

(b) Do the Government propose to hold an inquiry, through a Committee likely to command public confidence, into these allegations and call upon the public including the editor of the said *Bombay Chronicle* to submit any evidence that may be available?

Sir Godfrey Fell: (a) Government have seen the article in question which appeared, however, in the *Bombay Chronicle* of the 23rd February and not in that of the 24th February as stated in the question.

(b) The answer is in the negative.

#### SURPLUS AND CONDEMNED MILITARY STORES.

424. Mr. A. B. Latthe: (a) Will the Government state (1) the total price of surplus military stores, and (2) the total price of the condemned military stores that have been sold by auction or otherwise since the close of the war? What is the total loss that the Government has suffered as a result of these sales?

(b) Will the Government be pleased to state the total price of (a) condemned, and (b) surplus stores which are still to be sold by the Military Department?

Sir Godfrey Fell: I would invite the Honourable Member's attention to the reply given by the Honourable Mr. Hailey to a somewhat similar question in the Legislative Council on the 16th September 1920. The surplus military stores that have been disposed of since the end of the war are almost entirely the property of His Majesty's Government, so that the debits on purchase and credits on sales are matters affecting the finances of His Majesty's Government. The loss, if any, does not fall on the Government of India. There is a Disposals Commissioner in India who has been sent out on behalf of the Home Government, and who will be ready to give the Honourable Member further information on the subject if he so desires.

#### POLITICAL SECTION OF THE HOME DEPARTMENT.

425. Sir P. S. Sivaswamy Aiyer: (a) How long ago was the Political Section of the Home Department created?

(b) Has any Indian member of the Home Department office establishment been ever attached to this section? If so, how many were so attached since the creation of the Department and for what periods?

(c) Is secret and confidential work done in other sections of the Home Department, besides Political?

(d) Is it a fact that files of the Political Section of the Home Department when referred to other Departments of the Government of India or to the Office of the Director, Intelligence Bureau, are dealt with by the Indian members of those Departments without any objection?

(e) If the answers to (c) and (d) are in the affirmative, do the Government propose to throw open the Political Section of the Home Department also to the Indian Superintendents, Assistants and Clerks of the Department?

Mr. S. P. O'Donnell: (a) The Political Section of the Home Department was created in 1907.

(b) It has not been the practice to put Indians in the Political Section but Indians have been employed as stenographers on secret and confidential work.

(c) Yes.

(d) Yes.

(e) It is not proposed to reserve the section for Europeans and Anglo-Indians. At the same time there are a large number of Indians in the Department and their distribution among the several sections of the office is a matter which must naturally rest with the Head of the Department responsible for its efficiency.

#### REVISION OF PAY OF THE IMPERIAL SECRETARIAT ESTABLISHMENTS.

426. Sir P. S. Sivaswamy Aiyer: (a) Is it a fact that the recent revision of pay of the Imperial Secretariat establishment has not equally benefited all persons holding similar or corresponding positions in the different departments and possessing similar qualifications?

(b) Is it a fact that promotions in some Departments of the Secretariat office establishment have been liberal and in others much less so owing to different Departments interpreting the orders in different ways?

(c) If the reply to (b) is in the affirmative, do the Government propose to equalise promotions in the different Departments?

Mr. S. P. O'Donnell: (a) There are always difficulties in applying general principles to individual cases, and the difficulties were particularly great in the matter of reckoning previous temporary or officiating service. To meet this difficulty Secretaries in each Department were given discretion to allow broken periods of service to count for increments provided the service rendered was consistently satisfactory.

(b) The discretion permitted to Secretaries may have had this result in certain cases, and it has been stated in a memorial received that some Departments have interpreted the rules more liberally than others.

(c) This memorial is being examined and the question of applying these principles in the same way to all those similarly affected is under consideration.

#### MEMORIAL OF ASSISTANTS AND CLERKS.

427. Sir P. S. Sivaswamy Aiyer: Is it a fact that the Assistants and Clerks in the Secretariat memorialised the Government a second time about their pay about six months ago and that no orders have yet been passed on their representations?

Mr. S. P. O'Donnell: Three memorials have been received from the assistants and clerks in the Secretariat, the last one in August 1920. No orders have as yet been passed, but they are now under consideration.

#### INSPECTOR OF OFFICE PROCEDURE.

428. Sir P. S. Sivaswamy Aiyer: What are the functions of the Inspector of Office Procedure? When was the appointment created and how many departments of the Secretariat have received the benefit of his inspection and with what result?