

of the Export Promotion Councils are generally following Government rules. There are, however, certain departures from these rules in a few cases. Government is taking suitable steps to ensure that all Export Promotion Councils follow Government Rules in the matter of Pay & Allowances etc. No standing orders for the E.P.Cs have been framed nor is any such proposal under consideration of the Government.

Constitution of Pepper Board

3695. DR. SUDHIR ROY : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is a proposal to set up a Pepper Board for increasing the production of black pepper, an important exportable commodity ;

(b) if so, the details thereof ; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P.A. SANGMA) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) It has been decided to set up a Spices Board for the overall development of export of spices including pepper. The existing cardamom Board and Spices Export Promotion Council will get merged in the proposed Board.

[Translation]

Tax evasion worth crores of Rupees by changing brand name and prices of Cigarettes

3696. SHRI KALI PRASAD PANDEY:
SHRI SHANTI DHARIWAL :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether his attention has been drawn to the news item appearing in 'Navbharat Times' of 9th July, 1985 captioned, "Cigarette Ka Nam Va Mulya Badal Karoron Rupaye Ki Kar Chori" (Tax evasion worth crores of rupees by changing brand name and prices of cigarettes) ;

(b) if so, whether Government have taken any concrete action against the owners of firms mentioned therein and other cigarette companies for tax bungling in various ways and for selling cigarettes at higher prices ;

(c) if so, the State-wise details thereof ; and

(d) if not, whether any effective steps are proposed to be taken in the near future ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY) : (a) to (d) Some complaints regarding evasion of tax by cigarettes companies including the news item referred to in part (a) of the Question have come to the notice of the Government. The rates of excise duty on cigarettes are specific. The slabs of specific duty have been fixed with reference to the adjusted sale price of cigarettes. There are some reports of sales of cigarettes in retail, at prices higher than those printed in violation of the provisions of the Standards of Weights and Measures (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 1977. The enforcing agencies for these rules are the State Governments and the Union Territory Administrations. Instructions have been issued to the Central Excise field formations not to approve the brands of cigarettes which are hardly distinguishable from one another.

Transactions being done through benami firms and benami accounts particularly those at Kanpur mentioned in the news item have been referred to the concerned Commissioner of Income-tax for appropriate action under the law.

[English]

Appointment of Non-professional as Head of Rubber Board

3697. DR. VIJAYA RAMA RAO : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have decided to put a non-professional member of I.A.S. in service as head of the Rubber Board ; and