

under these branches; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO) : (a) to (c). There are standing guidelines issued by Reserve Bank of India to commercial banks for extending relief measures to persons affected by natural calamities such as droughts, floods etc. which will be applicable to persons affected by recent floods in Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab and Haryana. These guidelines envisage, *inter-alia*, conversion of short term production loans into medium term loans, rescheduling of existing term loan instalments and provision of additional need based loans to the affected persons. In respect of current dues in default, no penal interest is to be charged. Effective from 1st March, 1988, the rate of interest on short term loans to farmers for agriculture has been further reduced. As for housing finance, commercial banks are required to grant loans for house repairs and house construction upto Rs 5,000 to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes at concessional rate of interest of 4%.

Indian Trade Facilitation Council

384. SHRIMATI BASAVARAJESWARI : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have set up an Indian Trade Facilitation Council;

(b) if so, the functions thereof:

(c) if not, when it is likely to be set up; and

(d) the extent to which it will help obviate the procedural delays in external trade?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI) : (a) to (d). No, Sir, a suggestion has however been received for constituting a Trade Facilitation Council with a view to simplifying procedures and documentation in external trade taking into account relevant international standards, which has been noted.

Lifting Curbs in Tea Dealers

385. SHRIMATI BASAVARAJESWARI : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are rescinding the Tea (Registration of Dealers and Declaration of Stocks) Order, 1984;

(b) if so, the main reasons for rescinding the curbs; and

(c) to what extent these curbs have helped the tea dealers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). Tea (Registration of Dealers and Declaration of Stocks) Order, 1984 was promulgated in the context of shortage of tea for domestic consumption with the resultant increase in tea prices in India. The situation has since changed with the availability of adequate quantity of tea in the country and consequent stability in prices. It was, therefore, felt that the Tea (Registration of Dealers and Declaration of Stocks) Order, 1984 was no more serving any purpose.

World Bank Disbursements to Developing Countries

386. SHRIMATI BASAVARAJESWARI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state: