

(b) what special schemes have been formulated by the Planning Commission for the development of these areas during the current financial year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI SANKAR GHOSE): (a) A Hill Area has already been set up in the Planning Commission.

(b) While the responsibility for the development of hill areas is primarily that of the State Government, the Hill Area Cell has been assisting the State Governments in devising procedures for identifying a strategy for the development of Hill Areas on the basis of their resource potential as also in the formulation of integrated development plans for such areas. Planning Commission allocates Special Central Assistance to supplement the efforts of the State Governments for their hill areas. During 1976-77 special central assistance of Rs. 36 crores is being provided for this purpose.

Corrupt practices in the Khadi and Village Industries Boards in Kanpur and Murshidabad

*221. SHRI SANAT KUMAR RAHA: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have recently received any report regarding embezzlement, irregular expenditure and corrupt practices in the Kanpur and Murshidabad Branches of the Khadi and Village Industries Board; and

(b) if so, what action Government have taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI A. P. SHARMA): (a) and (b) According to information furnished by the Khadi and Village Industries Commission, the statutory audit report revealed an embezzlement in the Khadi Board,

Kanpur. The amount involved is reported to be around Rs. fifty six thousand. It has been indicated that police investigation and departmental enquiry are under progress and the Board is taking appropriate action against the concerned persons.

The Accountant General's report on the West Bengal Khadi and Village Industries State Board has referred to a stock shortage to the extent of Rs. 1,900 in Chak Islampur Centre in Murshidabad District. Action is in progress about this reported shortage.

Prices of Consumer goods produced by monopoly concerns

*222. SHRI R. NARASIMHA REDDY:
SHRI LEONARD SOLOMAN SARING:
SHRI SYED NIZAM-UD-DIN:
SHRI NIRANJAN SINGH TALIB:

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that prices of most of the consumer goods especially those produced by the monopoly houses have remained static during the last one year; and

(b) whether it is also a fact that the difference between the cost of production and sale price of these goods is very high?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI T. A. PAI): (a) Statement shows index numbers of wholesale prices of groups of consumer goods for March, 1976 compared with March 1975. According to available information, none of these items was being manufactured solely by monopoly houses or by a single manufacturer who may be considered to have a monopoly.

[See Appendix XCVI, Annexure No. 20.]

(b) Does not arise.