

Closing Down of Consignment Agencies for Iron and Steel

615. DR. VASANT KUMAR PANDIT: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether by policy decision Government have closed down consignment Agencies for Iron and Steel,

(b) whether it is a fact that in spite of this Consignment Agencies of Amrut Steel and Rati Steel of Thane, Bombay and P. V. Shroff of Pune are still continuing; and

(c) if so, have Government made any inquiries and the reasons for keeping the above three agencies operating?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b). Matters like appointment of Consignment Agents are of a commercial nature and these are decided by the producers themselves, taking into consideration various relevant factors. Government does not interfere in such matters and the question of Government taking a policy decision does not arise.

(c) Does not arise.

Enquiry into gold auctions

617. SHRI FAROOQ ABDULLAH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Union Government have also taken the decision to conduct an enquiry into "converting of gold" by a consortium of people at the gold auctions held during the Janata regime;

(b) if so, when the same is likely to be taken; and

(c) what are the reasons for delay in taking the final decision?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN): (a) to (c). In pur-

suance of the statement made by the Prime Minister in the Lok Sabha the matter is under examination of the Government.

Poor supplies of Essential Commodities to States

618. SHRI FAROOQ ABDULLAH. Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether several States have made a complaint to him regarding poor supplies of essential commodities to the States for the last two months;

(b) if so, which are the States,

(c) the main reasons for poor supply of essential commodities to the States;

(d) what steps are being taken to improve the position;

(e) whether he had called the meeting of the State Ministers of Civil Supplies to discuss the problem; and

(f) if so, the outcome of the Conference?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b). During the past two months, Department of Civil Supplies has received complaints about shortages of some essential commodities from Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, West Bengal, Orissa, Punjab, Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir, Meghalaya, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Goa, Daman & Diu and Chandigarh.

(c) The main reasons for supply constraints of a few essential commodities have been likely fall in the production of agricultural commodities including foodgrains, sugarcane and oilseeds, teething troubles involved in re-introduction of dual pricing in sugar and movement bottlenecks.

(d) Efforts are being made to overcome infra-structural constraints and step up the movement of essential commodities like sugar and food-grains and stream-line their distribution. Efforts are also being made to increase their production and keep bank credit under check. The exports of meat have been banned. State Governments have been asked to enforce vigorously the Essential Commodities Act and similar enactments.

(e) and (f). The conference of State Ministers of Civil Supplies and Advisers to Governors was held in New Delhi on 7.3.1980 for reviewing the public distribution system and enforcement measures to improve supply of essential commodities. State Governments were impressed upon to strengthen the scope of public distribution system to ensure equitable distribution of essential commodities in short supply. Some problems being faced by State Governments and Union Territory Administrations in the supply and/or movement of essential commodities have been noted by the concerned Ministries of the Union Government and remedial action will be taken.

Help to IA and AI to meet financial crisis due to fuel price escalations

619. SHRI FAROOQ ABDULLAH:
SHRI K. MALLANNA:
SMT. MOHSINA KIDWAI:

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Union Government has decided to help Indian Airlines and Air India to meet the financial crisis faced by them following the fuel price escalations;

(b) if so, whether the fuel shortage has also affected these airlines;

(c) if so, to what extent and what help Government have agreed to provide them; and

(d) to what extent these two Airlines have been affected by the fuel price escalation and fuel shortage?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI KARTIK ORAON): (a) Government have decided to provide additional capital to Air-India. Indian Airlines has not requested for any financial help from Government.

(b) to (d). Whereas the fuel shortage has affected Air-India considerably, Indian Airlines operations have not been constrained by such shortage. The operating costs of both the Airlines have gone up due to periodic fuel price hikes during the year 1979-80. The fuel bill of Indian Airlines has gone up to Rs. 66.50 crores (estimated) for the year 1979-80 as against Rs. 47.91 crores during the year 1978-79. The fuel bill of Air-India has gone up to Rs. 138 crores (estimated) for the year 1979-80 as against Rs. 65.46 crores during the year 1978-79. Government has approved an additional capital of Rs. 9.60 crores to Air-India for the year 1980-81.

Amount advanced by Nationalised Banks and financial institutions to Kohinoor Mills

620. SHRI K. A. RAJAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the nationalised banks and other public financial institutions have advanced huge amounts of money to the Kohinoor Mills for its modernisation and other purposes;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether Government have a proposal under consideration to take-over this mill and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JAGANNATH PAHADIA): (a) and (b). The Central Bank of India, who