

was more than doubled with 57,498 biogas units completed. During the current year, nearly 14,000 biogas units have been completed and the target of 75,000 units is expected to be met.

Under the country-wide field trial/demonstration programme, other renewable energy systems are being installed such as (i) solar thermal devices for water heating, timber seasoning, crop drying, desalination, etc.; (ii) solar photovoltaic systems for water pumping, lighting, communication sets, television, radio, etc.; (iii) wind mills for water pumping; (iv) energy plantations. There are nearly 516 renewable energy appliances/devices in the country covering approximately 116 districts.

Fiscal incentives are being provided for manufacturers and users of renewable energy equipment. Over 17,000 solar cookers have so far been sold under a subsidy scheme. Another subsidy scheme for wind pumps and solar photovoltaic pumps for minor irrigation is being implemented together with the Ministry of Irrigation.

All the above schemes are being implemented in the country through the nodal departments/agencies nominated by the State Governments and various other departments/agencies of Government of India.

Opening of E.P.F. Office at Salem in Tamil Nadu

273. SHRI C. PALANIAPPAN : Will the Minister of LABOUR AND REHABILITATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether an Employees Provident Fund Office is proposed to be opened at Salem, (Tamil Nadu) benefiting more than one lakh employees of mills, hotels, firms etc. ;

(b) action proposed to be taken to settle the gratuity etc. in for retiring workers in advance instead of waiting for four years ; and

(c) action proposed to be taken to start

a hill resort project fully sponsored by Government of India at Yercond hill of Salem for the benefit of labour ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRI DHARMAVIR) :

(a) Proposals for opening of sub-regional offices are considered by Government on the recommendations of the Regional Committees and the Central Board of Trustees of the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation. The Provident Fund authorities have intimated that a proposal to open a sub-regional office at Salem is under examination and will be placed before the Regional Committee shortly.

(b) The liability for payment of gratuity under the Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972 is that of the employers. They are required to make the payment within 30 days of the date of receipt of the application. In case of non-payment of gratuity, the aggrieved employee can make an application to the Controlling Authority for settlement of his claim.

(c) So far as the Ministry of Labour is concerned there is no such proposal.

Waiting List for Telephones in Delhi

274. SHRI R.P. YADAV : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the position of waiting list of telephones belonging to various Telephone Exchanges of Delhi Telephones, pertaining to various categories as on 1st July, 1983 ; and

(b) the names of the Telephone Exchanges which are termed as Frozen ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI V.N. GADGIL) : (a) The position of waiting list as on 1.7.1983 is given in the statement laid on the Table of the House. (Placed in Library. See No. L.T-6730/83)