

companies direct or to the Government of India;

(d) what are the prospects of setting up of blast furnaces for the production of iron and steel at Government level consequently upon the availability of the loan; and

(e) whether it is likely that America or any other foreign country may participate in case a Government-sponsored Iron and Steel Project is undertaken?

The Minister of Finance (Shri C. D. Desmukh): (a) It is not the usual procedure to ask the International Bank for any definite amount of loan for any particular project at the outset. Accordingly, no specific amount has been sought as loan from the International Bank for the expansion of iron and steel production in India. The amount will be negotiated after the Bank Mission, which is now in India, has submitted its report.

(b) Government have formulated certain proposals and these are now being discussed with the Bank Mission.

(c) The point whether the loan would be advanced to the steel producing companies direct or to the Government of India will also be a matter of negotiation with the Bank after the submission of the report by the Bank Mission.

(d) and (e). Government are exploring the possibilities of setting up a Government-owned unit for the production of iron and steel with the assistance of a loan from the International Bank and in collaboration with some existing steel manufacturer who would be willing to participate. It is too early to express an opinion about the prospects of such a project materialising.

RELIGIOUS TEACHERS FOR FORCES

299. Shri Veeraswamy: Will the Minister of Defence be pleased to state:

(a) whether religious teachers are employed in the Armed Forces;

(b) if so, what are the various religious subjects that are taught to the Forces;

(c) the number of such teachers and their scales of pay; and

(d) the total amount spent in 1951-52 on these teachers and the total amount allotted for this year?

The Minister of Defence (Shri Gopaldaswami): (a) Religious teachers are employed in the Army but not in the Navy and the Air Force.

(b) Hindu, Sikh, Muslim and Christian religious teachers have been employed in the Army.

(c) The actual number of religious teachers employed is not available as separate statistics by classes of employment of personnel are not maintained. The number of religious teachers authorised however, as on 31st May, 1952 on a unit basis was:—

Pandits	445
Maylvis	8
Granthis	88
TOTAL	541

The number of *padrees* employed is not available, as they are employed on a station basis where the number of a particular denomination warrants it. Their pay is Rs. 100 p.m.

Pay of religious teachers other than *padrees* is Rs. 35 to Rs. 45 p.m.

(d) Separate figures of expenditure on religious teachers are not compiled, nor is budget provisions made for categories of personnel separately.

GENERAL ELECTIONS

300. Shri Nana Dass: Will the Minister of Law be pleased to state:

(a) what was the total number of voters (for the last general elections) among the personnel of our Armed Forces;

(b) how many of them were issued with ballot papers; and

(c) how many of them exercised their franchise?

The Minister of Law and Minority Affairs (Shri Biswas): (a) to (c). The information is not available with the Election Commission and will be collected and laid on the Table of the House in due course.

COMMISSIONS IN THE INDIAN ARMY

301. Shri Buchhikotiah: (a) Will the Minister of Defence be pleased to state the total number of Commissions granted during the last year?

(b) How many were granted to persons from the ranks?

The Minister of Defence (Shri Gopaldaswami): (a) 489.

(b) 25.