

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY (PROF. SIDDHESHWAR PRASAD): (a) and (b). No, Sir. As a result of the increase in the cost of furnace oil on the one hand and easy availability of coal and rail transport on the other, a number of major industrial units have switched over and are switching over from furnace oil to coal resulting in the saving of 4.5 lakh tonnes of furnace oil valued at Rs. 27.5 crores in terms of foreign exchange during 1975-76. The savings during 1976-77 are expected to go up to 7.8 lakh tonnes of furnace oil.

Coir Development Scheme of Kerala

1490. SHRI A. K. GOPALAN: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether a revised proposal for Coir Development Scheme was submitted by Kerala Government to Central Government for approval and financial assistance during 1974;

(b) whether despite repeated requests from the Kerala Government, Government of India have not yet given approval to the proposal; and

(c) the reasons for the delay?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (SHRI A. P. SHARMA): (a) The Government of Kerala had submitted a revised proposal on 10-12-1974 for coir development for the Fifth Plan which envisaged assistance to the existing coir co-operative societies and for organisation of new primary coir cooperative societies, involving a total outlay of Rs. 41.72 crores. The proposal was examined in detail after which it was agreed that the State Government would concentrate on re structuring of the existing coir co-operative societies and that new coir cooperative societies need not be organised till all the existing potentially viable coir cooperative societies

had been made economically and financially viable. Accordingly, a special Central assistance of Rs. 4.31 crores was sanctioned to revitalise the existing potentially viable coir cooperative societies in the State. An amount of Rs. 3 crores has already been released to the State Government.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Study Re. Working of Sugar Factories in Maharashtra

1490-A. SHRI H. N. MUKERJEE Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether a study has been conducted regarding the working of sugar factories in Maharashtra; and

(b) if so, the findings of this study and the Government's reaction thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION (SHRI A. C. GEORGE): (a) Yes, Sir; a Study team was appointed to examine mainly the various problems relating to adequate supply of sugar cane to sugar factories in Maharashtra.

(b) The main findings and suggestions of the Study Team are: (a) there should be clear demarcation of sugarcane areas between different sugar factories; (b) cane research programmes in the State should be strengthened; (c) cane development should receive priority of attention of individual sugar factories; (d) special attention should be paid to development of irrigation in the areas of sugar factories; (e) atleast 50 per cent of purchase tax collected should be earmarked exclusively for sugar cane development work and research on sugar cane; (f) a revolving relief

fund should be created to which co-operatives also should be required to contribute; (g) there should be uniform price for cane in the State at least region-wise; and (h) in future, thorough and proper assessment of sugar cane availability should be made before a licence is recommended for establishment of a sugar factory.

The Government of India have brought the report of the Study Team to the notice of the Government of Maharashtra who are primarily concerned with the recommendations.

Directives to States to check rise in prices

1490-B. SHRI P. M MEHTA: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have issued any directive to the State Governments to check rise in prices;

(b) if so, the salient features thereof;

(c) how many States have taken action in the matter; and

(d) to what extent these measures have checked the rise in prices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION (SHRI A C GEORGE): (a) to (d). Before the presentation of the Budget for 1976-77, States were advised to observe the budget month as the 'Month of Vigilance' for ensuring availability of essential commodities at fair prices. On June 15, 1976, the Minister of State in the Ministry of Civil Supplies and Cooperation wrote to all Chief Ministers/Governors urging upon them to take appropriate

steps against hoarders, black markets and other anti-social elements with a view to ensuring that their undesirable activities do not lead to increase in prices. Subsequently, instructions were issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs on July 16, 1976 to State Governments and Union Territories Administrations to be vigilant and to take stringent action against hoarders etc. including the use of MISA and DISIR wherever necessary. State Governments responded to the guidelines of the Centre and have intensified enforcement measures. These measures have helped to check rise in prices.

Suggestion to take over control of essential commodities for distribution to vulnerable section

1490-C. SHRI M RAM GOPAL REDDY: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh has suggested to the Centre to take over control of a percentage of the essential commodities for distribution to the vulnerable sections at a reasonable price; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION (SHRI A. C. GEORGE): (a) The Government of India is not aware of this suggestion.

(b) The question does not arise.