

(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-

thening plant protection work, provision has also been made for purchase of equipment by the State Departments of Agriculture to be hired to the farmers.

In case of rainfed cotton, which is subject to uncertainty due to the fluctuations in rainfall, the programme is proposed to be taken up on a pilot basis over an area of 20,000 hectares in each of the seven districts selected for the purpose. The programme in such areas would consist of :

(i) Intensive pilot demonstration.

(ii) Expanded programme on somewhat larger areas where a few selected techniques would be taken up.

Whereas the entire cost of the intensive pilot demonstrations would be met by the Government of India, suitable incentives have been provided under the expanded programme by way of 50% subsidy in the first two years and 25% in the last year on pesticides and urea for foliar application.

Farm Information Publicity Unit

3623. SHRI N. S. BISHT : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) the main features of the Farm Information Publicity Unit alongwith the number of posts and pay scales;

(b) the present strength of the unit; and

(c) the methods of manning the posts.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE) : (a) and (b). A statement is laid on the table of the House. [*Placed in library See No. LT—571/71*]

(c) The post are either filled by direct recruitment by promotion. The direct

recruitment in respect of Class I & II posts is being made through the Union Public Service Commission and Class III posts through the Employment Exchange.

Suggestion by Study Group of F. A. O. on Rice Economy and Trade

3624. SHRI P. GANGADEB :

SHRI NIHAR LASKAR :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Food and Agriculture Organisation Study Group which met at Rome on the 24th to 28th May, 1971 had made suggestions for the solution of problems confronting the World's rice economy and trade ;

(b) if so, the suggestions made; and

(c) how far the suggestions have been accepted by Government of India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE) : (a) to (c). The FAO Study Group on Rice met at Rome from 24th to 28th May, 1971. The Report of the Study Group has not yet been received from FAO. It has been reported by our representative, who attended its Session, that the Study Group discussed the Report of the Adhoc Working Party on International Action on Rice, which had been set up by it at its previous Session to examine the problems confronting the world rice economy and the possible solutions thereof. The Working Party had suggested that the broad objective should be to achieve a balanced situation in production, consumption and trade in rice. Its recommendations, *inter alia* envisaged flexibility in rice production policies so as to assure adequate supplies