

of work for a long time, and we must tackle it on a priority basis. For that, we must have more judges, we must also see that the judges who are recruited dispense justice and the procedures do not brook delay.

There are several outstanding proposals which have to be completely collated and synthesized and brought before the House, and we hope also to have the report of a High-Power Judicial commission to deal with the various problems. As I told you, we can only hope and pray that during the next five years, we shall be really grappling with the problem effectively and properly.

Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : Agarwalji, please put a supplementary question, because yours is the first question.

SHRI JAI PARKASH AGARWAL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to know whether, keeping in view the day-by-day increase in the number of cases, efforts have been made to effect corresponding increase in the number of judges ?

MR. SPEAKER : This has already been answered.

SHRI JAI PARKASH AGARWAL : Have the Government taken any action in regard to peoples court, so that corruption, which is on the increase, is checked ?

SHRI A. K. SEN : These are two different questions. Firstly, we are trying that all the cases are disposed of as early as possible. In so far as corruption is concerned, we have never heard any such thing about the Supreme Court...

(interruptions)

SHRI JAI PARKASH AGARWAL : Please tell us about the peoples Court.

SHRI A. K. SEN : We have not set up people's court. No proposal has so far been formulated therefor.

[English]

SHRI SHARAD DIGHE : Is there any proposal to increase the salaries of the judges of the Supreme Court and the High Courts and to improve their service conditions so that still better people can be attracted towards these posts and the efficiency to dispose of the cases may increase ?

SHRI A. K. SEN : That is one of the major proposals under consideration.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Unless you do that, prospective judges will come to the Parliament.....
(interruptions)

SHRI A. K. SEN : But the hon. Member has passed that stage.

SHRI N. TOMBI SINGH : For the entire North-Eastern States and Union Territories, Gauhati High Court alone is handling the cases. Naturally, there are a lot of pending cases. Is the hon. Minister aware of the demands made by the States of Manipur and Tripura for a separate High Court. If so, what steps are being taken by the Government ?

SHRI A. K. SEN : Gauhati High Court is one of the exceptions about accumulation of arrears. The statement shows that the accumulation is only 12,541, which is very very good compared to the other figures which speak for themselves.

Prices of Life Saving Drugs

*41. SHRI CHITTA MAHATA : Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are studying the reasons for continuous

high prices of life saving drugs in the country ;

(b) if so, the details of the decision taken by Government to check the rise in prices of such drugs and also to lower them so that poor people can also avail of such drugs; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND INDUSTRY AND COMPANY AFFAIRS: (SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL) : (a) to (c) It is not true to say that the prices of life saving drugs are continuously high in the country. About 75 percent of the drugs and formulations are price controlled. Revision of prices of price controlled bulk drugs and formulations is done in accordance with the provisions of Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1979. In respect of decontrolled formulations, manufacturers are free to adjust their prices. However, on the whole, the increase in the prices of drugs and formulations has been lower than that of the wholesale price index all commodities.

SHRI CHITTA MAHATA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not agree with the replay of the hon. Minister. In the market, the prices of life-saving drugs have increased at least 75 percent or more over the last five years, under the existing drug price control. Under the circumstances, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Minister is in a position to amend the Drug Price Control Order, so that prices of life-saving drugs can be checked from further increase.

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND INDUSTRY AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL) : Sir, in my reply, I have said that compared to the Wholesale Price Index, the increase in the price of drugs is lower. I have got figures to substantiate this. In

1984-85 upto December, the Wholesale Price Index of Commodities was 336.30 while that of drugs and pharmaceuticals was 216.8. Then in 1983-84, the Wholesale Price Index was 315.3 and for drugs and pharmaceuticals, it was 213.3. In 1982-83, the Wholesale Price Index was 288.3 and for drugs and pharmaceuticals, 171.4. Sir, I agree with the hon. member that there is increase in the prices of drugs, but compared to the wholesale price index, in increase is not much and in certain industries the increase is larger, and in certain drugs the increase in prices is lower and they have been reduced also.

SHRI CHITTA MAHATA : The hon. Minister has given reply only with regard to the wholesale prices. I want to know the position of the retail prices in the market.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL : Sir, the hon. member wants to know the retail prices of all the drugs. There are more than ten thousand drugs and how is it possible for me give the information ?

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN That is unfair. He is asking about the general trend.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI USHA THAKKAR : The prices of all the commodities have been rising. Although the prices of medicinal have not gone so high get the poor people are not getting proper medicines in Government Hospitals, be it a referred hospital or a civil hospital. I want that the poor people show get enough medicines in all hospitals so that they are benefited.

[English]

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL : If there is any shortage, the hon. Member is at liberty to bring it to my notice. We will see that the drugs which are in short supply are provided.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : Fifty percent of our people are living below the poverty line and as such they cannot afford to buy medicines. Also, the Government wants to achieve "Health for all" by 2000 AD. If so, whether the government will consider the proposal of the West Bengal Government, Hathi Committee and WHO to reduce the prices of about 97 essential drugs and life-saving drugs; and whether it is a fact that multinational companies and monopoly houses and drug industries are producing tonic and syrup instead of life-saving drugs; if so, what steps government wants to take and whether government propose to formulate a national drug policy.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL : So, far as pricing of the drugs is concerned, BICP periodically reviews the prices and wherever it is necessary either they reduce the price or they increase the price; and under BICP, there is a Drug Price Review Committee and they review the prices, the trend of the prices and they collect all the information. I think they meet every week in order to study the trend of the prices in drugs and pharmaceuticals and they make recommendations to our Ministry; on their recommendation, we take action. The hon. member wanted to know whether a new policy is being considered. My predecessor in 1983 constituted a National Drug and Pharmaceutical Development Council and that Council has submitted a report and the report is under consideration.

Setting up of a Bench of Supreme Court in the South

*43. **PROF. P.J. KURIEN :** Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is a proposal to set up a bench of the Supreme Court in the South; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the decision taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI A. K. SEN) : (a) and (b). Article 130 of the Constitution provide that "the Supreme Court shall sit in Delhi or in Such other place or places, as the Chief Justice of India may with the approval of the President, from time to time, appoint." No proposal has been received from the Chief Justice of India in this regard.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN : The answer is not only short but evasive also. He has quoted the relevant portion of the Constitution. I do not know how it is relevant here. Does the Constitution bar setting up a bench of the Supreme Court anywhere in the country? In fact, the Constitution envisages about it. You have quoted Article 130 of the Constitution. So, the Supreme Court only envisages new benches in other places; it never prohibits. Then I do not know what is the logic of giving this portion of the Constitution. How far have the clients from Tamil Nadu or Kerala or Karnataka or from the eastern region or north eastern region to travel? How much money have they to spend? Most of these people who really want to file an appeal in the Supreme Court cannot do it because of these things. Our motto is to see that justice should reach the poor and the common people. In this way, can it be possible to do it? He himself gave the number of cases pending in the Supreme Court—1.48 lakhs. What steps do you propose to take for opening up new benches of the Supreme Court in other places especially in the South?

SHRI A. K. SEN : It is very difficult to make out the question from the proposal made by the hon. member. But what I could gather from his proposal is: what prevents the government from setting up benches of the Supreme Court outside