

(d) Nil, because the transactions were with countries with whom the State Trading Corporation has rupee payment agreements.

Indian Handicrafts

*30. Shri J. B. S. Bist: Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to state.

(a) the steps taken to popularize Indian handicrafts in the UK and the Continent; and

(b) whether Government propose to open permanent stalls in these countries to bring the Indian Cottage Industry products within the reach of ordinary persons?

The Minister of Commerce (Shri Kanungo): (a) and (b) Steps for the promotion of exports of handicrafts are being taken by the Central Government in respect of all countries including U.K. and Continent. Apart from the Indian Handicrafts Development Corporation which was set up in April, 1958 to look after activities connected with exports, publicity is being given through exhibitions, trade centres, etc. abroad. Trade Delegation of business executives from foreign countries was also invited to India to establish direct contacts with dealers and experts.

A proposal to set up Trade centres exclusively for handicrafts at Frankfurt (West Germany), Los Angeles and New York is under consideration.

Closure of Textile Mills in Bombay State

*31. Shri Sonavane: Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to refer to the reply given to Starred Question No. 1242 on the 19th December, 1958 and state

(a) the reasons for the total and partial closure of (i) Rajen Textile and (ii) Jayashankar and (iii) Lokamanya Textile Mills respectively of Barsa in Bombay State, and

(b) the manner and method of solving the problem from the points of

view of fall in production and unemployment of nearly two thousand workers?

The Minister of Commerce (Shri Kanungo): (a) Jayashankar and Lokamanya Textile Mills which were to be closed partially have extended their notices of closure of third shift. Rajen Textile are reported to have been closed from 1st January, 1959. The difficulties of these manufacturing units stem from outmoded machinery and accumulation of stocks.

(b) 1,321 workers are affected by the closure of Rajen Textiles. There is no retrenchment in the other two Mills. The closed mill is to be surveyed this month by the Textile Commissioner's Office and the management will consider re-opening it in the light of the recommendations of the Survey Team.

Rebate on Handloom Products

*32. Shri Sampath: Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to state

(a) the latest position in regard to the amount of rebate dues to be paid to the handloom weavers co-operative societies in Madras State, and

(b) the steps taken to expedite the payment?

The Minister of Commerce (Shri Kanungo): (a) The State Government have reported that an amount of Rs. 55,34,565 is necessary to meet the expenditure in connection with the claims of rebate due to co-operative societies as on 31st March, 1958.

(b) An amount of Rs. 40 lakhs has been sanctioned.

Soap Manufacture

*33. Shri Gza. Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to state

(a) whether Government are aware of the difficulties experienced by indigenous non-motive power soap manufacturers in getting copra and caustic soda, and