to consider anomalies arising out of implementation of Vth Central Pay Commission Awards for Armed Forces. However, a Departmental Anomalies Committee has been set up by the Government to consider anomalies pertaining to Defence civilians working in various Defence establishments.

SHRI U.V. KRISHNAMRAJU : Mr. Speaker, Sir, consequent upon the implementation of the Fifth Central Pay Commission's recommendations, there was a lot of discontent and heart-burning among the various officers and jawans of Armed Forces because the recommendations were heavily biased. Now, the Report of the Ajit Kumar Committee has been examined and considered by the Government. What is the percentage of its implementation in the three Forces, namely, the Army, the Navy and the Air Force?

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : Sir, consequent upon the examination of that Report, a small Committee has been set up which is looking into the various aspects of the recommendations made by this Committee. This Committee is holding, more or less, daily and weekly meetings depending on the convenience of those who are concerned with it. Once the final recommendations become available, these will be implemented.

SHRI U.V. KRISHNAMRAJU : Has any time-frame been suggested by the Government to implement these recommendations for various categories?

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : There is no question of time-frame. The three Service Chiefs, the Cabinet Secretary and the Defence Secretary are examining these issues. And the moment they come to a final conclusion, we shall act on it.

SHRI C. KUPPUSAMI : Sir, a Committee has been constituted. That Committee submitted its Report as early as 23rd April, 1998. Subsequently, the Minister mentions about constituting another Committee to go into the Report of the original Committee. There is a saying in Tamil.

"Committiyai podu, illavittal kinathile kallai podu."

This means :

"If you want to shelve the matter or delay it to your convenience, constitute a Committee in the guise of delaying it."

It amounts to putting a stone in the well which cannot be taken out normally. So, may I request the Minister, who was spearheading the struggle for the Railway employees in 1975, to avoid such delay and implement the Report of the Fifth Central Pay Commission without any further delay.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : Sir, this is not a matter of implementation of the Commission's Report. There have been a series of developments, including some major trouble, at least, in one category of employees in one of the Defence Services. Consequent upon that, a Committee was set up. That Committee gave its Report. What is now happening is that a Group of Officers is there. I did mention about a Committee. But calling it a Committee may not be an appropriate way of putting it across. A Group of Officers are examining each of the recommendations. The three Service Chiefs are involved in examining these recommendations. They will come to conclusions. Those conclusions will be the final thing.

The Member is making a point about the delay. There are a number of recommendations that have come. They relate to pay-scales. There are six different recommendations in regard to six various aspects of this recommendation.

Then, there are allowances which run into 29. There are differences and discussions pertaining to those allowances.

Then, another area where the Committee has given a recommendation, is the grievances redressal system.

So, in all these matters, the three Service Chiefs and, as I said, a Group of Officers – who are associated – are examining it. When their recommendations come, these will be implemented. The Pay Commission's recommendations have already been implemented. This is a fallout of the Pay Commission's recommendations and their implementation.

[Translation]

MAJOR-GENERAL BHUVAN CHANDRA KHANDURI, AVSM : Hon. Speaker Sir, the pay structure of Armed Forces is discussed every now and then, but there is one category which is discussed less and those are the released veterans of 2nd World War, who were sacked after 5-6 years. They were relieved without pension and that time they had received some gratuity but for a long time they got nothing. State Governments used to provide them 100 rupees per month. I have raised this issue in tenth Lok Sabha also. After that some state governments had agreed to provide them 250 rupees every month. It is my request to the central government to take a decision

in a systematic way. The veterans of 2nd World War are more than 80 years of age. So many of them have no support, there is no one to look after. I would like to know from the hon. Minister that whether you are going to make some arrangement for remaining period of their life so that they can spend their life with dignity.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : Mr. Speaker, Sir, a few days before I have received an application in this regard which is under consideration. I can assure the House that the decision will be taken on that matter utmost sympathetically.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Q. 169. Dr. T. Subbarami Reddy.

SHRI DADA BABURAO PARANJPE : Sir, you must give me an opportunity. I am the only survivor here among the 500 War veterans of Azad Hind Fauj . . . (Interruptions) I may be given a chance . . . (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : No. There are other Members who were in the Army.

(Interruptions)

SHRI DADA BABURAO PARANJPE : Sir, then I walk out in protest . . . (Interruptions)

11.46 hrs.

(At this stage, Shri Dada Baburao Paranjpe left the House)

[Translation]

SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, he has been a soldier of Azad Hind Fauz, therefore he may be given a chance to ask a question. . . . (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Please understand. I understand his position. But I have gone to the next question. Next time, I will give his chance.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Please take your seat.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Paranjpe, please take your seat. I will consider your request later.

(Interruptions)

Revival Package for Steel Industry

*169. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to announce revival package for Steel Industry on the basis of recommendations of Expert Committee;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Committee has submitted its first report;

(d) if so, the action taken by the Government thereon; and

(e) the extent to which this revival package is likely to improve the functioning of the Steel Industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS) : (a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the Lok Sabha.

Statement

Revival Package for Steel Industry

(a) to (c) A Working Group had been set up by Government to study the present slow down in the Steel Sector. The Group has since submitted its report. The recommendations of the Working Group, inter alia, include :

- (i) Rationalisation of DEPB (Duty Entitlement Pass Book) rates.
- (ii) To consider feasibility of converting ad valorem rate of import duty into fixed duties on certain finished steel items.
- (iii) To consider a combination of measures comprising levy of Special Import Duty on imports of seconds and defectives alongwith raising duties for certain types of steel up to World Trade Organisation bound rates.
- (iv) To consider removal of imports of Seconds and Defectives below a specific floor price from OGL.
- (v) To deal with cases of dumping by establishing a fast track mechanism.
- (vi) Withdrawal/Waiver of Special Customs Duty of 2% + 3% and Special Additional Duty of 4% on input items for the steel sector which are not available within the country.

(d) and (e) The details of action taken by Government on the recommendations and some of the results achieved so far to enable the steel industry to overcome the present problems are as under :