

have abolished minimum export price for tea; and

(b) if so, the reasons thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI ARJUN SINGH) : (a) and (b). In view of prospects of higher world production, presence of large quantities of low quality teas in the world market and higher stocks level, the prices of tea have shown declining trend during 1985. In the drop of this situation, minimum export price on tea exports has been abolished so to enable Indian teas to compete effectively in the world market.

[Translation]

Accumulation of Huge Stocks of Small Staple Cotton with Farmers

926. SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) whether farmers in the country are getting remunerative price for small-staple and long-staple cotton;

(b) whether large stocks have accumulated with the farmers producing small-staple cotton and if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the reasons for importing cotton last year ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN) : (a) Yes, Sir. The Cotton Corporation of India has been asked to purchase cotton at the minimum support prices as and when the market prices of kapas trend to fall below the support price to assure the farmer of remunerative prices.

(b) No Sir.

(c) The import of medium staple cotton was resorted to during the last cotton season to meet a part of the shortage in this variety estimated at that time.

[English]

Interest of Delayed Payment on Out-station Cheques

927. SHRI D.P. JADEJA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have directed nationalised banks to pay interest on out-station cheques which are not credited beyond 28 days;

(b) whether it is a fact that most cheques are delayed for a period between 21 and 25 days;

(c) whether Government propose to reduce the period of delay permitted to only 20 days to make concession meaningful; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHANA POJARY) : (a) Reserve Bank of India advised banks in August 1984 to pay interest at Savings Bank rate on outstation cheques drawn on their own branches after a period of 28 days where credit was afforded or cheques returned to the depositors beyond a period of 28 days of their lodgement.

(b) No specific data is available regarding the time required for collection cheques.

(c) and (d). The question of reducing the time taken by banks for collection of outstation cheques has been engaging the attention of government and the banks and significant improvement in this regard is expected with progressive improvement in communications and mechanisation.

Tourist Package Scheme for Members of Parliament

928. SHRI M. SUBBA REDDY : Will the Minister of PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal to arrange package tours on weekends for the