

coasts specially in Contai area of West Bengal;

(b) whether any report in this regard has been submitted by the Union Government's representatives who visited West Bengal recently and if so, the details therein; and

(c) whether any proposal has been made by the Government of West Bengal in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY  
(SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a)  
No, Sir.

(b) and (c). A Team consisting of the Salt Commissioner, Government of India, Chairman-cum-Managing Director, Hindustan Salts Ltd. and Director of Industries, Government of West Bengal, visited, *inter-alia*, the Contai area in West Bengal to find out whether production of salt can be augmented by utilising vacant lands in that area. They have located some additional areas for salt production. The matter would be pursued further after the report of the Study Team appointed by the West Bengal Government for exploring the possibility of salt extraction in Contai area is received.

#### Rise in the Prices of Sunlight and Lifebuoy Soaps

1929. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the prices of various soaps like 'Sunlight' and 'Lifebuoy' manufactured by Hindustan Lever and used by common man have gone up in the month of January and February; if so, reasons thereof; and

(b) whether Government have received complaints of artificial scarcity regarding these soaps and reduction of oil contents in these items; if so, the steps taken to assure that these items are supplied according to ISI standards by the Hindustan Levers?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY  
(SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a)

Yes, Sir. This is due to higher prices of oils used in the manufacture of soaps.

(b) No complaint of scarcity of soaps has been received by the Government. However, in regard to the reduction of oil content in soaps, a complaint has been received by the Ministry of Commerce, Civil Supplies and Co-operation, who are examining it in consultation with ISI.

#### Price of Jute

1930. SHRI MOHD. HAYAT ALI: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been sharp rise in the price of jute and jute goods;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the recent price hike in jute goods is due to the fact that some owners of jute mills in West Bengal are not adhering to the directions of Jute Commissioner that 'No jute mills should keep in stock raw jute beyond four weeks; and

(c) if so, names of such jute mills and what action Government proposes to take against them?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY  
(SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) The prices of both raw jute and jute goods in the jute year 1977-78 had been rising steadily. In case of jute goods, however, the prices are now showing a downward trend. In October, 1977, when the raw jute prices had touched Rs. 240 per quintal, Jute Commissioner imposed a ceiling of Rs. 225 per quintal beyond which the purchase and sale of raw jute was disallowed.

(b) and (c). No, Sir. Jute Commissioner has instituted criminal prosecutions against the following four Jute Mills under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, for keeping stocks above permissible limit:—

1. M/s. Bally Jute Company Ltd.,

2. M/s. Birla Jute Manufacturing Co. Ltd.,

3 M/s. Anglo India Jute Mills Co. Ltd., and

4. M/s. Champdany Jute Co. Ltd. At present, mills are permitted to stock raw jute only upto six weeks' consumption.

#### Exemption of Cement from Import Duty

1931. SHRI AGHAN SINGH THAKUR Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state.

(a) whether Government have exempted cement from import duty;

(b) the total quantity likely to be imported with particulars of the medium of import;

(c) the cost and the sale price per bag; and

(d) how far the supply position of Cement will be eased as a result of this measure and how this imported cement is proposed to be distributed?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The State Trading Corporation of India has so far contracted for the import of 84 lakh tonnes of cement. (plus/minus 10 per cent) from South Korea, Poland and Rumania. The cement is presently being imported through the ports of Bombay, Cochin Madras and Visakhapatnam.

(c) The landed cost of the imported cement per bag is about Rs. 30. Imported cement is being sold generally at the same price as for indigenous cement. The price per bag, however, varies slightly from State to State and from place to place in the same State depending on the incidence of Central Sales Tax, State Sales Tax, road transport charges and octroi etc. As the landed cost of the imported cement is higher than the cost of indigenous cement, Government have decided to pool the prices and increase the F.O.R.

destination price of cement by Rs. 17 per tonne w.e.f. 7th January, 1978 so that, together with local levies, the retail price did not increase by more than Rs. 20 per tonne or Re. 1 per bag.

(d) As a result of import of cement supply position has considerably eased, especially in the Port towns and nearby areas. Imported cement is distributed in the same manner and through the same channels as indigenous cement.

#### Rural Industries in Tamil Nadu

1932. SHRI RAGAVALU MOHANARANGAM:

DR. P. V. PERIASAMY.

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the particulars of the wide embracing plan for setting up of rural industries in Tamil Nadu; and

(b) the extent of Central assistance sought in this regard and the extent of such assistance sanctioned or proposed to be sanctioned?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Under the Centrally sponsored scheme of Rural Industries Project Programme, 5 districts viz. Tirunelveli, Salem, Chingleput, Ramanathapuram and Dharmapuri have been covered so far. Under this scheme Central assistance is given to the State Government for meeting full expenditure on the establishment of the project and for organising promotional schemes like training programme, common facility service centre etc. Assistance by way of loan is also provided to State Government for re-advancing the same at a very low rate of interest to the entrepreneurs for starting industries in the project area.

(b) The funds are allotted by the Central Government on the basis of funds available for this programme. From the year 1962-63 to 1976-77 an amount of Rs. 216.18 lakhs comprising