

respect of oilseeds, raw cotton and kapas, and foodgrains, while the cost of credit has been raised by prescribing minimum rates of interest. The net liquidity ratio of banks has been raised by stages from 30 to 34 per cent, and in January last, the Bank rate was raised by 1 per cent with effect from 8th January, 1971.

(b) and (c). Unscrupulous traders/manufacturers may occasionally feel tempted to take advantage of the temporary shortage in the supplies of essential articles and indulge in hoarding and black marketing. To deal with such malpractices, the Government has delegated powers under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, to all the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations for regulating the prices, supply and distribution of essential commodities.

For certain offences under the Act, the maximum period of imprisonment was increased through an amendment in 1967 from 3 to 5 years, and a minimum punishment of one month's imprisonment for second and subsequent offences was made mandatory. District authorities have powers to confiscate essential commodities in the event of contavention of orders issued under the Act, and the offenders are liable to be debarred from carrying on business in such commodities for a period of not less than 6 months. The provision for summary trial under the Act has been extended for the present for a further period of two years, namely, upto 31st December, 1971.

#### Scholarship for Post-Graduate Studies

169. SHRI INDER J. MALHOTRA : Will the Minister of EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that an income limit has been fixed for the award of 50 Government scholarships for Post-Graduate Studies in Engineering and other subjects abroad ;

(b) if so, the limit of income fixed and the reasons therefor ; and

(c) whether fixation of such income restriction will not amount to discrimination ?

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE (SHRI SIDHARTHA SHANKAR RAY) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Rs. 1,000/- P.M. from all sources. As this Scheme is intended to provide financial assistance to meritorious students, who are citizens of India, and who do not have the means to go abroad for further studies, an income limit has been fixed.

(c) It will not amount to discrimination.

#### Devaluation of Indian Currency

170. SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have any proposal for further devaluation of Indian currency ; and

(b) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANTRAO CHAVAN) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

#### Effect of Rise in Prices of Fourth Plan

171. SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the recent rise in prices is going to effect the Fourth Plan ; and

(b) if so, what effective measures are being taken to check the price rise ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANTRAO CHAVAN) : (a) Despite the recent rise in prices, it is the Government's intention to implement the major programmes included in the Plan according to schedule.

(b) The maintenance of price stability is one of the principal objectives of Government policy. This is sought to be achieved through appropriate fiscal and monetary policies and physical and administrative controls, apart from ensuring the speedy implementation of the programmes of agricultural and industrial production. Fiscal measures include efforts to raise resources in a non-inflationary manner, while monetary measures include selective credit control *via* the Reserve Bank of India so as to control bank advances against commodities subjected