

SHRI K. R. GANESH: There is a proposal before Government to increase the production. Sheep-breeding has been improved and the quantity of wool produced has increased.

(a) whether the State Government of Kerala have made a request to the Prime Minister for fixation of prices of essential commodities; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

**Loans provided to Adivasi Areas in Orissa under concessional rate of interest**

\*365. SHRI C. M. SINHA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the amount of financial assistance provided by the Central Government to the Adivasi areas in the State of Orissa under the scheme of concession rate of interest for certain categories of borrowers started by Public Sector Banks; and

(b) the number of persons benefited thereunder during the current year?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YESHWANTRAO CHAVAN):

(a) and (b). Public sector banks have completed identification of the branches where the scheme of Differential Rate of Interest is to be implemented and have commenced lending under the Scheme only recently. Reports received so far indicate that in Orissa State 26 branches have been selected and of these 16 are in tribal districts. Details of the total amount disbursed under the scheme as well as the number of persons benefited in Orissa State are not yet available. In this connection it may be mentioned that the banks do not maintain statistics separately for Adivasis, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes on the one hand and the other borrowers on the other.

**Request made by Kerala Government for fixation of prices of essential commodities**

\*367. SHRIMATI BHARGAVI THANKAPPAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YESHWANTRAO CHAVAN):

(a) The Government of Kerala have made a request for the public distribution of essential commodities like foodgrains, pulses, sugar, cloth, edible oils etc. at fixed prices through fair price shops.

(b) There is already a network of fair price shops distributing wheat and rice at fixed prices. Levy sugar is also being distributed through fair price shops. In certain States a limited quantity of edible oil and pulses is being distributed through fair price shops. A decision has also been taken to sell the entire production of controlled cloth through fair price shops approved by the State Governments, Super Bazars, Fair Price Shops affiliated to the National Co-operative Consumers Federation and mills' retail shops.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: What has it got to do with his Ministry, Sir? I think it has nothing to do with his Ministry. Is his Ministry a Ministry of 'shock absorbers'?

SHRIMATI BHARGAVI THANKAPPAN: Will the Minister consider increase of fair price shops in Kerala?

SHRI YESHWANTRAO CHAVAN: I am sorry I won't be able to give the figure of fair-price shops in Kerala. For the entire area I do not have the figure with me. Kerala State is one of the States where there is a very good organisation of the fair-price shops. And, it is because of this, that the Chief Minister has pointed out that if there is supply of essential commodities they can make a better distribution.