

against 3.40 lakh bales in the preceding year. The percentage of procurement in West Bengal relating to the total production in that State has gone up from 8.4 per cent in 1979-80 to 11.7 per cent, in 1980-81 which means an increase of about 41 per cent.

(b) Action plan for substantial increase in procurement during the year 1981-82 is under preparation.

Working of S.T.C.

684. SHRIMATI MADHURI SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are satisfied with the working of State Trading Corporation as an instrument of export promotion; and

(b) if not, the steps being taken to ensure that the Corporation concentrates more fully on developmental export activity?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KHURSHED ALAM KHAN): (a) Government makes periodic review of the working of State Trading Corporation depending on the shift in the emphasis on various trading activities. Presently, the shift of emphasis has taken place from export of canalised items to promotion of export of new items in the non-canalised and non-traditional areas and exploration of new markets.

(b) A number of steps have been taken such as identification of products/markets for major thrust, functionalisation of activities into procurement management, marketing and project management, initiation of dialogue with Indian and foreign parties for establishment of joint venture projects in the fields of identified project ranges such as processed fruits, leather products, meat and marine products, and ancillary management services to provide technical guidance to small scale units for upgrading the quality and streamlining their production by adding balancing equipments wherever ne-

cessary, close liaison with State organisations for supplying commodities in an organised manner e.g. Coffee Board, Cardamom Board and State Govt. undertakings for supply of meat and marine products and vegetables and, lastly, strengthening of foreign branch offices with requisite skilled workers and good communication network for necessary thrust in marketing and feedback.

Seizure of Silver at Bombay Airport

685. SHRI CHHANGUR RAM:

SHRI JAGPAL SINGH:

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in a recent seizure of silver worth lakhs of rupees at the Bombay Airport a number of persons belonging to the Staff of Air India were found to be involved in the transactions; and

(b) if so, details thereof and the action taken by the Government against the officials of Air India involved in the case?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI A. P. SHARMA): (a) Yes, Sir. Three loaders of Air India and one contract security man were involved in the case relating to the seizure of 349 kgs. of silver at Bombay airport on 28-8-80.

(b) Air India has suspended the three loaders concerned and the services of the contract security man have been dispensed with.

Soaring Prices of Groundnut oil

686. SHRI R. K. MHALGI: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether his attention has been drawn to the market surveys appearing in the newspapers in the first week