

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRI R. K. KHADILKAR): The administration of the Employees' Provident Fund is the concern of the Central Board of Trustees set up under the Employees' Provident Funds and Family Pension Fund Act, 1952 and not the direct concern of the Central Government. The provident Fund authorities have reported as under:—

(a) and (b). The Employees' Provident Funds and Family Pension Fund Act, 1952 already applies to mica mines employing 20 or more persons. Every possible effort has been made to cover mica mines in Bihar and Rajasthan under the Act. However, some of the establishments which are situated in remote areas or deep in the interior of the regions not served by regular transport facilities could not be surveyed due to inaccessibility. In order to overcome these difficulties, a vehicle has been provided to the Regional Office, Bihar and the question of providing the same to Rajasthan is being examined.

Memorandum by Construction Workers

3619. SHRI S.M. BANERJEE : Will the Minister of LABOUR AND REHABILITATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether no labour law is applicable in the case of construction workers ;

(b) whether workers' representatives had submitted a memorandum to him in the month of may, 1971 ; and

(c) if so, the steps taken by Government to get them covered under various labour laws ?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRI R. K. KHADILKAR) : (a) No.

(b) Yes.

(c) A number of labour laws are already applicable to the workers in the construction industry.

The CPWD/MES Contractors' Labour Regulations, though not statutory, are also applicable to the construction workers in CPWD and MES Departments.

Besides, there is a proposal to have a legislation to provide for the safety of the workers employed in the construction industry.

Subsidy paid to Sugar Mills

3620. SHRI S. M. BANERJEE
SHRI C. JANARDHANAN :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state the total amount of subsidy paid to Indian Sugar Mills Association or Sugar Mill owners during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHER SINGH) : No subsidy was paid to Indian Sugar Mills Association or Sugar Mill owners during the last three years.

Implementation of Abolition of Contract Act in Iron Ore Mines of Baragonda and Gua, Bihar

3621. SHRI B. K. MODAK : Will the Minister of LABOUR AND REHABILITATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Abolition of Contract Act passed recently has been implemented in iron ore mines Baragonda and Gua, Mines (Bihar) ;

(b) if so, the number of contracts abolished; and

(c) whether minimum wages and other facilities are given to the contract workers?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRI R. K. KHADILKAR) : (a) and (b). The Central Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970 came into force with effect from 10-2-71. To implement the various provisions of the Act, the Contract Labour Central Advisory Board, the Registering, the Licencing, Appellate Authorities and Inspectors are being appointed.

(c) Employment in iron ore mines is not covered by the Minimum Wages Act.

Shortage of Cotton in the Country

3622. SHRI N. S. BISHT : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is an acute shortage of cotton in the country due to which many textile mills are facing closure ; and

(b) if so, the steps taken or proposed to be taken to remedy the situation and increase the production of cotton ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE) : (a) Shortage of cotton during 1970-71 had threatened uninterrupted working of cotton textile mills in the country.

(b) To meet the situation, the Government have resorted to imports of cotton from abroad. So far approximately 10.5 lakh bales have been imported. Besides this, the Government took steps for arresting rise in prices of cotton, and for ensuring, as far as possible, equitable distribution of the avail-

able supplies. Efforts are also being intensified to raise the production of cotton in the country. In addition to Centrally Sponsored Schemes in operation for a few years, a new scheme for Intensive Cotton Distt. Programme formulated on the lines of the IADP with an outlay of 14.74 crores has been approved by the Government of India. Being a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, concerned State Governments will now sanction the projects so far as they are concerned. Advance action has been taken for early implementation of the scheme. A statement indicating the salient features of this programme is enclosed. Considerable stress has also been laid on research on cotton under the coordinated improvement scheme. A hybrid variety of cotton (Hybrid-4) which has a considerable potential of increased production is being extended to suitable areas. The implementation of Intensive Cotton District Programme and spread of Hybrid-4 is likely to augment the indigenous supply of cotton by 7-8 lakh bales during 1973-74.

STATEMENT

A new scheme for intensive cotton district programme, formulated on the lines of the Intensive Agricultural District Projects with an outlay of Rs. 14.74 crores, has been approved by the Government of India. This would extend to irrigated and rainfed areas. In the irrigated belt, six districts in five States having compact and sizeable areas under cotton, have been selected. These districts account for 52% of the total irrigated cotton area. Every effort will be made to popularise the package of practices. For this purpose, adequate field staff would be employed and provided with transport for keeping close contact with the farmers. To induce the growers to adopt the recommended schedule of plant protection, subsidy on chemicals and equipments has been provided. For streng-