

(a) the locations in Kerala where additional branches of scheduled banks are proposed to be opened during 1991;

(b) whether the only banking facility available to people living in Koombara in Kozhikode district, Kerala, an important agricultural centre, is eight kilometres away;

(c) if so, whether Government propose to open a bank branch there; and

(d) if so, the time by which the bank branch is likely to be opened?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recently issued guidelines in regard to their approach for future branch expansion to all Indian commercial banks including Regional Rural Banks (RRBs). They have not so far received consolidated requests from banks for opening branches under the Policy in respect of rural/semi-urban areas. As regards urban and metropolitan centres, the recommendations of the Working Groups set up for identification of unbanked/underbanked localities are under examination of the RBI. It will, therefore, not be possible to indicate at this stage the locations of additional branches proposed to be opened in Kerala during 1991.

(b) to (d). The Centre Koombara was not identified by the Lead Bank and State Government under the branch licensing policy 1985-90 for opening a bank branch thereat. A branch of South Malabar Gramin Bank is functioning at Maranchatty which is located only 2 kms. away from Koombara. Under Service Area Approach the centre Koombara has been allocated to Kakkadampoil Branch of Canara Bank which is also close by. RBI has, therefore, not felt any immediate need for opening a bank branch at the proposed centre.

Steel and Metal Industry

308. SHRI PRATAP SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to take any steps to make our steel and metal industry sectors globally competitive; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI BASAVARAJ PATIL): (a) and (b). Global competitiveness depends on various factors like the quality and cost of raw materials and other inputs, technology and efficiency of work practices. Efforts to bring about improvements in these and other parameters are a continuing process. Presently, while aluminium is already globally competitive, modernisation projects are going on in sectors like steel, zinc and lead.

Survey for Locating Mineral in Tamil Nadu

309. SHRI P. R. S. VENKATESAN: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Mineral Development Corporation has undertaken any exploration work for finding minerals in Tamil Nadu during the last three years;

(b) if so, at which of the places/territory; and

(c) the results achieved?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI BASAVARAJ PATIL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.