

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI MAGANBHAI BAROT): (a) No, Sir. In the Industrial Policy announced by the Government in July, 1980 there is no such definite proposal.

(b) The question does not arise.

Rising prices of essential commodities

232. SHRI T. BASHEER:

SHRI SYED AHMED HASHMI:
SHRI F. M. KHAN:

Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the rising prices and non-availability of many essential commodities in the country recently; and

(b) if so, what are the reasons there for and what steps have been taken by Government to ease the situation?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI BRAJA MOHAN MOHANTY): (a) Government is aware of rise in the prices of some essential commodities and also short supply of two or three commodities.

(b) Apart from the general inflationary situation, the rise in prices and short supply of a few commodities may be attributed to decline in the production of some commodities in 1979-80, wide-spread drought in 1979, increase in the Prices of petro-products, shortfall in power supply, transport bottleneck" and the" seasonality factor.

A continuous watch is being kept on the prices and availability of essential commodities and various remedial measures are being taken to improve the situation. Emphasis is being laid on increase in the production of various essential commodities, particularly commodities like pulses, oilseed, sugar and cement which are in short supply. The public distribution system is being expanded and made a permanent feature of the Indian *economy*. The number Of fair price shops in the country is reported

to have gone up from 2.35 lakhs, in January, 1980 to 2.66 lakhs in October, 1980. Foodgrains for meeting the requirements of public distribution system through fair price shops to the extent they cannot be met from the State Government's stocks are supplied to the State Governments from the Central Pool at subsidised rate. During the oil year 1979-80, 3.55 lakh tonnes of imported edible oils were lifted by the States for distribution through the public distribution system against 93,000 tonnes during the preceding oil year. Arrangements for import of edible oils for the current oil year have been made to ensure adequate supplies of edible oils through the public distribution system. Credit policy continues to be restrictive. The export of some essential commodities is being regulated/ banned. Some essential commodities in short supply are being imported. The provisions of the Essential Commodities Act and the thereunder as well as the Prevention of Blackmarketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980 are being enforced vigorously by the States.

New group-insurance scheme for Central Government Employees

233. SHRI KALPNATH RAI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to introduce a new group insurance scheme for Central Government employees on self-financing and contributory basis;

(to) whether the scheme will provide twin benefits of insurance coverage to the family members of employees in the event of their death while in service and a lumpsum payment on retirement; and

(c) whether this insurance will be time bound or related to the eventuality of death or retirement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SAWAI SINGH SISODIA): (a) Gov-