

view the need for reducing the cost of production. The bank rate which is the pivot of the interest rate structure has been left unchanged at 9 per cent.

Importers to show firm commitments to Import Goods

1769. SHRI D. D. DESAI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to make it imperative on importers to show firm commitments to import goods for which licence is demanded before giving import licences under the liberal licensing policy; and

(b) if so, the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION (SHRI MOHAN DHARIA): (a) Yes, Sir, licences for import of (i) edible oils, (ii) dry fruits (iii) dates, (iv) cloves, (v) nutmegs and (vi) cinnamon, under the free licensing policy, are issued on the basis of firm import commitments made by applicants.

(b) This procedure has been adopted in order to ensure that licensing should correspond to the actual imports that will materialise and also have proper monitoring of the import of these items.

Export Orders secured by J.C.I.

1770. SHRIMATI PARVATHI KRISHNAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Jute Corporation of India has already secured export orders worth Rs. 45 crores from U.S.A., U.K., U.S.S.R. and Egypt for the current year;

(b) if so, whether Government have

taken any steps to increase substantially the number of its purchasing centres for procurement of raw jute;

(c) whether Jute magnates had deprived the State exchequer of several crores of rupees; and

(d) if so, the facts thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION (SHRI MOHAN DHARIA): (a) Jute Corporation of India has secured export orders worth about Rs. 10.47 crores from USA, UK, USSR, Egypt, Canada etc.

(b) Jute Corporation of India is planning to increase the number of its Departmental Purchase Centres to 100 during the current year as against 87 in the last year.

(c) and (d). Government is not yet aware of such deprivations in these export-deals or setting up of purchase centres.

Setting up of Rural Banks

1771. SHRIMATI PARVATHI KRISHNAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND REVENUE AND BANKING be pleased to state whether Government have taken a decision to set up rural banks and/or for their expansion during this financial year?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND REVENUE AND BANKING (SHRI H. M. PATEL): During the last financial year, a decision was taken by Government to increase the number of Regional Rural Banks from 50, as originally decided, to 60.

Hosiery Units in Calcutta, Tripura and South India

1772. SHRIMATI PARVATHI KRISHNAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the hosiery units in Calcutta, Tripura and South India need help to improve exports; and