

makes evasion, in spite of attendant risks, profitable and attractive. The Committee accordingly recommended that the marginal rate of income-tax, including surcharge, should be brought down from 97.75 per cent to 75 per cent with simultaneous reduction in tax rates at the middle and lower levels. This recommendation has been accepted by Government with minor modifications and implemented through Finance Act, 1974.

Alleged statement for providing legal protection to Shri Yusuf Patel

*568-A. SHRI BHOGENDRA JHA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether an ex-member of Lok Sabha has alleged through open statement in the Press that while a Member of the Fourth Lok Sabha he had approached the Prime Minister for providing legal protection to Shri Yusuf Patel in exchange for revealing smuggling operations; and

(b) if so, the facts thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PRANAB KUMAR MUKHERJEE):

(a) and (b). The question presumably is based on the news item appearing in the "Motherland" dated 17th October, 1974, regarding a Press Conference held by Shri George Fernandes, an ex-Member of Parliament. This news item has been seen by the Government.

According to the news item Shri Fernandes had written to the Prime Minister and others "that Yusuf Patel who had fallen out with Mastan had met him (Shri Fernandes) in New Delhi and offered to tell all about the smuggling activities in the country, if, in return, he was protected from Mastan".

The records have been checked up and it has not been possible to trace any such letter from Shri George Fernandes.

Ex-Gratia Compensation for Enemy Properties

*569. SHRI SAMAR GUHA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether most of the applications received from migrants from former West Pakistan for *ex-gratia* compensation for enemy properties have been expeditiously dealt with;

(b) if so, the reasons for inordinate delay in dealing with similar applications from the migrants from former East Pakistan;

(c) the total number of applications received, disposed of and still outstanding in regard to migrants from former West Pakistan and East Pakistan about such *ex-gratia* compensation;

(d) whether Government have set up a time limit for finally dealing with the issue of *ex-gratia* compensation in regard to migrants from former East Pakistan; and

(e) if so, facts thereof?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH):

(a) and (b). No discrimination is made between migrants from former East Pakistan and West Pakistan in dealing with their applications for *ex-gratia* grant.

(c) About six thousand applications for *ex-gratia* grant have been received so far, of which nearly 80 per cent relate to the claims from East Pakistan and 20 per cent to that from West Pakistan. Out of these total claims, 882 claimants have been paid, of which 452 are from East Pakistan and 430 from West Pakistan.