

they may live at least till they are repatriated to Bangladesh and, if so, what are those steps or what are the discussions held in this regard with the Government of Pakistan.

SHRI SWARAN SINGH: Obviously, it is the responsibility of the Government of Pakistan to look after all these internees of Bangladesh origin and it is difficult for me to imagine what type of assistance could India render in a situation of the type that we face in the matter of our relations with Pakistan. It is for all these reasons that we had ourselves made an offer after consulting the Government of Bangladesh that we had decided to repatriate the families of all civilian internees and also of the prisoners-of-war and we expressed the hope that Pakistan would also do the same. They have, as I mentioned already, said that they have decided to repatriate 10,000 out of the total number of the internees there as a first step. I would like to add that, in a humanitarian case of this character, there should be no counting of heads and, irrespective of the numbers, they should send out all the family members, women and children, who happened to be in custody there or who happened to be stranded in Pakistan.

Opening of Weapons testing Range near Itarsi

*448, **SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY:** Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any weapons testing range has been opened near Itarsi;

(b) if so, the particulars thereof; and

(c) the amount spent in regard to the range established?

THE MINISTER OF STATE (DEFENCE PRODUCTION) IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA): (a) to (c). A Central Proof Range has been

established at Itarsi. The Proof range mainly caters to the Proofing of various items of ammunition and their components pertaining to Artillery and Infantry weapons and most of the Field Tank and Anti-tank equipments, produced in the Ordnance Factories located in the Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh region. Components for ammunition items supplied by civil trade are also proved in this establishment.

The total cost is expected to be about Rs. 3.15 crores.

SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY: In view of large complaints about testing of weapons supplied to artillery, infantry and other civilians, I would like to know from the Government whether in the past Government have made any assessment to what extent these weapons which passed into the hands of our army personnel and others from the ordnance factories were found to be defective or short of proof range. Why did Government take such a long time to establish such a factory only very recently at a cost of Rs. 3 crores, and more, at Itarsi and in Maharashtra?

Secondly, about the testing arrangement that is now done, I want to know whether the proof-range testing is of the same standard as that in other countries which are supplying weapons to our neighbouring countries, particularly Pakistan. I want to know about the standard.

SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA: The premise under which the hon. Member is asking this is not correct. There has been absolutely no complaint about the quality of the weapons, hand-guns and ammunitions that have been supplied to our armed forces. As a matter of fact, the quality has been found to be uniformly of a very high order, of a very high standard. Therefore, this question of why it was not established earlier really does not arise. As I have explained in the main answer, we established this mainly to cater to the production which is taken out of the

ordnance factories which are located in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh regions, and these factories were established mostly after the Chinese aggression, in 1962. Then we wanted a Central Proof Range establishment and Itarsi was selected after a great deal of consideration. Orders to establish the Proof Range establishment were passed in 1967. After that, this Proof Range has been established. It is testing certain new equipment that we have started making or manufacturing in India after 1962, and this Proof Range has come very handy for our various projects that we undertook after the Chinese aggression.

SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY. In view of the hon. Minister's reply about the proof Range arrangement that has been done, may I know whether Government have come to the conclusion that the reason for the defect in the proof range is either the defect in the machines or weaponry or defect in the ammunitions also; if it is in respect of ammunitions also, may I know whether there are any such testing establishment to test the ammunitions also, to see how far they are in order?

SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA: These tests are necessary and they are part of the manufacturing process and we would not hand over any equipment, whether it be arms or ammunition, to our Armed Forces, without properly testing them or evaluating them. Not only this, but also items from the civil trade and certain imported items are properly tested before they are handed over to the Ordnance Depots for use in the Army, Navy or in the Air Force.

These Proof Ranges serve both the purposes—to find out defects in any line of production and also to evaluate the performance of the various weapons that are produced from time to time.

MR. SPEAKER: Such questions should be drafted very carefully and also replied to very carefully. Some times, it relates to defence affairs. I

think it is much better if they are discussed in the Defence Consultative Committee, rather than by open questions here in the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Sukhdeo Prasad Verma—not here.

Representations regarding payment of pension to parents of Military Martyrs

*450. **PROF. NARAIN CHAND PARASHAR:** Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether representations have been received from the parents of the Military Martyrs for the grant of a part of the Family Pension to them out of the pension generally given to the War Widows; and

(b) if so, the decision of Government on the representations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE (DEFENCE PRODUCTION) IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA): (a) Yes, Sir; representations have been received from the parents of a few Armed Forces Officers killed in the recent Indo-Pak conflict, for granting them a part of the special family pension payable to the widows of the officers.

(b) In the case of personnel below offer rank, the Controller of Defence Accounts (Pensions) is empowered to divide the special family pension among the eligible heirs of the deceased serviceman in such cases. In the case of officers, orders have been issued under which the special family pension may be divided between the widow and the parents of the officer who was killed in the war. Decisions on individual representations are to be taken after necessary investigation and on the merits of each case.

PROF. NARAIN CHAND PARASHAR: May I know from the hon. Minister through you as to the exact date on which these orders were issued as also the exact proportion in which the proposed pension is to be divided?