

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL): (a) to (d). The required information is being collected and will be laid on the table of Lak Sabha.

Rural indebtedness and minimum wages of Farmlands

777. SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under the consideration of Government regarding the liquidation of rural indebtedness and review of the law dealing with minimum wages of farmlands; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN): (a) and (b). **RURAL INDEBTEDNESS**

In August, 1975 the Government of India issued guidelines to the States and Union Territories for liquidation of non-institutional rural indebtedness of small/marginal farmers, agricultural labourers and rural artisans.

2. Under the guidelines the States/Union Territories were to impose moratorium on recovery of debt as interim measure followed by (a) total discharge of debt of marginal farmers, agricultural labourers and rural artisans having annual income upto Rs. 2400/- and (b) Scaling down of debts of small farmers.

3. The State/Union Territories were also advised to reorganise and strengthen the cooperative institutions at the primary level to provide institutional credit to these sections of the rural poor.

4. Most of the States/Union Territories have taken legislative measures to discharge/scaling down of debts of these weaker sections and have undertaken reorganisation of Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies (PACS).

5. The State Governments have now been advised to assess the impact of these measures so as to initiate fresh measures to be taken by them to give relief to the rural poor. The Reserve Bank of India are also surveying five districts — Amaravati (Maharashtra), Champaran (Bihar), Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu), Karnal (Haryana) and Rewa (Madhya Pradesh)—to assess the impact of these debt relief measures.

MINIMUM WAGES OF FARMLANDS

Most of the State Governments and Union Territories Administrations revised the minimum rates of wages for agricultural workers during the period 1975-76. Appropriate Governments are required to review at intervals not exceeding five years, the minimum rates of wages and revise them if necessary.

2. The State Governments and Union Territories have been advised to effect further revision in minimum wages of the agricultural workers in farmlands wherever it has become due.

Shortage of drinking Water in Villages

778. SHRI P. K. KODIYAN: Will the Minister of WORKS AND HOUSING be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is acute shortage of drinking water in certain parts of the village areas in the country;

(b) if so, what is the total number of villages where there is acute shortage of drinking water;

(c) what are Government's plans to provide drinking water in these villages; and

(d) how much money is expected to be spent in the next five years to extend drinking water facilities in these villages?

THE MINISTER OF WORKS AND HOUSING (SHRI P. C. SETHI): (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. Villages where