

'A.S.T.R.A.'

385. SHRI H. S. NARASIAH: Will the Minister of PLANNING be pleased to state:

(a) when the Application of Science and Technology in Rural Areas Scheme (ASTRA) was started by the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore; and

(b) what are the details of the scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI INDER KUMAR GUJRAL): (a) ASTRA was set up on August 20, 1974 as a Cell in the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore;

(b) The details of the scheme are:—

- (1) to catalyse the development/testing of village-oriented technologies on the Institute campus;
- (2) To establish an Extension Centre amidst a cluster of village near Bangalore; and
- (3) to accomplish and monitor the transfer of the development/tested technologies to rural areas through the Extension Centre and through established rural development agencies.

Sale of Cheap T. V. Sets offered by Small Scale T. V. Manufacturers

386. SHRI YOGENDRA SHARMA:

SHRI JAGJIT SINGH ANAND:

Will the Minister of ELECTRONICS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the small scale T. V. manufacturers have offered 51 cm. set for Rs. 2000 and 31 cm. set for Rs. 1500 ex-factory exclusive of excise and sales tax;

(b) whether Government are contemplating to exempt small scale T. V. industry from excise duty and sales tax for a period of two years enabling middle class families to purchase T. V. sets at low price; and

(c) whether Government propose to approach the nationalised banks to advance

loans to low income group for purchase of T.V. sets?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI): (a) The Electronics Industries Association in a Memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister have offered to supply a standard 51 cms (20") TV set for Rs. 2000, and small screen TV set (size unspecified), at less than Rs. 1500 both ex-factory prices. In the same Memorandum, various measures have been proposed including that:

The nationalized banks be directed to advance loans at low interest to the general public for buying TV sets, with repayments in instalments spread over a period of 24/36 months; that excise duty and sales tax on TV sets be removed for a period of 2-3 years; that total exemption be given from payment of excise duty for all Small Scale T.V. manufacturers.

(b) and (c) Government have already indicated, through a Customs Notification dated February 16, 1976 that the import duty on the glass shells used in the manufacture of TV picture tubes would be reduced with immediate effect from 186% to 75%. According to the Union Budget for 1976-77, the excise duty on TV sets with an ex-factory price of Rs. 1800 and below is reduced to 5% while for sets with an ex-factory price above Rs. 1800 the excise duty remains at 20% *ad-valorum*. If immediate steps are now taken by industry to design simple, functional TV sets and to reduce their manufacturing and marketing costs in the many areas where this is possible, TV sets should become available to consumers at a considerably lower price than they are today. This would lead, in turn, to an expansion in demand for TV sets and, as a consequence, to growth in TV set production.

387. [Transferred to the 24th March, 1976.]

Foreign tours by the officers of N.I.D.C.

388. SHRI BIR CHANDRA DEB BURMAN: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) the number of times the Managing Director, Chief Consultant and Directors