

(d) whether Government have explored the possibilities of new markets for this commodity?

The Minister of Commerce (Shri Karmarkar): (a) and (b). There is no evidence of any real slump in the mica industry. Leaving out 1951-52, the period of stock-piling when there was an unusual rush to obtain supplies, the overall level of exports has been fairly well-maintained.

With the disappearance of a sellers' market, there is no doubt a demand from buyers that supplies should be made according to higher standards of quality.

(c) and (d). For stabilising the industry, Government have been advised that the quality for export should be improved by adopting a universal standard for grading mica. Action is being taken in this direction.

Other suggestions include:—

(1) Creation of central organisation for taking over export operations; and

(2) Promotion of research work to encourage use of mica in the country.

These suggestions are under examination and no decision has been reached. Wherever possible, this item is included for Export in Trade Agreements with foreign countries.

GOVERNMENT TEST HOUSE, ALIPORE

*912. **Shri Tulsidas:** Will the Minister of Works, Housing and Supply be pleased to state why the testing facilities available at the Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad, are not being utilised by Government to supplement the efforts of the Government Test House at Alipore in order to minimise overloading and the resultant delay in the latter?

The Minister of Works, Housing and Supply (Sardar Swaran Singh): For maintaining uniformity of standards it is desirable that testing to specifications is carried out by a single Central Testing Authority. I am not

aware that the capacity of the Government Test House, Alipore, is overloaded to such an extent as to cause concern on the score of delay.

कालीन उद्योग

*९१३. श्री आर० एन० सिंह: क्या वाणिज्य तथा उद्योग मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि क्या सरकार ने भारत में कालीन उद्योग के विकास के लिये कोई योजना बनाई है ?

The Minister of Commerce (Shri Karmarkar): Schemes for assistance to the carpet industry have been prepared by some State Governments and they have asked for financial assistance from the Centre. This request is under consideration.

WEAVERS' COLONIES

*914. **Shri Gadilingana Gowd:** Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to state:

(a) the total amount of loan given to former Madras State from 1946 till the end of September, 1953 for construction of weavers' colonies; and

(b) whether it is a fact that instalments of loans were not re-paid regularly consequent on the failure of weavers' societies to re-pay the loans to the State?

The Minister of Commerce and Industry (Shri T. T. Krishnamachari): (a) So far as the Government of India are concerned, the answer is in the negative.

(b) Does not arise.

Dhoties AND Sarrees

*917. **Shri Ramananda Das:** Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the prices of *dhoties* and *sarrees* have recently gone up in West Bengal and people are finding it difficult to procure them at reasonable prices;