

Amendment of Essential Commodities Act

166. SHRI K. L. N. PRASAD: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state

(a) whether Government are contemplating major amendments to the Essential Commodities Act to check hoarding, blackmarketing and other related economic offences;

(b) if so, by when the legislation is likely to be introduced in the Parliament;

(c) whether hoarding and black-marketing of essential commodities have increased in the recent past; and

(d) whether it is a fact that great hardship is faced by people in getting the essential commodities and if so, what steps are being taken in this regard?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI BRAJA MOHAN MOHANTY):

(a) Yes Sir.

(b) The Bill is likely to be introduced in the current session of Parliament.

(c) No Sir.

(d) No Sir.

Redemption of gold bonds

167. SHRI M. KALYANASUNDARAM: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any decision has been taken regarding redemption of gold bonds issued under the National Defence Gold Bond Scheme in 1965;

(b) what is the total quantity of gold and its present market value;

(c) what is the total number of bond-holders at present and what was the total number of bonds issued at the beginning;

(d) the details of the procedure for the return of the gold; and

(e) whether any capital gains tax will be collected from the beneficiaries?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI MAGANBHAI BAROT): (a), (d) and (e) The National Defence Gold Bonds, 1980 fell due for redemption on 27th October, 1980. Holders of these bonds have already been advised of the arrangements made for the return of gold to them. A copy of the Press Communique issued on 22nd September 1980 giving the necessary information is enclosed.

[See Appendix CXVI, Annexure No. 16].

(b) The total quantity of gold to be returned is 129,92,969 Grammes and its present market value is estimated at about Rs. 206 crores.

(c) 1,37,515 bonds were originally issued and as a result of subsequent subdivision/consolidation, the bonds to be redeemed now number 1,86,926.

Strike by the ground staff of Air India

168. SHRI SADASHIV BAGAITKAR: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Air India ground staff went on strike on the 24th October, 1980 resulting in the cancellation of a number of International flights;

(b) if so, what were the reasons therefor;

(c) the loss suffered by Government as a result thereof; and

(d) what steps have been taken by Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI A. P. SHARMA): (a) and (b). The Air India Employees Guild had given a directive to its members for 'sit-down strike' effective 24th October, 1980, demanding 20 per cent bonus as against 8.33 per cent admissible under the agree-