

Up-Gradation of Visakhapatnam City

10151. SHRI MOHAMMAD ISMAIL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for not upgrading the Visakhapatnam city into 'B' class city;

(b) whether Government have received any memorandum from the workers and employees organisation of Visakhapatnam in this connection; and

(c) if so, the names of the organisation and the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI K. R. GANESH): (a) The population of Visakhapatnam Municipality, according to the 1971 census figures, is well below the limit of 4 lakhs which qualifies a city to be included in B-2 class.

(b) and (c). Representations were received from the Co-ordination Committee of Central Government Employees Unions and Associations of Visakhapatnam. Government have not found it possible to agree to the demand for upgrading Visakhapatnam to 'B-2' class.

"Rate of Levies on Import of Jute Goods from Nepal"

10152. SHRI T. D. KAMBLE: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state the rates of duties or levies leviable on the import of Jute goods from Nepal and the nature of such duties?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI K. R. GANESH): The rates of duty leviable on the import of Jute goods from Nepal are as follows:—

(1) Basic Customs Duty—Nil.

(2) Auxiliary duty of Customs—Nil with effect from 3rd May, 1973. Before that date auxiliary duty of Customs was leviable at the rate of 5 per cent ad-valorem.

(3) Countervailing Duty:—

(a) Hessians—Basic Excise Duty Rs. 600 per Metric tonne (no auxiliary duty).

(b) Other jute goods including jute twist, yarn, thread, rope and twine—Basic excise duty Rs. 400 per Metric tonne plus auxiliary duty of Rs. 200 per Metric tonne (i.e. 50 per cent of the basic excise duty).

Annual Convention of Travel Agents Association held in New Delhi on 22-3-1973

10153. DR. H. P. SHARMA: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether government's attention has been drawn to the observations and suggestions made at the annual convention of the Travel Agents Association of India held on 22nd March, 1973 in New Delhi;

(b) how far the practice of undercutting of air fares by international airways still prevails and the details of cases of such undercutting of fares that have come to Government's notice during the past one year; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to prevent this unethical practice during the past one year?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (DR. KARAN SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). It is believed that certain international airlines indulge in malpractices such as undercutting the IATA approved fares which result in the diversion of traffic. The following measures have been taken to deal with the situation:

(i) Reduced return excursion fares have been introduced between the USA and India.

(ii) Reduced return youth fares have been introduced between India and France.

(iii) A charter company has been established by Air India for operation of charters at cheap fares.

(iv) A new rule has been incorporated in the Aircraft Rules, whereby it is compulsory for airlines to file their tariffs with the Director General of Civil Aviation for approval.

Apart from the above measures, a close watch is being maintained by the International Air Transport Association enforcement organisation as well as by our own governmental authorities concerned with the infringement of the foreign exchange regulations.

Taking over of closed and sick Tea Estates

10154. DR. H. P. SHARMA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to amend

the Tea Act, 1953, with a view to incorporating therein provisions similar to those of Chapter III-A of the Industries (Development and Regulations) Act, 1951 in order to confer on the Tea Board the power to take over closed and sick Tea estates;

(b) when such a legislation will be brought before Parliament; and

(c) the broad outlines of the proposal?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI A. C. GEORGE): (a) to (c). Certain proposals in this regard are being examined by the Government.

Impact of Dollar Devaluation on Jute Trade

10155. DR. H. P. SHARMA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the assessment of the impact of dollar devaluation on Indian Jute Industry made by the Indian Jute Mills' Association in a press release dated February 27, 1973 as published in the Economic Times' dated 28th February, 1973; and

(b) if so, what is Government's independent assessment in this regard and how far it agrees with the IJMA's appraisal in the matter?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI A. C. GEORGE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The competitive position of jute goods in the U.S. Market has been affected marginally.

Meeting of Northern India Cotton Textile Mills' Association, held at New Delhi

10156. DR. H. P. SHARMA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the broad outlines of the observations and suggestions made at the ninth annual general meeting of the Northern India Cotton Textile Mills' Association, held in New Delhi on the 3rd April, 1973; and

(b) the decisions and steps taken by Government in the light thereof?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI A. C. GEORGE): (a) Some of the points made by the President, Northern India Cotton Textile Mills' Association in his speech delivered at the Ninth Annual General Meeting of the Association on 3rd April, 1973, in New Delhi were:

(i) increasing the spindleage and loomage in the cotton textile industry during the Fifth Plan;

(ii) relieving the textile industry from the burden of 40 per cent import-duty on cotton;

(iii) increase in the prices of controlled cloth; and

(iv) effecting certain changes in the scheme of distribution control on cotton yarn.

(b) (i) Exercises are under way to assess the quantum of additional spindleage, loomage, processing capacity etc. which should be created in the cotton/textile-industry during the Fifth Plan.

(ii) There is no change in the imposition of 40 per cent import duty on raw cotton.

(iii) The question of revision of the prices of controlled cloth can be considered only on receipt of the report of the Bureau of Industrial Costs & Prices who have been asked to undertake an enquiry into the prices of controlled cloth.

(iv) It has not been found possible to give effect to the changes in the scheme of distribution control on cotton yarn proposed by the Association.

Terms and Conditions of Surveyors and Loss Assessors of Nationalised General Insurance Companies

10157. SHRI BISWANARAYAN SHASTRI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether surveyors and loss assessors of the nationalised General Insurance Companies are the employees of the said concerns;

(b) if so, the terms and conditions of their service; and

(c) if not, whether Government propose to give recognition to them as is given to the chartered accountants?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRIMATI SUSHILA ROHTAGI): (a) to (c). The information is being collected and it will be laid on the Table of the House as soon as it is available.

Seizure of Pornographic Literature and Blue Films by Calcutta Customs

10158. SHRI BISWANARAYAN SHASTRI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether customs Authorities in Calcutta carried a raid on a ship at Khidderpur and seized a good quantity of pornographic literature and blue films;