

Andal and Madra Colliery (Birlas) near Andal have been thoroughly inspected by the Khan Vibhag in between September, 1970 to April, 1971; if so, when;

(b) whether numerous violations of the Mines Act, Rules and Regulations have been detected, if so, the details thereof;

(c) what specific steps have been taken against the managers, agents and directors of the concern for these violations; and

(d) whether all the defects and irregularities as pointed out by the Khan Vibhag have been removed?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRAM AUR PUNARVAS MANTRI) (SHRI R.K. KHADILKAR): (a) to (d). A statement giving the information in regard to the Proper Kajora and Moira Collieries is laid on the Table of the House. [*Placed in Library.* See No. LT-216/71].

Steps to check losses suffered by Consumers Cooperatives

547. SHRI S. A. MURUGANTHAM: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE (KRISHI MANTRI) be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of Consumer Cooperatives in the country have incurred losses in their working;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether efforts have been made to run these Cooperatives economically; and

(d) if so, the details of the steps taken in this direction?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (KRISHI MANTRALAYA MEN UP MANTRI) (SHRI JAGANNATH PAHADIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The main reasons are: (i) decline in their sales turnover in recent years due

to relaxation of controls on food-grains and sugar, which formed bulk of their business; (ii) adverse fluctuation in prices of agricultural commodities; (iii) high overhead costs as against low margins of profit, especially on controlled commodities; (iv) large over-dues from member societies, against supplies made on credit; (v) injudicious purchases and lack of inventory control; (vi) comparative inexperience of management and staff; and (vii) in some cases, mismanagement, heavy shortage in stocks, pilferages, and other mal-practices.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Through inspections and studies conducted at Central and State levels, the reasons for uneconomic working of Consumer Cooperatives in general, as also of individual institutions, have been identified, and measures for improvement in their working have been spelt out. General guidelines, together with detailed suggestions in respect of various Cooperative Stores, have been sent to State Governments. The problems, and the remedial measures therefor, are discussed at Conferences, Seminars, meetings of the Central Advisory Committee on Consumer Cooperatives, and other forums, and the decisions and recommendations circulated to all concerned. A Sub-Committee of the Central Advisory Committee on Consumer Cooperatives studied the working of Consumer Cooperatives in five States, and its reports, containing its observations and recommendation for improvement have been circulated to State Governments.

Amendment of Employees Provident Fund Act

548. SHRI S. A. MURUGANTHAM: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRAM AUR PUNARVAS MANTRI) be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to amend the Employees Provident Fund Act;

(b) if so, the nature of amendments proposed to be made; and

(c) when the amending Bill is proposed to be brought before Parliament?