

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI CHAND RAM): (a) The Corporation acquired 7 vacuators worth \$ 3.5 lakhs from the owner of the vessel 'Kapeton Marcos' as a part of the contract for lightening of foodgrain from the vessel on payment of nominal cost of \$ 2,000 in non-convertible Indian currency on completion of the lightening operation. The Committee on Public Undertakings has pointed out in its 5th report on C.I.W.T.C. that the Food Corporation of India had in 1974-75 about 200 vacuators in working condition. This Ministry is not aware as to how many of these were lying idle when the vacuators were acquired by Central Inland Water Transport Corporation.

(b) Central Inland Water Transport Corporation have stated that they were not aware that 200 vacuators were lying idle with the Food Corporation of India.

(c) Central Bureau of Investigation has been asked to investigate the matter and report its result.

(d) The report of Central Bureau of Investigation is still awaited.

Working of the regulated markets in jute growing States

362. SHRI ANANDA PATHAK: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the working of the regulated markets set up in jute growing States has been found to be far from satisfactory; and

(b) if so, what steps Government have taken to improve the functioning of these markets?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (KUMARI ABHA MAITI): (a) and (b) The regulated markets scheme comes under the purview of State Governments.

Fair price for cotton growers

363. SHRI HARKISHAN SINGH SURJEET: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) what is the price of raw cotton during the current year as compared to that during the last year; and

(b) what steps Government have taken to ensure fair price to the growers, particularly in rural areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (KUMARI ABHA MAITI): (a) A Statement is attached. (See Appendix CVI, Annexure No. 32)

(b) To protect the interest of cotton growers, Government have announced minimum support price for kapas of fair average quality of prominent varieties for 1977-78 (September—August) cotton season. However, with a view to help the growers in the disposal of their unsold stocks of cotton, Government have recently instructed Cotton Corporation of India to purchase kapas of fair average quality even at 3 to 5 per cent above minimum support price announced by Government.

Accumulation of cloth with the mills

364. SHRI HARKISHAN SINGH SURJEET: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state the estimated quantity of cloth which has accumulated with the textile mills in the country at present?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (KUMARI ABHA MAITI): According to provisional data available, the stock of cotton cloth with the textile mills as on 30-6-78, was 288.60 million metres.

Sale of vessel "Galiana" by the C.I.W.T.C.

365. SHRI HARKISHAN SINGH SURJEET: Will the Minister of SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a vessel belonging to the Central Inland Water Transport Corporation, viz, 'GALIANA', repaired at a cost of Rs. 13 lakhs, was sold for Rs. 3.07 lakhs only;

(b) what are the names of the officials of the Corporation who were party to this decision; and

(c) what action Government propose to take against the concerned officials in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI CHAND RAM): (a) Yes, Sir. The vessel 'GALIANA' was repaired at a cost of Rs. 13.40 lakhs in the year 1972-73, while it was sold for Rs. 3.07 lakhs in the year 1977-78.

(b) The sale was approved by the Tender Committee consisting of S/Shri M. Yusuf Khan, P. G. Biswas, M. D. Khatri and N. K. Sarkar and was approved by Shri K. Chelliah, the former Chairman-cum-Managing Director who had nominated the members on the Committee.

(c) The matter is currently under investigation by C.B.I. whose report is awaited.

Failure of the Jute Corporation of India to eliminate intermediates in jute trade

366. SHRI VISWANATHA MENON: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Jute Corporation of India has failed to eliminate the role of intermediaries operating in the jute market;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) what steps Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (KUMARI ABHA MAITI): (a) to (c) Due to various constraints, e.g.

non-availability of adequate storage space, lack of pressing and baling facilities, inadequacy of banking and communication facilities prevalence of rural indebtedness due to which crops are mortgaged to traders even before harvesting by the growers, it had not been possible for the Jute Corporation of India to cover all the primary markets and thus to eliminate the middlemen. However, it has been decided to enlarge the scope of operations of the Jute Corporation of India from the 1978-79 season.

Working of the Jute Corporation of India

337. SHRI VISWANATHA MENON: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the staff, including the field staff, working in the Jute Corporation of India have work only for about 5 to 6 months in a year;

(b) whether Government propose to utilise the staff, in the lean period for training the farmers in improving the quality of jute; and

(c) if so, what are the details of the scheme formulated in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (KUMARI ABHA MAITI): (a) to (c) It is true that the field staff of Jute Corporation of India has generally remained under-utilised for some months in a year because of the restricted activities of the Corporation. It has, however, been decided to enlarge the area of operation of the Corporation for the 1978-79 season onwards. Among other things, it is also proposed that the Jute Corporation of India should take up the training of farmers in grading of jute on a planned basis during the lean periods. The details of this scheme would be worked out in consultation with the State Governments concerned and the Directorate of Jute Development.