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12.13 hrs.

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

[English]

Statements showing action taken by Government on Recommendations

SHRIMATI CHANDRA TRIPATHI (Chandauli): I beg to lay on the Table statements (Hindi and English versions) showing action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in Chapter I and final replies in respect of Chapter V of:—

- (i) Thirty-Fourth Report of Estimates Committee (Eighth Lok Sabha) on Action Taken by Government on the recommendations contained in Eighth Report (Eighth Lok Sabha) on the Ministry of Commerce— Tobacco Board.
- (ii) Thirty-Fifth Report of Estimates Committee (Eighth Lok Sabha) on Action Taken by Government on the recommendations contained in Seventeenth Report (Eighth Lok Sabha) on the Ministry of Finance (Department of Economic Affairs)— Reclassification of Transactions relating to Defence Pensions.

12.14 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

[English]

Closure and lockout in large number of Jute Mills in West Bengal

SHRI HARISH RAWAT (Almora): I call

the attention of the Minister of Textiles to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon:

“The situation arising out of closure and lock out in large number of jute mills in West Bengal and the measures taken by the Government to resolve the crisis facing the industry.”

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA): Sir, The Motion seeks to draw attention to the situation arising out of closure and lock out in large number of jute mills in West Bengal and the measures taken by the Government to resolve the crisis facing the industry.

At present, 19 jute mills affecting about 74,400 workers are lying closed in West Bengal. This is besides the 3 permanently closed jute mills involving about 6,900 workers. The details of jute mills lying closed at present are given in the list which is given below.

The main reason put forward by jute mills for closure generally is labour trouble. However, liquidity problems arising out of adverse trading conditions due to imbalance between cost of production and sale price realisation are also reported to be contributory factors for such closure.

Of late, prices of jute goods have remained depressed due to seasonal slump in demand (reduced volume of purchases of jute bags through DGS&D for packing foodgrains), increasing competition from synthetic substitutes for cement and fertiliser packing, distress sales by weaker mills and suspension of shipment of jute goods from Calcutta Port due to lock-out declared by Bargeowners from 14th June, 1987 in response to work-to-rule agitation by Bargemen which started a month earlier. All these factors have led to increase in unsold stocks of jute goods with mills despite reduced volume of production in recent months.