

SHRI NARHARI PRASAD SUKHDEO SAI: A trunk automatic exchange has been established at Ahmedabad to which Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar are being transferred. Baroda, Rajkot and Jamnagar will be connected to this TAX in 1979-80. Ahmedabad Trunk Automatic exchange will be inter connected with the existing TAX at Indore and Bombay and will provide interdialling facilities among Bombay, Poona, Surat, Baroda, Rajkot, Gandhinagar, Jamnagar, Ahmedabad, Indore and Bhopal.

PROF. P. G. MAVALANKAR: He has left out answering the second part of my question—whether the existing facilities are working efficiently and faultlessly. He may kindly answer this part while answering my second supplementary question. May I know whether he will consider including such cities in Gujarat which are very busy commercial centres involving crores of rupees of business including export outside Gujarat, outside India, because I find that those cities are not included in the programmes for 1978-79 and 1979-80? I do not want to give those details because the department knows them; there are cities where commerce valued at more than Rs. one crore takes place between Gujarat and other States in India, as well as export from Gujarat to other countries. Secondly, I wanted to know whether the STD facilities are working faultlessly and efficiently, because what is the use of paying for STD when people have to wait for more than one hour to get through a Call?

MR. SPEAKER: The rule of equality operates; it does not discriminate.

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BRIJLAL VERMA): We are in the process of giving connections. Our norms are: if there are 100 calls in each line then we go in for STD.

PROF. P. G. MAVALANKAR: Kandla is an important port, but there is no STD facility between Ahmedabad and Kandla. May I know whether places like Kandla are being connected by STD with Ahmedabad?

SHRI BRIJLAL VERMA: It is in the future plan.

SHRI VINOD BHAI B. SHETH: It concerns not only the Minister of Communications but the Minister of Health also, who is not here. In big cities when there are many wrong calls and when trunk calls are delayed, the doctors have found that there are more cases of blood pressure and hypertension.....

MR. SPEAKER: It does not arise out of this. Next question.

Works Norms For E.P.F. Organisation

*432. **SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY:** Will the Minister of PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) how far the work norms prescribed in the Manual of Accounts Procedure for E.P.F. Organisation of 1960 are being implemented;

(b) whether the legislation of Employees Family Pension Act, 1971 and Employees Deposit Linked Insurance Act, 1976 has increased the work norms of E.P.F. employees; and

(c) if so, how far the additional staff is proposed to be sanctioned by Government region-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR & PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. RAM KRIPAL SINHA): The Employees Provident Fund Authorities have reported that:—

(a) The Manual of Accounting Procedure issued in 1968 does not prescribe any work norms as such for maintenance of accounts of Employees Provident Fund. However, work norms are contained in the 'Employees Provident Funds Manual' issued in 1963. These norms were revised by the Central Board of Trustees, Employees' Provident Fund in 1970, and are being implemented for staffing the Regional Offices of the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation.

(b) Separate work norms have been evolved for providing staff for work pertaining to the Employees' Family Pension Scheme 1971 and the Employee's Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme, 1976

(c) The Central Board of Trustees at its meeting held on the 5th December, 1977 has recommended revised yardstick. The recommendation is yet to be considered by the Government.

SHRI K. RAMAMURTHI: Before putting my supplementary, I would like to point out that the answer starts with the sentence: "The Employees Provident Fund Authorities have reported that..."

Why do they want to escape from the responsibility for the answer? It is not an autonomous organisation. Why

'have they put it in this form? Now I will put my supplementary. In the answer it has been said that the manual of accounting procedure was under consideration by the trustees of the Poard at their meeting held on 5th December 77. This provident fund organisation is a very important organisation because it is a social security scheme for the workers. A lot of complaints have been received by the trade unions and a lot of accounts have not been settled for 1 to 6 years. When we enquired from the provident fund organisation, we were told that because the staff on the manual side is very less and because of the recent legislation regarding compulsory deposit scheme, family pension scheme and more coverage of workers they could not dispose of the cases immediately or within a short duration.

MR. SPEAKER : Enough of preface. Kindly come to the question.

SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY : In view of the fact that the organisation is now completing the 25th year, will the Ministry come forward to assure this House—because of the inadequacies in the Manual in disbursing provident fund amounts—that they will form a committee to go into its working, particularly into the work norms for employees in the provident fund organization?

DR. RAM KIRPAL SINHA : As far as the revision of work norms is concerned, a constant review is made; and as I have already said, the work-load is reduced from time to time after such a review. On the 5th December this year, a sub-committee of the Employees' Provident Fund Organization was formed, and it has gone into its working and is reviewing it. The work-load has been scaled down from time to time.

MR. SPEAKER : He says that because of the defects in the Manual, disbursement has become difficult. Would you rectify it?

DR. RAM KIRPAL SINHA : The Committee has made certain recommendations; and all possible steps are being taken to bring the work-load upto-date.

SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY : Recently, the employees of the Provident Fund Organization have agitated all over India. They have put forth some demands relating to wage rise, work norms and cash benefits on the occasion of the silver jubilee celebrations of that organization. Will the Minister assure us that he will call the employees and initiate talks on this matter and settle them amicably?

DR. RAM KIRPAL SINHA : A few weeks ago, I met the representatives of the recognized union, and discussed the problem with them; and we have considered their demands sympathetically. Those demands which we can concede, we are looking into. As far as the question of cash benefits and other things are concerned, there are linked with various other issues; and we will look into them.

President Sadat's Visit to Israel

*434. SHRI G. S. REDDI :
SHRI K. MALLANNA :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the stand taken by the Indian Government regarding the recent visit of President Sadat to Israel ;

(b) the details regarding the comments expressed by various Arab countries ; and

(c) whether the visit of the President Sadat to Israel has led to the signing of a Peace treaty in Geneva ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJ-PAYEE) : (a) The Government of India is watching the situation.

(b) Various opinions have been expressed by different Arab countries regarding the recent developments which have already appeared in the press.

(c) No, Sir.

SHRI G. S. REDDI : The Ministry, in its statement on 18th November has welcomed the bold step taken by Egypt and Israel; whereas on the 20th, the same Ministry says that we are watching the situation. The Ministry now repeats that they are watching the situation. The original statement was hailed all over India and the world; and it was said that India was playing a good role, and that welcoming the visit was a bold step. I do not know whether Government has now changed its policy of non-alignment, and is merely watching the situation.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJRAYIT : I am sorry to say that the policy of non-alignment is not affected by our stand on the question of President Sadat's visit to Israel. It has been India's policy not to