

sional rate of interest of 14% is charged on such loans if the procurement is undertaken at the support prices fixed by the Government of India. However, if a State Government undertakes purchases at prices above the support prices either within the State or 'Inter-State' credit is provided at the commercial rate of interest *viz.* 16.5% only after the concerned State Government obtains the prior concurrence of the Central Government in regard to the quantities and time frame within which such purchases are to be undertaken by it.

The State Government of Andhra Pradesh has reportedly represented to Reserve Bank of India that it may be permitted to value stocks at cost price of purchases.

Rise in Prices of Gold and Silver

4368. SHRIMATI D.K. BHANDARI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether prices of gold and silver are rising day by day;

(b) if so, detailed reasons for this increase, item-wise;

(c) whether Government are able to take effective steps to check this daily increase; and

(d) if so, details of these steps and by when these will be implemented ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EXPENDITURE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI B.K. GADHVI) : (a) and (d). There has been a significant increase in the prices of gold and silver in India in recent months. However, towards the end of November a declining trend has emerged. The increase in prices of these precious metals may be *inter alia* due to high festival demand, paucity of floating stocks, uptrend in international prices and diversion of speculative funds into bullion markets in expectation of further rise.

(c) and (d). Gold and silver are not essential commodities and the Government does not consider it necessary to take any special measures to check the increase in their prices.

Proposals Regarding Share Transfer

4369. SHRIMATI D.K. BHANDARI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether certain proposals to solve the problems of share transfer in the country are under consideration;

(b) if so, details thereof;

(c) the objectives of these proposals; and

(d) how the small investors will be benefited with these proposals ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EXPENDITURE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI B.K. GADHVI) : (a) to (d). A Working Group under the Convenorship of Shri R.N. Bansal, Member, Company Law Board, had been constituted by the Ministry of Finance on 12th November, 1987 to examine the various aspects of the share transfer problem. The objectives of the Working Group are to, *inter alia*, suggest measures for simplification of the existing system of share transfer in respect of listed companies, keeping in view the requirements of small investors. The deliberation of the Working Group is in progress.

Joint Venture for Production of Potash

4370. SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation proposes to set up a joint venture project with Canadian Government for the production of potash at Manitoba mines in that country;

(b) if so, what would be the equity share of the MMTC;

(c) whether the share would be in the form of cash or equipment and machinery; and

(d) the cost of the project ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI NARAYAN DATT TIWARI) : (a) to (d). A proposal received from the Government of Manitoba State, Canada, for participa-

tion of MMTC in a potash mining project is under consideration. No final decision regarding participation in the project has been taken.

Steps to meet the Demand of Cotton

4371. SHRI KADAMBUR JANARTHANAN : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) the details of cotton crop estimated for the new season (State-wise);

(b) whether the Ministry agree with Cotton Advisory Board's statement that cotton crop is adequate to meet the demand; and

(c) if not, the steps being taken to meet the demand ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR) : (a) The cotton Advisory Board estimated the stotewise cotton production during the 1987-88 cotton year as follows :

(In lakh bales of 170 kgs. each)

State	Estimated production
Punjab	17.00
Haryana	6.50
Rajasthan	5.00
Gujarat	8.25
Maharashtra	20.00
Madhya Pradesh	6.50
Andhra Pradesh	18.00
Karnataka	7.50
Tamil Nadu	5.50
Others	0.75
Total :	95.00

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Export Polley of Cotton

4372. SHRI KADAMBUR JANARTHANAN : Will the Minister of TAX-TILES be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have adopted the same policy in cotton export like last year;

(b) whether there is any change in the export policy of cotton in accordance with the Cotton Advisory Board's decision; and

(c) if so, the details thereof ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR) : (a) to (c). In terms of the long term export policy on cotton, 5 lakh bales of long and extra long staple cotton, ~50,000 bales of Bengal Desi and 50,000 bales of Digvijay variety would be exported per year on a continuous basis for a period of three years commencing from the cotton year 1986-87. However, owing to lower production of cotton during 1986-87, increased mill consumption of cotton and rise in cotton prices, the exports of staple cotton have been suspended since July, 1987. The Cotton Advisory Board has not envisaged any exports of staple cotton during the current cotton year.

Export Earning and Import Bill

4373. SHRI VIJAY N. PATIL : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) the trend in export earnings from April 1987 to September 1987, and its comparision to the same period during 1986;

(b) whether the import bill from April 1987 to September 1987 is on the higher side in comparison to corresponding period of 1986;

(c) if so, the reasons for higher import bill; and

(d) the steps Government are taking to sustain a good rate of export growth and to check trade deficit ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA) : (a) According to the provisional data, India's exports during April-September, 1987 amounted to Rs. 7411.26 crores as compared to Rs. 5857.44