

and measures are now being considered for an enquiry into the actual conditions of labour in the matter of wages, prices, and cost of living. A committee, as suggested by the Honourable Member, will not be able to come to any decision without sufficient information on these points. If the Honourable Member would like any information about the lines along which it is proposed to collect the necessary data, Sir Thomas Holland shall be glad to show him the papers.

The Honourable Member is no doubt aware that the settlement of labour disputes is a provincial subject. Owing to the variety of conditions prevailing in different parts of India, it is not possible to put forward any uniform proposals on this subject. The Government of India, however, have addressed Local Governments with regard to the establishment of machinery in every province for the study of labour questions and for the settlement of labour disputes. The matter is already engaging the attention of Local Governments. A Commissioner of Labour has been appointed in Madras. The Bombay Government have obtained the services of a senior officer who is also Chairman of the Industrial Court, from the Ministry of Labour in London to organise a Labour Bureau. It is understood that other Local Governments are moving in the same direction.

#### ALI RAJAHS OF CANNANORE.

267. **Mr. S'Chamnad Sahib Bahadur :** (a) Is it a fact that the Ali Rajahs of Cannanore are the rightful sovereigns of the Laccadive Islands, that the said islands were sequestered by the Government for arrears of tribute on condition of annually rendering accounts to the Ruling Rajah, and restoring them after the arrears are cleared, that even after the arrears were cleared, neither the islands were restored nor even any account rendered for several years, that though after some agitation their restoration was ordered by the Government, the Madras Government delayed doing so until they got some of the members of the Rajah's family to sign a document giving up their rights in these islands in return for an annual malikana allowance of Rs. 23,000 reducing thereby the status of the Rajah from that of a Ruling Prince to that of an ordinary Jenmi, without even allowing (him) the honour of a salute or the title of His Highness, and that the present Rajah did not sign the document protesting against its injustice and illegality, and he received the allowance only under protest?

(b) If the facts are, as stated in part (a), do the Government propose to order the restoration of the islands to the Rajah who is their rightful owner and restore to him his status?

**Mr. S. P. O'Donnell :** I will have the records examined and hope to be in a position to reply to the Honourable Member's question later on in the session.

#### MAIL CONTRACT.

268. **Sir Frank Carter :** (a) What is the present position of the Mail Contract between the United Kingdom and India?

(b) Was the contract suspended during the war?

(c) If the contract was suspended, has it since been renewed and on what terms?

(d) If it has not been renewed, will Government be pleased to state what their intentions are regarding it?

**Mr. C. A. Innes:** (a) The arrangement for the conveyance of mails between the United Kingdom and India forms part of the contract between the Postmaster General, London, and the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company for the conveyance of the East India, China and Australia mails. This contract came into operation on the 1st February 1908 and is terminable at any time after the 31st January 1915 on 24 calendar months' previous notice by either party to the contract. The Postmaster General has arranged with the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company that notice to determine the contract shall not be given by either party before the 31st January 1922, so that the contract cannot terminate before the 31st January 1924 at the earliest.

(b) The contract was not suspended during the war.

(c) and (d). As the contract was not suspended, these questions do not arise.

#### QUARTERS FOR SECRETARIAT ASSISTANTS.

**269. Khan Sahib M. Ikramullah Khan:** (a) Is it a fact that racial distinction has been observed in the construction and allotment of quarters in Raisina for the Secretariat assistants and clerks? If so, will the Government be pleased to take early steps to remove such distinction?

(b) Is it a fact that the cost of the European quarters is much more than that of the Indian quarters?

(c) Is the Government aware that a large number of Indian assistants have adopted European style of living and that they live in houses of European type in Simla? If so, what arrangements has Government made for their accommodation in Raisina?

(d) Will the Government be pleased to state whether Sir Claude Hill ever promised that Indians living in European style will be provided with European style quarters? If so, how many Indian assistants and clerks—Muhammadans, Hindus and Sikhs—have been provided with such quarters?

(e) Is it a fact that no separate out-houses and servants' latrines have been provided with the C, D and E type of Indian quarters at Raisina? If so, how does the Government propose to meet the requirements of *pardah* observing families living in such quarters?

**Mr. J. Hullah** (on behalf of Colonel Sir S. D'A. Crookshank): (a) No racial discrimination is implied or intended in the construction and allotment of the clerks' quarters at Raisina. Different types of quarters have been provided for the assistants and clerks who live in the Indian and European style and, so far as possible, considering the large numbers involved, these quarters have been designed so as to suit the conveniences of the two styles taken as a whole.

(b) Taking architectural and siting, class and *pardah* considerations into account, an accurate comparison of cost cannot be drawn between the quarters in the two styles, but in certain cases the cost of the quarters in the European style is more than that of the quarters in the orthodox style.

(c) Government are well aware that some Indian assistants have adopted the European style of living but, owing to the limited number of European style quarters available and the fact that a considerable number of Europeans of the ministerial staff have still to be accommodated in tents, it is not possible