

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION, SOCIAL WELFARE AND CULTURE (DR. PRATAP CHANDRA CHUNDER): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Electronic Instruments with Agricultural Universities

2525. SHRI M. KALYANASUNDARAM: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether a study team set up by the Electronics Commission has discovered that 30 to 35 per cent of the electronic instruments available with agricultural universities in India are lying idle;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) measures proposed to be taken to make use of these valuable instruments?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA): (a) Yes, Sir. The report of the Panel on Agri-Electronic Instrumentation set up by the Electronics Commission, published in September, 1976 stated that around 30 to 35 per cent of the total instruments available in the agricultural organisations are lying inoperative.

(b) The report gave particulars of only a few important instruments and not a complete list of all instruments reported to be lying idle.

The instruments are lying idle because of various reasons including improper selection, incomplete procurement, lack of knowledge in operation, inadequate maintenance etc.

(c) Government are aware of the situation. Most of the Agricultural Universities have already established Instrumentation Cells for the maintenance and repairs to these instruments. Care is now being exercised

in the selection, procurement and installation of the equipment.

ICAR is giving grants-in-aid to the agricultural universities for establishment of these Instrumentation Cells. The problem was also discussed at the last meeting of the Vice-Chancellors of the agricultural universities held in March 1977 and it was decided to hold a summer Institute on this subject with the help of the Electronics Commission at an early date. Scientists and technicians from agricultural universities will receive training in the handling, maintenance and other aspects of these instruments during the Summer Institute.

Liberalisation of the rate of Interest on House Building Advances

2526. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI: Will the Minister of WORKS AND HOUSING AND SUPPLY AND REHABILITATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the rates of interest on House Building Advances to Central Government employees were enhanced in August, 1975;

(b) if so, whether Government are aware that this has caused great hardship to the Government employees; and

(c) whether Government propose to reconsider its decision and liberalise the rates of interest to bring them at par with other public institutions like nationalised banks and other financial institutions?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI BIJU PATNAIK): (a) Yes, Sir. Earlier, the rates of interest were 6½ per cent per annum, flat. With effect from 6th August, 1975, these were revised as under:—

(i) 6½ per cent per annum for advances upto Rs. 25,000,

(ii) 8 per cent per annum for advances between Rs. 25001 to Rs. 50,000, and

(iii) 10 per cent per annum on the advances between Rs. 50,001 to Rs. 70,000.

(b) For employees taking an advance of or upto Rs. 25,000, there was no increase in rate. For the others, the revision in rates did mean an increase but different interest rates being applicable to the same advance on a slab-rate basis, the average interest payable on the total loan will be less than what it appears on the face of it. Thus, the average rate of interest even on the highest permissible amount of Rs. 70,000 will be 8.03 per cent only. Besides, the Government has directed that the costlier loan should be adjusted first. This will, therefore, further reduce the interest burden.

(c) The rates of interest of HUDCO and the Apex Cooperative Housing Finance Society have been studied. Barring the interest rate of HUDCO for the Economically Weaker Sections, whose household income is Rs. 350 p.m. or under, and for whom the interest rate is 5½ per cent p.a., the Government's interest rate for its employees is more favourable than the interest rate of these financial institutions. The banks do not generally lend for housing except to a limited extent for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes hostels where the rate of interest is less and for rural housing. To their employees, different banks give at different rates, some very concessional, but the Government does not propose to revise its interest rate to be at par with them.

12.00 hrs.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

REVIEW AND ANNUAL REPORT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LTD., NEW DELHI FOR 1975-76 AND A NOTIFICATION UNDER REQUISITIONING AND ACQUISITION OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY ACT, 1952

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI BIJU PATNAIK): On behalf of Shri Sikander Bakht, I beg to lay on the Table:—

(1) A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (1) of section 619A of the Companies Act, 1956:—

(i) Review by the Government on the working of the Housing and Urban Development Corporation Limited, New Delhi, for the year 1975-76.

(ii) Annual Report of the Housing and Urban Development Corporation Limited, New Delhi, for the year 1975-76 along with the Audited Accounts and the comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-590/77].

(2) A copy of Notification No. S.O. 4226 (Hindi and English versions) published in Gazette of India dated the 4th December, 1976, under sub-section (2) of section 17 of the Requisitioning and Acquisition of immovable Property Act, 1952. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-591/77].

FERTILISER (MOVEMENT CONTROL) 2ND AMENDMENT ORDER 1977, FOOD CORPORATIONS (AMDT.) RULES, 1977, ANNUAL REPORT OF F.C.I. FOR 1975 76 AND STATEMENTS RE. DELAY IN LAYING PAPERS, ETC.

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI