

remittance of freight amounts by the steamer agents in India till the delivery of the goods at destination port is established; and

(d) if so, Government's reaction to the above suggestion and what other measures it proposes to take to prevent the frauds ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI) :

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Increased incidence of maritime fraud is attributable to factors such as severe depression faced by Shipping Industry the world over. Consequently tonnage is running after limited cargo resulting in great temptation for unlawful activities.

As these frauds are of commercial nature, Government is not directly involved in taking penal action against the fraudulent parties. It devolves on the commercial interests to take appropriate action.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The recommendations of a Working Group appointed by Government to suggest remedial measures for preventing maritime frauds by tramp operators which also included the suggestion in part 'c' above have been accepted by the Government in principle. Certain other important measures suggested by the Working Group are to license the shipping agents, obtaining of bank guarantee, restriction on the shipping agents to withdraw from the agency until after the completion of the voyage in respect of which he has collected freight from shippers, etc.

Marriage age and Conception age in Andhra Pradesh

1413. **SHRI LAKSHMAN MALLICK :** Will the Minister of SOCIAL AND WOMEN'S WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item appearing in the Hindustan Times dated the 11th February, 1985 stating that in the

rural areas of Andhra Pradesh the average age of marriage is still 13 years and the conception age ranges between 15 to 35 years ; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government in the matter ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AND WOMEN'S WELFARE (SHRIMATI M. CHANDRASEKHAR) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The violation of any of the provisions of the Child Marriage Restraint Act is punishable through prosecution in a Court of Law. The Government has taken steps to educate the public about the evil consequences of child marriage by publicity through mass media and by involving voluntary organisations. The Child Marriage Restraint Act was amended in 1978 raising the age of marriage from 15 to 18 years for girls and from 18 to 21 for boys.

Findings of the Committee Appointed to Examine the Problems of the Staff of Badarpur Thermal Power Station

1414. **SHRI MOHAMMAD MAHFOOZ ALI KHAN :** Will the Minister of IRRIGATION AND POWER be pleased to refer to the reply given to part (a) of Starred Question No. 709 dated 17 April, 1984 regarding transfer of Badarpur Employees to N.T.P.C. and state :

(a) whether a Committee was appointed by the Department of Power to examine the personnel problems of Badarpur Thermal Power Station ;

(b) if so, whether the said Committee has also considered the cases of those Badarpur-based Central Government employees of B.T.P.C., referred to in the aforesaid reply, who have not been absorbed in N.T.P.C. nor considered for promotion during the last seven years by N.T.P.C. or by their parent Department viz. the Central Electricity Authority ;