

5000 Primary Teachers Going Without Retirement Benefits

By A Staff Reporter
GUWAHATI; Sept 5—Over 5000 primary school teachers in Assam; who retired six years ago; are understood to have got a raw deal. Those teachers reportedly have not been paid their pension; provident fund amount and gratuity till today.

Confirming this, the Director of Elementary Education, Sri Champak Gogoi tried to explain the situation as due to absence of a Service Conduct Rules for the elementary school teachers. He said that his Directorate prepared Service Rules in 1979 but those rules were not finalised by the Government of Assam. Unless rules were finalised; nothing could be done; he said.

The Services of primary school teachers were provincialised amidst fanfare of the Teachers' Day celebrations on September 5, 1975; and immediately thereafter over 3000 retired from service as per Government rules.

When the services of the

teachers were under the Board of Elementary Education; a teacher could work upto age of 60. After provincialisation; the superannuation age was fixed at 58 and as a result, over 3000 retired after the date of provincialisation. Now the figure of retired teachers has stood at over 5000.

When teachers were under the Board; a retired teachers used to get provident fund money and gratuity at the time of retirement. Asked how many teachers retired since provincialisation; Sri Gogoi said that there was no figure with the Directorate and now DI of Schools have been asked to collect data.

Following provincialisation of services of primary school teachers; the State Government instructed the concerned authority that the retired teachers be allowed to draw 50 per cent of their individual share in the provident fund. Payment of gratuity was stopped pending Government decision.

This action of the Government put the retired teachers in great inconvenience and hardship in their retired life that was advanced by two years or more due to the provincialisation.

A group of primary school teachers whom this correspondent met today; on the Teachers' Day got the impression that they were not interested in the celebration because nothing was reportedly done to improve their lot. They ruefully narrated fate of a number of retired teachers who are not getting a single paise even six years after their retirement. Some of the teachers are ailing and quite a number of them are passing day in extreme poverty. But the Government did not appreciate the poor teachers' difficulties, they added

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