

(e) if so, the nature of assistance sought and whether Government are considering to extend the assistance ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. A. SANGMA) : (a) to (e) On the basis of the reports submitted by the 100% export oriented units, 57 out of the 408 approved units commenced production and export by 31st December, 1984. The remaining units are in various stages of implementation which involves gestation period and initial preparatory work relating to allotment of land and cement, power supply, Customs bonding facility, etc. The concerned authorities in Central and State Governments are, from time to time, requested to help remove bottlenecks expeditiously by way of priority allotment in these areas and similar assistance in other sectors.

[Translation]

Giving of loans by banks under 20 point programmes

662. SHRI BHARAT SINGH : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(b) whether with a view to create more jobs under the 20-Point Programme, loans were given by banks at lower rate of interest to small shopkeepers, fair price shop owners and artisans :

(b) whether it is a fact that a large amount of loans was given to such persons during the last two years but now the bank have stopped advancing such loans ; if so, the reasons therefor ; and

(c) whether Government propose to increase the amount of such loans for the uplift of persons of lower strata ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY) : (a) Yes, Sir, Banks have been extending finance at concessional rates of interest to small borrowers in the Priority Sector which

include retail traders e.g. small shopkeepers, fair price shop owners, etc.

(b) and (c) There has been sustained increase in the advances to these types of borrowers during the last two years. The banks are continuing their credit support to weaker sections. As at the end of March, 1985, 9.4% of the total bank credit of the public sector banks stood against weaker sections. The banks have been advised to step up their advances to weaker sections and to ensure that atleast 10% of their total credit is extended to these sections.

[English]

Modernisation of Rourkela Steel Plant

663. SHRI V.S. KRISHNA IYER : SHRI HARIHAR SOREN : Will the Minister of STEEL, MINES AND COAL be pleased to state :

(a) the amount spent or proposed to be spent for modernisation of Rourkela Steel Plant ;

(b) whether it will result in increase in the production of steel during the current year ; and

(c) if so, the quantum of increase in production ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STEEL (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH) : (a) A proposal for technological upgradation and modernisation of Rourkela Steel Plant has been prepared and is under consideration of Government. The proposal will be taken up for an investment decision after the VII Plan allocations of the steel sector are finalised shortly.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

News-Item captioned "India's balance of payments position alarming"

664. SHRI C. MADHAV REDDI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether his attention has been