

statutorily controlled price, the fertilizers subsidy is likely to continue. During 1987-88 the budget provision on this account is Rs. 1910 crores.

Financial Assistance to Mines

4712. SHRI VISHNU MODI : Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether various mines in the country are not being provided with any technical know-how or financial assistances by Government ;

(b) if so, whether Government proposed to establish a small mines service institute on the lines of small industries service institute in the country ; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF MINES IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SMT. RAMDULARI SINHA) : (a) The Indian Bureau of Mines offers technical consultancy services and training facilities. The charges are concessional for small mines. The officers of the Bureau while inspecting the mines also provide guidance to the mines on technical aspects. Further Ore Dressing Laboratories and Pilot Plant facilities for mineral beneficiation are available at Nagpur, Bangalore and Ajmer. As regards financial assistance, mining industry is already recognised as an eligible activity for purpose of assistance from financial institutions, including assistance from the Industrial Development Bank of India.

(b) and (c) Consultations about the setting up of a small mines service institute were held with the State Governments during the recent conference of State Secretaries of Geology and Mining. The general view was that there is no need to set up a small mines service institute as these services are already provided by the Indian Bureau of Mines.

[Translation]

Linking of Prices of Agricultural Produce with Price Index

4713. SHRI KALI PRASAD PANDEY : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is a proposal to link the prices of agricultural produce with the price index in order to improve the condition of farmers ;

(b) if so, the details thereof ; and

(c) the time by which a final decision is expected to be taken in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA) : (a) to (c) There is no proposal at present under the consideration of the Government to link the prices of agricultural produce with the price index. However, the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP), while recommending the level of prices for different agricultural commodities, makes a comprehensive overview of the entire structure of the economy of the particular commodity including its production and price trends, Cost of production of that crop, the likely effect of the price policy on the rest of the economy, particularly the cost of living, level of wages and industrial cost structure. Since March, 1980, CACP also takes into account the changes in the terms of trade between agricultural and non-agricultural sectors which include not only the prices paid by the farmers for purchasing inputs but also the changes in the prices paid by them for commodities purchased for consumption purposes. So viewed, the changes in the consumer prices are already being taken into account.

Apprenticeship Training in BALCO

4714. DR. PRABHAT KUMAR MISHRA : Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether arrangements for imparting apprenticeship training exist in the plant of Bharat Aluminium Company Limited.

(b) if so, whether after the training the apprentices are provided employment in the plant itself ;

(c) whether employment has been provided to the apprentices trained in Korba BALCO plant ; and

(d) if so, the number of such apprentices as also the number of those who are still unemployed and the arrangements being made to provide them employment ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF MINES IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI MATI RAMDULARI SINHA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) Under the Apprentices Act, 1961 and Rules made thereunder, the Regional Apprenticeship Adviser fixes the number of apprentices to be inducted in various trades. As per terms and conditions of induction, the apprentices, on their successful completion of apprenticeships are absorbed to the extent vacancies meant for direct recruitment are available. Out of 438 apprentices trained during the years 1981 to 1985, 210 were offered employment by BALCO. The number of apprentices who have just completed training and who have not been offered any employment is 41.

[English]

EPF Arrears

4715. SHRI NARESH CHANDRA CHATURVEDI : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether the amount of arrears and number of defaulters of Employees Provident Fund dues has been increasing over the years :

(b) if so, the reasons therefor ;

(c) the year-wise break-up of the amount and the number of defaulters for last three years ; and

(d) the remedial steps taken to reverse this trend ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P.A. SANGMA) : (a) Yes, Sir, except that the total number of defaulting unexempted establishments during 1985-86 was less than during 1984-85.

(b) The increase in arrears could be generally attributed to :-

(i) Industrial sickness ;

(ii) Inadequacy of penalties imposed on the defaulters by the Courts.

(iii) Stay orders granted by the Courts ;

(iv) Pendency of re-construction schemes ordered by the Courts ;

(v) Closures/lock-out of establishments ;

(vi) Slow progress in the realisation of the outstanding dues through the revenue recovery machinery of the State Governments.

(c) the year-wise break-up for the last three years was as given below :-

Year	No. of defaulters.		Amount in arrears	
	Exempted.	Unexempted	Exempted Unexempted.	(Rs. in crores)
1983-84 :	132	7,588	45.75	41.62
1984-85 :	137	8,765	63.92	52.30
1985-86 :	139	8,593	84.24	58.30