

Shri Pattabam Gopalan:
 Shri Jyotirmoy Basu:
 Shri K. M. Abraham:
 Shri Vihawanatha Menon:
 Shri K. Anrudhan:
 Shrimati Susela Gopalan:

Will the Minister of Commerce be pleased to state:

(a) whether cotton position in the country has improved;

(b) if so, how it compares with that of 1965; and

(c) whether instructions have been issued to all textile mills not to close on Saturdays?

The Minister of Commerce (Shri Dinesh Singh): (a) No, Sir. Because of the installation of additional spinning capacity, the gap between demand and supply has increased.

(b) The general expectation is that the crop this year will not be better than the crop in 1965-66.

(c) The answer is in the negative.

Cotton Requirement during 1967-68

*333. Shri S. S. Kothari: Will the Minister of Commerce be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that adequate quantity of cotton would not be available for meeting the needs of the cotton mill industry during 1967-68;

(b) if so, the estimated shortfall; and

(c) how Government propose to make it good?

The Minister of Commerce (Shri Dinesh Singh): (a) and (b). The hon'ble Member is presumably referring to the current cotton season (September, 1968—August, 1967). In this season, the shortfall in the available supplies of cotton is estimated at about 1.1 million bales.

(c) This shortfall is proposed to be met by a reduction in the mill consumption of cotton through reduced

machine activity and by importing, to the extent possible, additional quantities of foreign cotton.

Requisitioning of Cotton Stocks by Textile Commissioner

*336. Shri Indulal Yajnik: Will the Minister of Commerce be pleased to state:

(a) whether the cotton stocks requisitioned by the Textile Commissioner are likely to prove totally inadequate to run the textile mills during the ensuing months;

(b) whether the present owners of the cotton stocks are unwilling to sell them to the mills at the ceiling prices fixed by Government at present; and

(c) whether Government are considering the upward revision of the cotton prices in view of the failure of the last monsoon with a view to giving relief to the farmers and to avoid the closure of many mills?

The Minister of Commerce (Shri Dinesh Singh): (a) It was not the intention that the Textile Commissioner should requisition the entire cotton crop for supply to all the textile mills during the ensuing months. However, the Textile Commissioner did requisition some stocks of cotton at the specific request of mills who were faced with serious difficulty in procuring supplies of cotton at appropriate ceiling prices. He is continuing to do so.

(b) According to Government's information, during the months of December and part of January, cotton was mostly available to the mills from the market around the ceiling prices fixed by Government and it was only from the second half of January that prices are reported to have started rising and have been consistently ruling above those ceilings except for Bengal Deshi Cotton.

(c) There is no proposal to raise the price of cotton further.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: I want to know whether the hon. Minister is aware that this artificial shortage of cotton is mainly due to the fact that