

### Repayment of Foreign Loans

688. SHRI A. NEELALOHITHAN-DASAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has defaulted in re-payment of foreign loans or interest thereon in any of the years 1976—80; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI MAGANBHAI BAROT): (a) and (b). The repayment of principal and payment of interest charges in respect of loan/credit agreements concluded by the Government of India with foreign countries/institutions have always been made as provided in those agreements. There has been no default in making payments during 1976—80.

### Exemption of basic drugs manufactured in India from Central Excise Duty

689. SHRI CHANDRA BAL MANI TIWARI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is true that basic drugs manufactured in our country are totally exempt from the levy of Central Excise Duty;

(b) if so, whether a notification has been issued to this effect;

(c) whether this exemption has been made in order to encourage production of basic drugs in the country; and

(d) what is the total revenue the Government is being deprived of on this account?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI MAGANBHAI BAROT): (a) Yes, Sir. All drugs, medicines, pharmaceuticals and drug intermediates, not elsewhere specified and falling under Item No. 68 of the CET are exempt from excise duty w.e.f. 1-3-78.

(b) Notification No. 62/78-CE dated 1st March 1978 which amends notification No. 55/75-CE dated 1st March 75 was issued as a part of 1978 Budget for exempting all drugs, medicines pharmaceuticals and drug intermediates not elsewhere specified.

(c) The exemption has been granted as the goods involved are sensitive categories of goods.

(d) The revenue involved in the exemption for the year 1978-79 was approximately Rs. 6 crores.

### Opening of Bank Branches in the Country

690. SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) number of bank branches opened in the country; State-wise during the last three years; year-wise and bank-wise; and

(b) number of bank branches proposed to be opened during the last three years; year-wise; state-wise and bank-wise?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI MAGANBHAI BAROT): (a). Required information, to the extent readily available, is set out in the statement laid on the Table of the House. [Placed in Library. See No LT—885/80].

(b) While the Reserve Bank of India gives a broad indication to the banks about the aggregative size of the branch expansion of commercial banks during a specific period, no bankwise/Statewise/Yearwise target of branch expansion are set.

### Rise in Market Prices of Items of Daily Needs

691. SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) is it a fact that the market prices of sugar, edible oil, pulses,