

(a) whether the Cardamom Board had suggested export of Cardamom to Scandinavian countries;

(b) if so, whether any export has been made to those countries; and

(c) if so, the quantity and the prices thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. R. DAS MUNSI) : (a) to (c) India's total export of cardamom to Scandinavian countries during 86-87 and 87-88 upto September is practically nil. The Spices Board earlier (Cardamom Board) has proposed a scheme for market promotion of cardamom for these countries.

Assessment of Export Promotion Councils

150. PROF. P.J. KURIEN : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) the performance of Export Promotion Councils (EPCs);

(b) whether Government have entrusted any organisation with the job of assessing the performance and suggest ways to improve the EPCs;

(c) if so, the details of the suggestions received; and

(d) the action taken in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P.R. DAS MUNSI) : (a) to (d) The Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad was entrusted with the task of undertaking a study of the functioning of EPC's and make recommendations. The Report of Study Team has been received. Necessary action has been initiated to examine the various recommendations.

Rate of Inflation

151. PROF. P. J. KURIEN : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the rate of inflation has increased during the past six months ;

(b) if so, the details thereof ;

(c) how does it compare with the corresponding period last year ; and

(d) the steps being taken to reduce the rate of inflation ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EXPENDITURE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI B. K. GADHVI) : (a) to (c) According to the latest provisional information available, the Wholesale Prices Index for All Commodities (Base : 1970 = 100) has recorded a rise of 5.5 per cent over the past six months ending 17th October, 1987 (latest available) as against a rise of 5.4 per cent in the corresponding period a year ago.

(d) The anti-inflationary policy being followed by Government includes effective demand and supply management like strengthening of Public Distribution System, allocation of additional stock of foodgrains to drought affected areas, augmenting domestic availability of essential commodities like sugar, edible oils, pulses and mopping up of excess liquidity in the system. The Central Government has also advised the State Governments to take strict action against traders indulging in profiteering, hoarding and blackmarketeering.

Assistance to Drought Affected Growers of Spices in Kerala

152. PROF. P. J. KURIEN : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Spices Board has initiated any special scheme for helping the growers of different spices who have suffered due to drought in Kerala ; and

(b) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. R. DAS MUNSI) : (a) and (b) The Spices Board has implemented a package scheme for minimising drought effects on Cardamom in Kerala. The major elements of the scheme are :